

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Greece – Italy



Interreg VI-A Greece-Italy Programme 2021-2027

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TABLE WITH ABBREVIATIONS

CCIs	Cultural and Creative Industries
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
DESI	Digital Economy and Society Index
EC	European Commission
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EURCI	European Regional Competitiveness Index
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVA	Gross Value Added
IPs	Investment Priorities
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
ISO	Interreg Specific Objective
JPC	Joint Programming Committee
JS	Joint Secretariat
MIS	Management Information System
MA	Managing Authority
MSME	Micro, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprise
NEETs	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
PA	Priority Axis
PC	Programming Committee
PO	Policy Objective
PPS	Purchasing Power Standards
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
RII	Regional Innovation Index
RIS3	Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation
RCI	Regional Competitiveness Index
SGIs	Services of General Interest
SME	Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SO	Specific Objective

INTRODUCTION

The present deliverable D.3 is the second version (V1.1) of the final Cooperation Programme that will be submitted to the members of the Programming Committee for further comments, prior to the final submission to the EC.

More specifically, the deliverable presents the final version of the Cooperation Programme which includes all the chapters of the Cooperation Programme taking into consideration the results of the first and the second round of Public Consultations as well as the decisions taken by the Programming Committee and other processes. More specifically (in chronological order):

- *The decisions of the 1st Programming Committee that took place on 3rd July 2020 whereby the Rules of Procedure (RoPs) were approved and a first discussion was held with regard to the key characteristics of the new programming period on the basis of the Orientation Paper that was published by the Commission, as well as the possible territorial enlargement of the eligible area of the programme to include the regions of Basilicata and Calabria.*
- *The decisions of the 2nd Programming Committee that was held on 9th December 2020 whereby the initiation of the 1st Round of Public Consultations in a form of a web-survey (google forms) was decided on the basis of the amended versions of the submitted questionnaires for categories A, B and C. The Programming Committee approved the territorial analysis of the intermediate deliverable ID1.2 “1st Draft of the Cooperation Programme Interreg Greece - Italy 2021-2027” (V1.2) and it was agreed to follow a bottom-up approach in the selection of the Programme’s Policy Objectives and Specific Objectives considering also the results that will come out of the consultation.*
- *The results that came out from the 1st Round of Public Consultations that took place between 28/12/2020 and 15/01/2021 and it was further extended until 29/01/2020. Such results are being included in the intermediate deliverable ID1.4 “First Round of the Public Consultations in the form of a Web-Survey” that was submitted on 09/02/21.*
- *The discussions and decisions of the 3rd Programming Committee (PC) that took place on 04/03/2021. The results that were presented by the consultant as per deliverable ID1.2 “1st Draft of the Cooperation Programme Interreg Greece - Italy 2021-2027” that formed an updated version on the basis of the results of the Public Consultation, including an amended territorial analysis and intervention logic on the basis of the discussion and comments of the previous PC. The decision of the PC with regard to the defined Policy Objectives and more particularly the selection of the following: PO1, PO2, PO4 and ISO1.*
- *The results of the 2nd Round of of Public Consultations that took place between 15/04/21 and 14/05/21 as per the decision of the previous PC and was extended to 04/06/2021. During this period, a web-survey, two workshops and a number of targeted interviews with selected stakeholders took place. The results are included in the “2nd Consultations Report” that was submitted to the members of the PC on 22/06/21.*
- *The discussions and decisions of the 4th Programming Committee (PC) that took place on 14/07/2021. During the PC the consultant presented the first final version of the Cooperation Programme as per the intermediate deliverable ID3.1. It was decided that the draft will be updated on the basis of a number of interventions and comments put forward by the members, in order to be sent for written procedure for further comments prior to the final submission to the Commission.*

- *The discussions and decisions of the 5th Programming Committee (PC) that took place on 23/09/2021. The draft Final Version of the Programme Document was presented by the consultant and the PC elaborated on it, especially in terms of indicative actions per SO, budget allocation among PAs/SOs, governance issues and indicators.*
- *The discussions and decisions of the 6th Programming Committee (PC) that took place on 21/10/2021. The updated Final Version of the Programme Document was presented by the consultant and the PC elaborated on it, especially in terms of budget allocation among PAs/SOs, and the potential use of Small Projects / Small Project Fund as well as Simplified Cost Options (SCOs).*
- *The discussions and decisions of the 7th Programming Committee (PC) that took place on 14/12/2021. The updated Final Version of the Programme Document was presented by the consultant and the PC elaborated on it, especially in terms of common actions on strategic proposals, national co-financing rates and common indicators.*
- *The discussions and decisions of the 8th Programming Committee (PC) that took place on 22/03/2022. The updated Final Version of the Programme Document was presented by the Managing Authority and the PC elaborated on it, especially in terms of justification on the use of financial instruments, technical assistance arrangement sand next steps for the final submission of the Programme.*

The chapters of the Programming Document follow the template included in the Interreg Regulation¹ and are as follows:

1. **JOINT PROGRAMME STRATEGY: MAIN DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND POLICY RESPONSES**
2. **PRIORITIES**
3. **FINANCING PLAN**
4. **ACTION TAKEN TO INVOLVE THE RELEVANT PROGRAMME PARTNERS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE INTERREG PROGRAMME AND THE ROLE OF THOSE PROGRAMME PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**
5. **APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY FOR THE INTERREG PROGRAMME (OBJECTIVES, TARGET AUDIENCES, COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH, WHERE APPROPRIATE, PLANNED BUDGET AND RELEVANT INDICATORS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION)**
6. **INDICATION OF SUPPORT TO SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS, INCLUDING SMALL PROJECTS WITHIN SMALL PROJECT FUNDS**
7. **IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS**
8. **USE OF UNIT COSTS, LUMP SUMS, FLAT RATES AND FINANCING NOT LINKED TO COSTS.**

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments (published in OJ L 231, 30.6.2021)

COOPERATION PROGRAMME INTERREG VI-A GREECE-ITALY 2021-2027

CCI	
Title	Interreg VI-A Greece-Italy
Version	V1.2
First year	2021
Last year	2027
Eligible from	
Eligible until	
Commission decision number	
Commission decision date	
Programme amending decision number	
Programme amending decision entry into force date	
NUTS regions covered by the programme	EL541 Άρτα, Πρέβεζα (Arta/Arta, Preveza) EL542 Θεσπρωτία (Thesprotia) EL543 Ιωάννινα (Ioannina) EL621 Ζάκυνθος (Zakynthos) EL622 Κέρκυρα (Kerkyra) EL623 Ιθάκη, Κεφαλονιά (Ithaki Kefallinia, Kefallonia) EL624 Λευκάδα (Lefkada) EL631 Αιτωλοακαρνανία (Aitolioakarnania) EL632 Αχαΐα (Achaia) EL633 Ηλεία (Ileia) ITF43 Taranto ITF44 Brindisi ITF45 Lecce ITF46 Foggia ITF47 Bari ITF48 Barletta-Andria-Trani ITF52 Matera ITF61 Cosenza ITF62 Crotone ITF63 Catanzaro ITF65 Reggio di Calabria
Strand	A

1. Joint Programme Strategy: Main Development Challenges and Policy Responses

1.1. Programme Area (not required for Interreg C programmes)

Reference: point (a) of Article 17(3), point (a) of Article 17(9)

Text field [2000]

Cross-border cooperation between Greece and Italy has been consolidating over the years. The Programme Area has been enlarged with the addition of two (2) new Italian regions, namely Basilicata and Calabria Regions, covering eleven (11) regional units from Greece and eleven (11) provinces from Italy. More specifically, it embraces:

- Three (3) Greek Regions:
 - The Region of Western Greece, including the following Regional Units: Aitoloakarnania, Achaia, Ileia;
 - The Region of Ionian Islands, including the following Regional Units: Zakynthos, Kerkyra, Kefalonia, Lefkada; and
 - The Region of Epirus, including the following Regional Units: Arta, Thesprotia, Ioannina, Preveza;
- Three (3) Italian Regions:
 - The Region of Puglia, including the following Provinces: Foggia, Bari, Brindisi, Lecce, Barletta-Andria-Trani (BAT) and Taranto;
 - The newly added Region of Basilicata, including the Province of Matera; and
 - The newly added Region of Calabria, including the following Provinces: Catanzaro, Cosenza, Crotona and Reggio Calabria.

The Programme area is located in the southern part of the European Union and covers a territory of 59.950,83 km² with a total population of 7,1 million inhabitants.

The Programme area is clearly maritime, but we can note also a relevant presence of rural areas in Puglia (Murgia, Capitanata and rural area of Salento), in Matera (where the coastline is only 35 km out of the total area of 3.479 km²). Calabria is a very mountainous area like Epirus and some part of Region of Western Greece (Aitoloakarnania). Calabria and Epirus are also linked by historical migration of the Greek-Epirotes in Calabria (Cosenza).

In the Programme area there are islands: major islands in Greece (Kerkyra, Lefkada, Kefalonia, Zakynthos), as well as small islands in Greece and Italy (Tremiti in Puglia, Dino and Cirella in Calabria - Province of Cosenza).

1.2. Joint Programme Strategy: Summary of Main Joint Challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities, as well as inequalities, Joint Investment Needs and Complimentary and Synergies with other Funding Programmes and Instruments, Lessons-learnt from Past Experience and Macro-regional Strategies and Sea-basin Strategies where the Programme Area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies

Reference: point (b) of Article 17(3), point (b) of Article 17(9)

Text field [50 000]

1.2.1. Summary of the Main Joint Challenges

Demography

As mentioned above, the Programme area has a total population of 7,1 million inhabitants that is further specified per Region and Regional Unit / Province in the following table.

TABLE 1. Population of the Programme Area

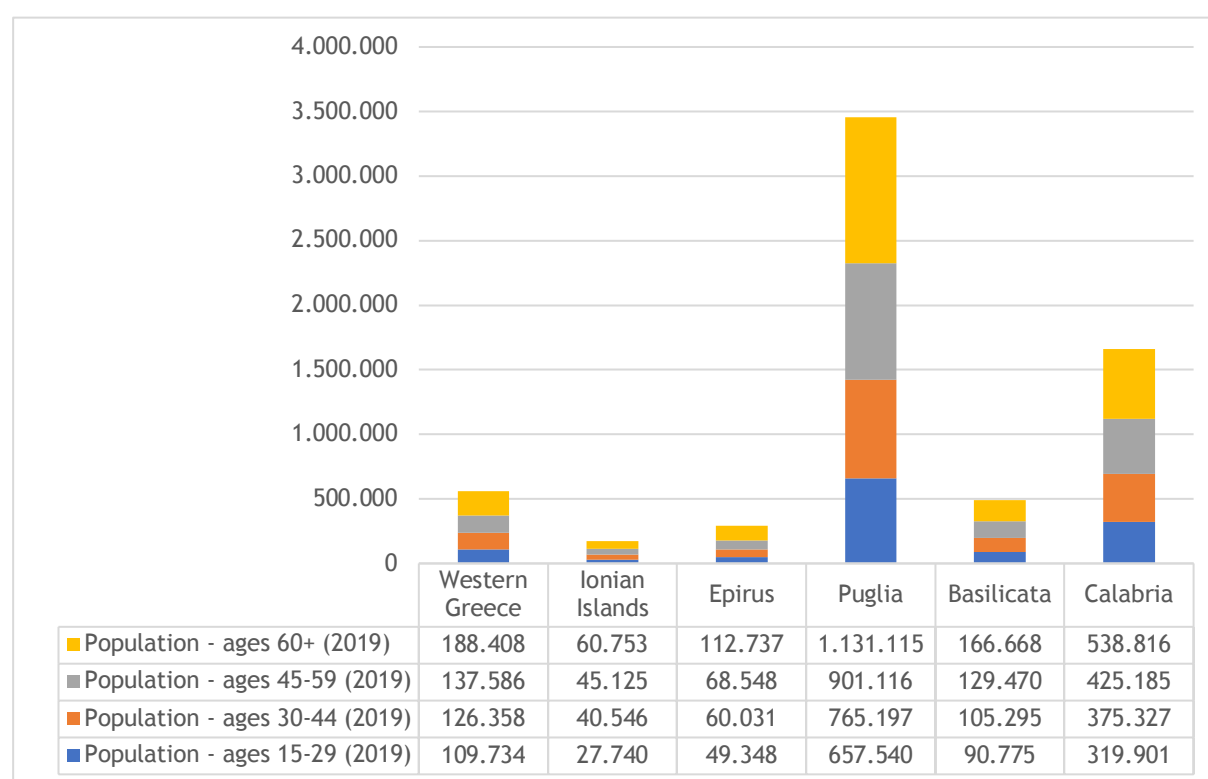
REGION	REGIONAL UNIT / PROVINCE	POPULATION	TOTAL POPULATION PER REGION
Western Greece	Aitoloakarnania	210.802	679.796
	Achaia	309.694	
	Ileia	159.300	
Ionian Islands	Zakynthos	40.759	204.624
	Kerkyra	104.371	
	Kefalonia	35.801	
	Lefkada	23.693	
Epirus	Arta	67.877	336.856
	Thesprotia	43.587	
	Ioannina	167.901	
	Preveza	57.491	
Puglia	Foggia	606.904	3.953.305
	Bari	1.230.205	
	Brindisi	385.235	
	Lecce	782.165	
	Barletta-Andria-Trani (BAT)	384.801	
	Taranto	563.995	
Basilicata	Matera	194.853	194.853

REGION	REGIONAL UNIT / PROVINCE	POPULATION	TOTAL POPULATION PER REGION
Calabria	Catanzaro	349.344	1.739.395
	Cosenza	690.503	
	Crotone	168.581	
	Reggio Calabria	530.967	
TOTAL			7.108.829

Source: Greece - Census 2011, ELSTAT; Italy - Census 2019, ISTAT

The Programme area shows a high level of ageing population, as depicted in the following chart.

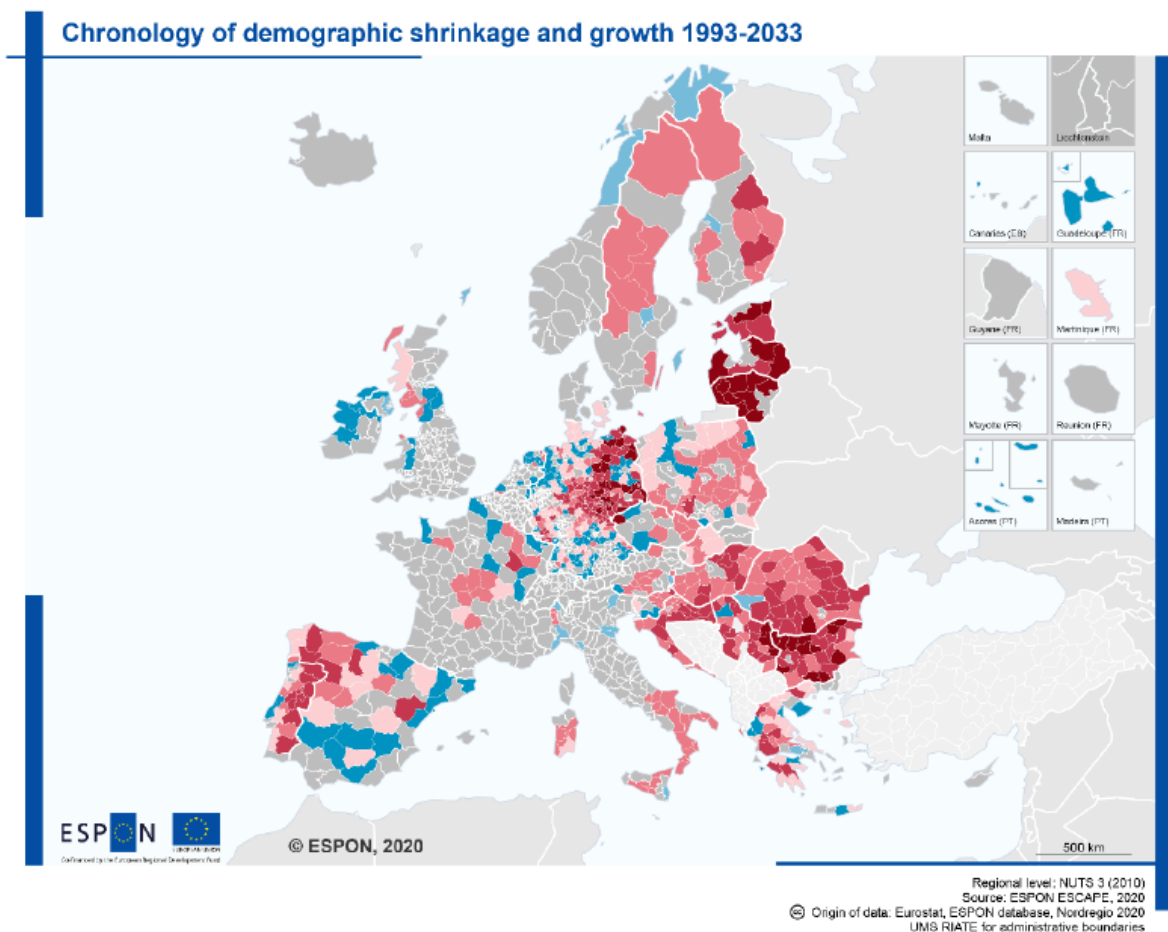
CHART 1. Population by Age Group in the Programme Area



Source: EUROSTAT

Moreover, as highlighted by ESPON², rural shrinking is widespread and long lasting in the macro-region of South Europe. This is evident in the vast majority of the Italian regions of the Programme area (with the exception of the Provinces of Bari and Barletta-Andria-Trani), as well as in the Greek Regions of Western Greece (Regional Units of Aitolokarnania, Ileia, Achaia), Epirus (Regional Units of Preveza and Arta) and Ionian Islands (Regional Unit of Kerkyra), as depicted in the following chart.

CHART 2. Demographic Changes in Rural Regions of the Programme Area



Rural regions with population decrease in the period 1993-2033

- Experiencing population decrease in both periods 1993-2013 and 2013-2033 at severe annual average shrinking rates (<-1)
- Experiencing population decrease in both periods 1993-2013 and 2013-2033 at moderate annual average shrinking rate (-1 to -0,5)
- Experiencing population decrease in both periods 1993-2013 and 2013-2033 at modest shrinking rate (>-0,5)
- Experiencing population decrease only in the period 2013-2033 at modest shrinking rates (>-0,5)

Rural regions with population increase in the period 1993-2033

- Experiencing population decrease in the period 1993-2013
- Experiencing population decrease in the period 2013-2033

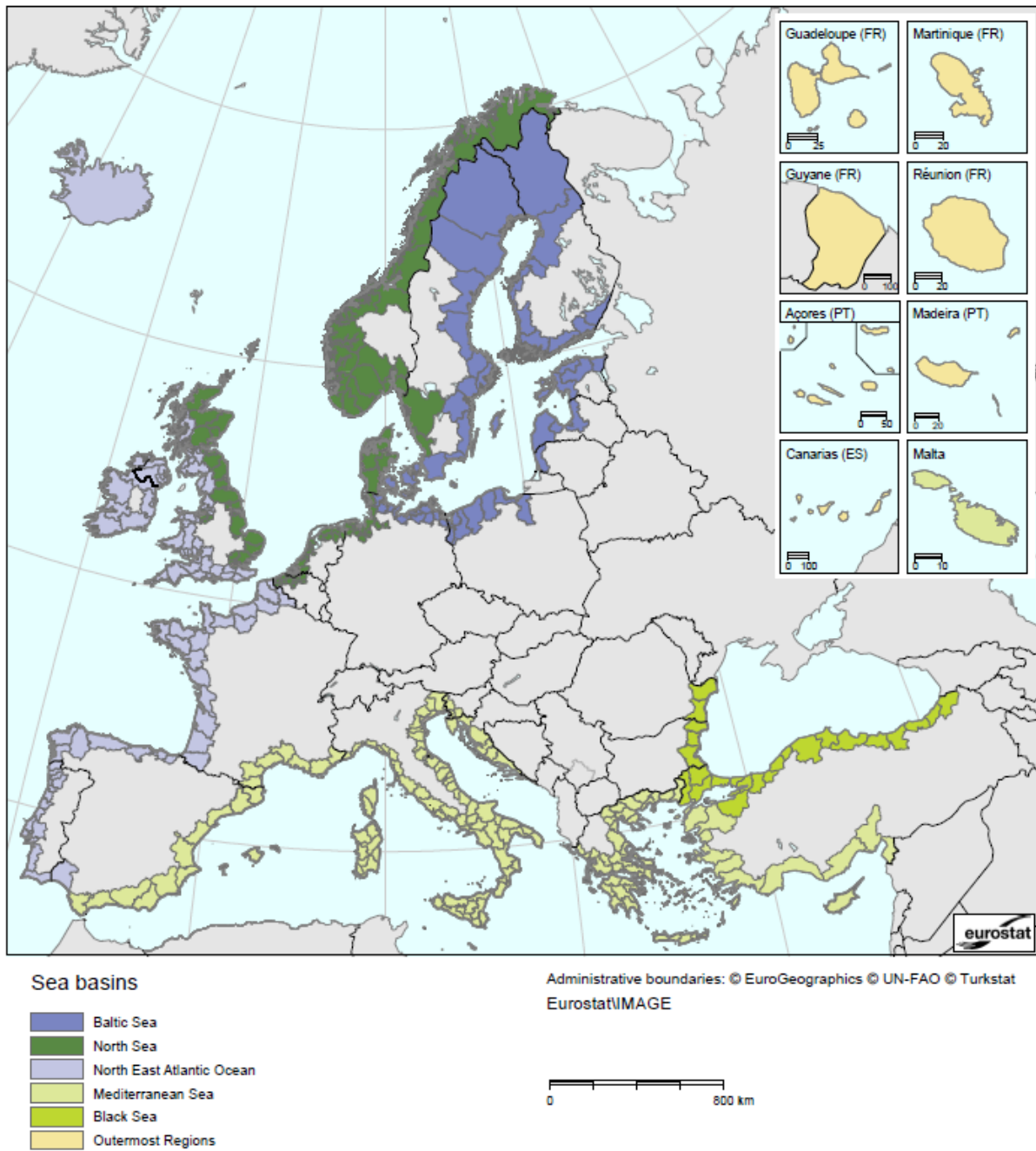
- No data
- Other regions

Source: ESPON, ESCAPE 2020

² ESPON (2020): “ESCAPE - European Shrinking Rural areas: Challenges, actions and perspectives for Territorial Governance” - Final Report

The Programme area is clearly maritime, as mentioned above and evident from the following chart.

CHART 3. Coastal Regions of the Programme Area

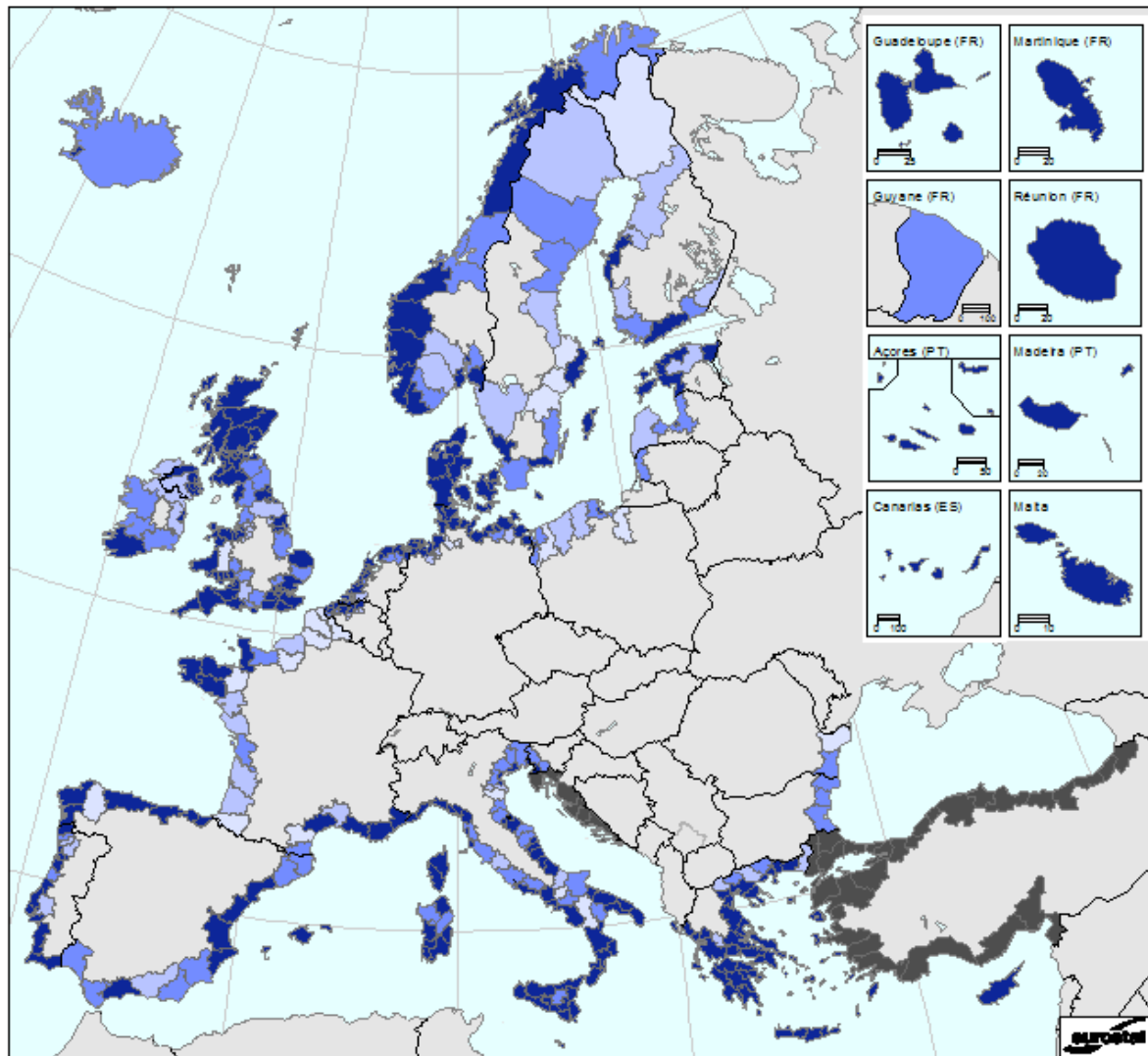


Based on NUTS 2010 and population grid 2006

Source: EUROSTAT

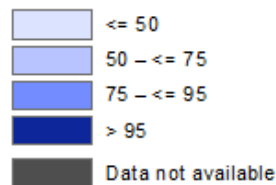
Moreover, the vast majority (>95%) of the population of the Programme area live in coastal regions, as clearly shown in the following chart.

CHART 4. Share of Population in Coastal Regions of the Programme Area Living within 50 km from the Coastline



Percentage of total NUTS3 region population

%



Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Eurostat/IMAGE



Based on NUTS 2010 and population grid 2006

Source: Eurostat

In terms of education, the table below shows that tertiary education attainment is higher in the age group 30-34. Data also reveals regional disparities, Epirus being the region with the highest rates and Calabria the one with the lowest.

TABLE 2. Tertiary Education in the Programme Area

REGION	Tertiary education attainment - ages 25-64 (2019)	Tertiary education attainment - ages 30-34 (2019)
Western Greece	20,6%	32,8%
Ionian Islands	24,6%	42,5%
Epirus	31,8%	46,7%
Puglia	15,2%	20,0%
Basilicata	16,9%	27,4%
Calabria	15,9%	19,9%

Source: EUROSTAT

Economic Development

The Programme area faces challenges linked to economic disparities and inequalities. The following table proves that GDP per capita in all regions lag behind the EU average. GDP per capita growth is close to the EU average, with the exception of two Greek regions reaching almost half of the EU average (Western Greece and Epirus).

TABLE 3. Economic Data of the Programme Area

REGION	GDP per capita (PPS)	EU Average	GDP per capita growth (PPS)	EU Average
Western Greece	15.000	31.200	1,56	3,21
Ionian Islands	19.700		2,86	
Epirus	14.600		1,60	
Puglia	19.400		3,05	
Basilicata	23.500		2,97	
Calabria	17.500		2,59	

Source: Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021

Moreover, the areas show different dynamics to a smaller or bigger extent for certain sectors. In Calabria the agricultural sector has more added value in economic terms when compared to the other Italian regions. The same also applies to Epirus. Agricultural sector (including first and secondary processing activities of such products) shows also dynamic in Basilicata. In Basilicata (including the province of Matera) there are some oil extraction areas; the petroleum refining is made in the industrial area of Taranto and Brindisi. The tertiary sector (services) is the one contributing higher in the Puglia region followed by industry (also agro-food industry) and building sector. Western Greece and Puglia regions are both characterised by strong trends of deindustrialisation. In terms of tourism, the Ionian Islands show a great dynamic.

Employment

Services is the major sector of employment across all regions in the Programme area as depicted in the following table. Employment in the other economic sectors varies significantly among the regions and deviate from the EU average, especially in the primary and secondary economic sectors (with the exception of two Italian regions, Puglia and Basilicata, which are close to the EU average in terms of employment in manufacturing).

TABLE 4. Employment in the Programme Area

REGION	Share of employment in:				
	Agriculture & Mining	Manufacturing	Utilities & Construction	Services	Public administration
Western Greece	26,3	7,1	6,2	51,2	9,3
Ionian Islands	9,6	3,2	6,7	74,5	6,0
Epirus	14,2	6,1	6,2	64,3	9,3
Puglia	8,7	13,8	8,3	62,2	7,0
Basilicata	9,1	15,1	10,2	58,5	7,1
Calabria	12,5	5,7	8,9	65,1	7,8
EU AVERAGE	4,6	16,4	8,2	62,9	7,1

Source: Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021

In September 2020, Italy ranked third in the EU classification of member states with the highest unemployment rate. The first country in the ranking was Greece, where more than 15% of all potential employees did not have any occupation. The overall unemployment rate is quite high in the Programme area (with the exception of Basilicata) as shown in the following table. The table also shows that the highest employment rates in the age group 20-64 are in Ionian Islands and Epirus while the lowest in Basilicata and Puglia.

TABLE 5. Unemployment in the Programme Area

REGION	Unemployment rate - Overall	Unemployment rate - ages 15+ (2019)	Employment rate - ages 20-64 (2019)
Western Greece	18,8%	24,7%	53,2%
Ionian Islands	16,4%	12,0%	64,7%
Epirus	19,5%	17,7%	60,8%
Puglia	15,1%	17,8%	50,2%
Basilicata	9,1%	10,9%	54,8%
Calabria	16,5%	25,5%	45,3%

Source: EUROSTAT / Overall Unemployment Rate: Greece - ELSTAT Q1 2021; Italy - STATISTA Q4 2020

The number of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) remains worrying: in Calabria NEETs account for 35,1%, while in Matera 26% and in Puglia 10% (EURES, 2019 data). Greece has also the second highest percentage of NEETs at EU level followed by Italy. This signals the need to change the vulnerable status of this group that consist of young people aged 15-29 and to better address their problematic access to the labour market.

Innovation

According to the Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021, the Programme area includes regions that are considered mostly moderate innovators. The majority of them have improved their innovation performance over time. The table below depicts the change of the Regional Innovation Index (RII) in the period 2014-2021, as well as the relative strengths and weaknesses of each region compared to the EU.

The Programme takes into account Innovation and research as an important sector as set out in the Communication on “A new ERA for Research and Innovation³”, which marked an important step in the realisation of the European Research Area. The aim of ERA and its importance today is to build excellence, cross-border cooperation between researchers, critical mass in key strategic areas, researchers’ mobility and overall an open single market for research and innovation. In addition, on 26 November 2021, the Competitiveness Council, on a proposal from the Commission, adopted a Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe ((EU) 2021/2122) that includes priority areas for joint action in support of ERA, as part of a common ERA policy agenda between the EU and Member States.

TABLE 6. Innovation in the Programme Area

REGION	PERFORMANCE	RII 2021 VS 2014	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Western Greece	Moderate Innovator (-)	+23.9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative SMEs collaborating • Product innovators • R&D expenditures public sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment knowledge-intensive activities • Design applications • Employed ICT specialists
Ionian Islands	Emerging Innovator (+/)	+35.6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-R&D innovation expenditures • Innovative SMEs collaborating • Sales of innovative products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design applications • Trademark applications • Employed ICT specialists
Epirus	Moderate Innovator (-)	+36%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D expenditures public sector • International scientific co-publications • Innovative SMEs collaborating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learning • R&D expenditures business sector • Employed ICT specialists
Puglia	Moderate Innovator (-)	+21.6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-R&D innovation expenditures • Sales of innovative products • Most-cited scientific publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D expenditures business sector • Tertiary education • Employed ICT specialists
Basilicata	Moderate Innovator (-)	+30.1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-R&D innovation expenditures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D expenditures business sector

³ COM/2020/628 adopted on 30.09.2020

REGION	PERFORMANCE	RII 2021 VS 2014	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business process innovators • Product innovators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trademark applications • Employed ICT specialists
Calabria	Emerging Innovator (+)	+20.1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business process innovators • Sales of innovative products • Non-R&D innovation expenditures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D expenditures business sector • Tertiary education • Employment knowledge-intensive activities

Source: Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021

It is evident from the above table that the Greek and Italian regions of the Programme area share common features in terms of both relative strengths (e.g., Non-R&D innovation expenditures) and weaknesses (e.g., R&D expenditures business sector). Thus, the challenge is to build upon and further exploit such strengths, while in parallel elaborating on weaknesses so as to reverse them.

Furthermore, RIS3 strategies should be taken into account, especially in the sectors whereby regions show a great potential, as the following table suggests.

TABLE 7. Regional Innovation Strategies in the Programme Area

REGION	RIS3 2014-2020
Western Greece	HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT; and • Energy applications. VERTICAL PRIORITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture - fisheries - food; • Tourism - culture; and • Materials - microelectronics.
Ionian Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary sector - agro-food & gastronomy; • Marine economy - fishery - aquaculture & marine tourism; and • Experience industry: tourism, culture and creative economy
Epirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary sector - food processing; • Experience industry (tourism - culture - creative industry); • Health & wellness; and • Academic Institutions, ICT and youth entrepreneurship.
Puglia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Manufacturing (smart factory, aerospace, mechatronics); • Health and the environment (green and blue economy, food processing, sustainable construction, cultural heritage and tourism); and • Digital, creative and inclusive communities (cultural and creative industry, services, social innovation, design, non-R&D innovation).
Basilicata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive; • Aerospace; • Energy; and

REGION	RIS3 2014-2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Green Economy.
<p>Calabria</p>	<p>VALORISATION OF THE PRODUCTION BASE that supports innovation and extra-regional projection of already developed areas / systems or with emerging potentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agribusiness; ● Green building; ● Tourism and Culture; ● Logistics; and ● ICT and innovative Tertiary sector. <p>QUALITY OF LIFE that responds to the main social challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environment and natural risks; and ● Life sciences.

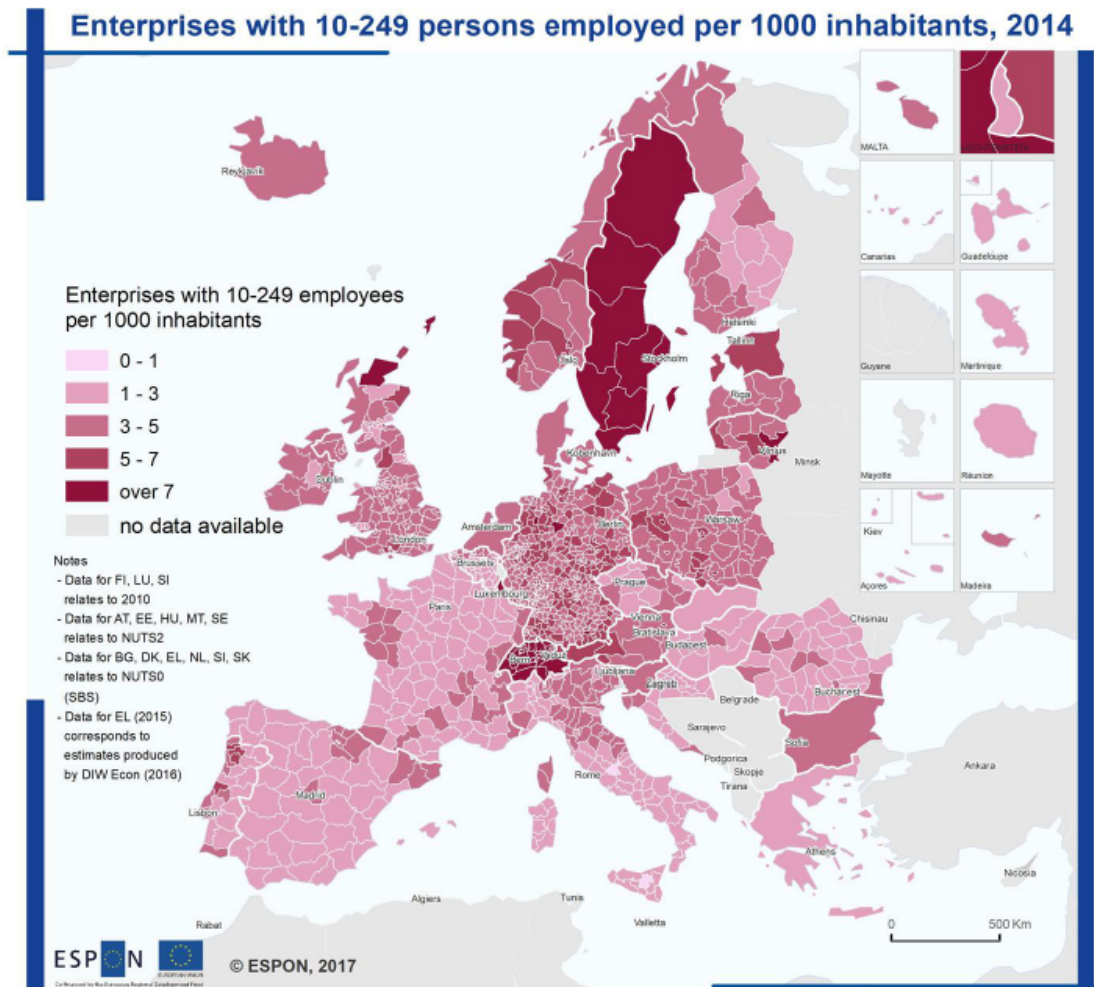
Source: EC Regional Innovation Monitor Plus

Moreover, there is a considerable number of universities and research centres in the Programme area. The Region of Western Greece hosts a plethora of public academic and research organisations: University of Patras, Technological Educational Institute of Western Greece, Hellenic Open University, Patras Science Park, Patras Innovation Hub, Foundation for Research and Technology and Industrial Systems Institute. In the Region of Epirus, there are the University of Ioannina and the Technological Educational Institute of Epirus, which coupled with the Technological Research Centre of Epirus and Ionian Islands form the major components of the regional innovation and knowledge production web. Puglia Region hosts several academic and research centres in Bari, Lecce, and Foggia: Polytechnic University of Bari, University of Salento, University of Foggia and LUM Jean-Monnet (Libera Università Mediterranea). Basilicata Region hosts the University of Basilicata, while in Calabria Region there are the University of Calabria and the Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria.

Entrepreneurship

The vast majority of enterprises in the Programme area is SMEs, according to the EC definition, as the following chart demonstrates.

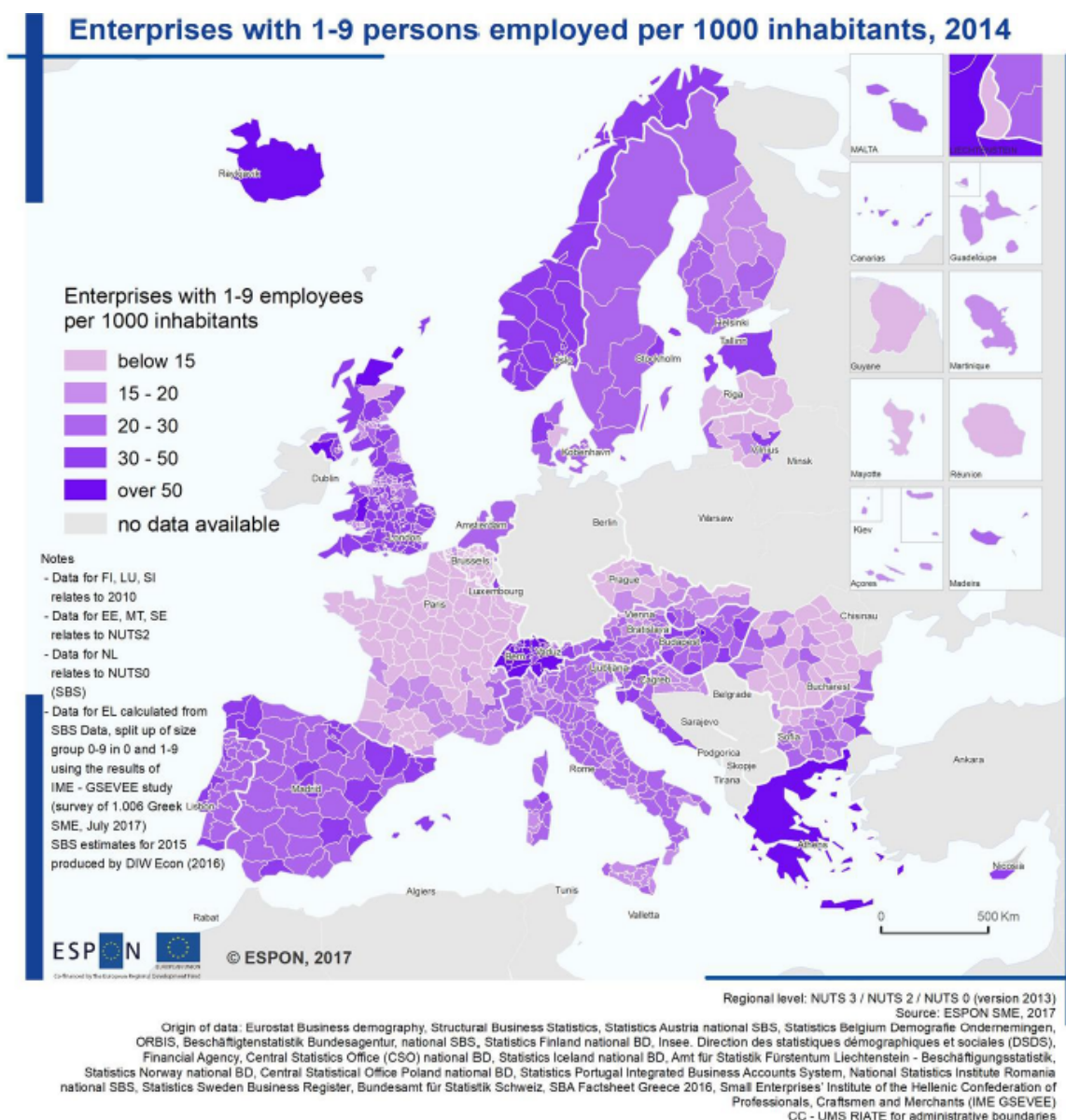
CHART 5. Number of SMEs per 1,000 Inhabitants



Source: ESPON, *Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in European Regions and Cities - Final Report (2018)*

There is also a considerable number of micro enterprises, especially in Greece, as shown in the following chart.

CHART 6. Number of Micro Enterprises per 1,000 Inhabitants



Source: ESPON, *Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in European Regions and Cities - Final Report (2018)*

Furthermore, the Programme area shows positive trends with regard to new enterprises (start-ups). Puglia is ranked among the 10 regions of Italy regarding the innovative start-ups and specifically 557. Accordingly, Calabria has 223 and Matera 29. At the same time, the enhancement of entrepreneurship is also of a strategic priority for all Greek regions. At national level start-ups are estimated to be around 2.000. Additionally, there are good results at Programme level regarding a number of previous projects dealing with start-ups and young entrepreneurship. Last but not least, there is a good level of enterprise birth rate in Puglia (7,7), Calabria (7,5), Basilicata (6,6), and sufficient in Greece (4,5).

Local and regional governance practices may have a significant impact on the performance and development of SMEs. Thus, the joint challenge in the Programme area is to support at cross-border level the growth, competitiveness and innovation potential of SMEs/MSMEs which consist the backbone of local economies, by promoting entrepreneurship training/skills and developing a culture of entrepreneurship and risk-taking as well as in developing effective networks and partnerships among business and with universities, development agencies, and knowledge organisations, etc.

Competitiveness

The Programme area still faces a joint challenge in terms of competitiveness. According to the Regional Competitiveness Index (RCI) in 2019, all regions of the programme area are below the European Regional Competitiveness Index (EURCI): the figure of the Region of Epirus is at -1.29, followed by the Region of Ionian Islands with a figure of -1.33 and the last one being the region of Western Greece with -1.43. The Region of Puglia shows a relatively better performance with -1.00, Calabria -1.11 and Basilicata -0.91.

According to the RCI 2019 scorecards, the major areas whereby the regions of the Programme area underperform are:

- macroeconomic stability (Greece);
- institutions (Italy);
- labour market efficiency (both); and
- technological readiness (both).

Blue Economy

Blue Economy is an area of potential for the Programme Area due to the contribution of coastal tourism to national GVA, the high employment rate in marine transport and port activities. More specifically, according to the EU Blue Economy Report 2019:

- In Italy blue economy's share in national Gross Value Added (GVA) is 1,3%, very slightly above the share of 1,2% in 2009, although the total contribution has risen slightly to EUR 19,8 billion in 2017 (EUR 17.2 billion in 2009). The total contribution in Basilicata was EUR 170,8 million and in Calabria EUR 1.165,3 million. Coastal tourism made the greatest contribution to GVA in the blue economy in Italy (EUR 7,1 billion), followed by maritime transport (EUR 3,9 billion), marine living resources, port activities and shipbuilding/repair (between EUR 2,7 billion and EUR 2,1 billion). In terms of employment, in 2017 around half was in coastal tourism followed by employment in marine living resources, in marine transport, in port activities and in shipbuilding/repair.
- In Greece, the blue economy's share in national Gross Value Added (GVA) is higher at 3,8%, amounting to just over EUR 6 billion in 2017. It has substantially increased the share from 2,2% compared to 2009. Coastal tourism made the greatest contribution to GVA in the Blue Economy in Greece (EUR 3, 34 billion), followed by maritime transport (EUR 1,02 billion), port activities (EUR 767 million) and marine living resources (EUR 637 million). There has also been a substantial increase in employment in the blue economy in Greece in the period from 4% in 2009 to 9,4% in 2017.

Environment

The Programme Area shows potential due to the current status of natural habitats (Natura 2000) and biodiversity, while it faces challenges in other areas (resource efficiency, climate change vulnerability, waste management). More precisely:

NATURAL HABITATS & BIODIVERSITY

With regard to Natural Areas and Biodiversity, the Programme area shows a great potential. According to the European Environmental Agency (EEA), the natural and protected areas index in the Italy-Greece maritime border area is moderate to high, and particularly high in coastal areas.

There is a large number of Natura 2000 sites and nationally protected areas, including several “Ramsar” (wetland) sites and areas. However, there are no transboundary ecosystems among the Programme’s area regions.

In Western Greece there are 34 sites included in the National Catalogue of the Natura 2000 Network, in Epirus 31 and in the Ionian Islands 19 sites⁴. In Calabria there are 185 marine and terrestrial Natura 2000 sites covering 19% of the region⁵, while in Puglia there are 87 sites⁶.

In the Greek regions of the Programme area there are 3 Ramsar wetlands (Amvrakikos gulf in Epirus; Kotychi lagoons and Messolonghi lagoons in Western Greece)⁷. In the Italian regions of the Programme area there are 4 Ramsar wetlands (Le Cesine, Saline di Margherita di Savoia and Torre Guaceto in Puglia; Lago di San Giuliano in Basilicata)⁸.

Moreover, in Calabria region there are three National Parks (Pollino, Sila and Aspromonte National Parks) and Serre Regional Natural Park. These are protected areas that include unpolluted forests, rugged promontories and rolling hills, together with numerous animal and plant species.

The area includes classified water bodies that are affected by point and/or diffuse pressures in rivers and lakes, and that have less than good ecological status. According to the report on bathing water quality for the year 2019 as published by EEA, at national level in Italy 88,4% of the bathing water is classified as excellent while the respective Greek percentage is 95,7%.

The common challenge in the Programme area is thus to jointly protect natural habitats in order to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

According to an EC study on the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region⁹, the performance on environmental indicators is mixed, with some Greek and Italian regions performing better than other regions, however the performance is relatively low, if compared to the rest of the EU. Overall, Greece and Italy show a strong performance on inland waterbodies compared to the EU-wide performance. In comparison, the status of waterbodies in the sea is less sound. The share of coastal and transitional waterbodies with good ecological status is highest in Greece and lowest in Italy. Being considered a hotspot for biodiversity, the Programme area performs relatively well on biodiversity, but generally has high soil erosion rates; the highest being recorded in the Italian regions. This is due to prevalent climatic and topographical conditions. In terms of the marine environment, according to the same study, the SWOT analysis of the macro-region and thus the Programme area revealed that the coastal and marine biodiversity is under threat, while sea pollution is considered a weakness. The challenge in the Programme area is thus to reverse this situation by jointly intervening so as to reduce sea pollution and to protect coastal and marine biodiversity.

⁴ Regional Operational Programmes of Western Greece, Epirus, and Ionian Islands

⁵ LIFE Public Database, PAN LIFE - Natura 2000 Action Programme

⁶ Puglia.con, La Rete Natura 2000

⁷ Ramsar Sites Information Service, Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance in Greece

⁸ Ramsar Sites Information Service, Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance in Italy

⁹ EC DG REGIO - “Study on Macroregional Strategies and their links with Cohesion Policy” - Final Report, 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

The economic impact of climate-related extremes (including storms, drought, fires and floods) varies considerably in the Programme Area. In absolute terms, the highest economic losses in the period 1980-2019 were registered in Italy, as depicted by the following table.

TABLE 8. Impacts of Extreme Weather and Climate Related Events in the Programme Area (1980-2019)

COUNTRY	LOSSES (MILLION EUROS)	LOSS PER SQ. KM (EUROS)	LOSS PER CAPITA (EUROS)	INSURED LOSSES (MILLION EUROS)	INSURED LOSSES (%)	FATALITIES
Greece	7689	58232	728	148	2	2550
Italy	72534	240122	1254	3439	5	20735

Source: European Environment Agency

Apparently, there is a common challenge in the Programme area to develop and promote adaptation mechanisms and tools, in order to build resilience and ensure that the area is well prepared to manage the risks and adapt to the impacts of climate change, thus minimising economic losses and other harms.

WASTE MANAGEMENT & CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In terms of recycling and waste management the Programme area shows potential and at the same time faces challenges to a certain extent. Data at national level show that Greece puts a significantly higher share of waste into landfill (at 81%), while Italy at 21% (below EU average). Waste generation per capita in both countries is slightly above the EU average of 1.717 kg per capita¹⁰. In terms of recycling of municipal waste, Greece (at 17.2%) is substantially below the EU average of 45.8%, while Italy is in line, showing a disparity in this regard.

There is a great potential to exploit circular economy practices that may also build upon previous experience and enhanced cooperation between the regions. The role of the circular economy in the green economic transition is also highlighted by the Green Deal and the Territorial Agenda 2030:

- Italy's strategic positioning on circular economy (in line with the commitments adopted under the Paris Agreement, UN Agenda 2030, G7 Communiqué and within EU) is stipulated in the document entitled "*Towards a Model of Circular Economy for Italy - Overview and Strategic Framework*". The document calls for a 'change of paradigm' for Italy's economy, for a new way to consume, produce and do business. There is a need for a new industrial policy aimed at sustainability and innovation capable of increasing the competitiveness of products and manufacturing.
- The transition to a low-carbon, resource efficient and circular economy is of paramount importance for Greece to ensure environmental protection but also to boost green growth, to create new jobs, fight unemployment and support innovation in production, consumption, value chain of materials, sharing use methods and reduction, reuse and recycling of waste, in order to extend the life circle of products and optimise the resources, water and energy. The Greek government has set implementation of circular economy objectives in practice, through a Circular Transition Business Plan of Greece, as one of its key cross-sectoral priorities.

AIR POLLUTION

¹⁰ Commission Orientation Paper, May 2019

The potential climate change vulnerability of the regions is above the EU-median and Western Greece is the most affected region while Ionian Islands region belongs to the least vulnerable ones in the EU. In the case of Italy¹¹ emissions of total GHGs show a decrease by the year 2035. The case is the same at national level for Greece. In the case of Italy, the sectors that contribute more to the total emissions is transport and energy industries, while in Greece is mostly the transport sector.

In terms of air quality in the case of Greece for the year 2020¹², most of Ozone (O3) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) is concentrated in the metropolitan areas and in Western Greece and more particularly the city of Patras. In the case of Puglia, the region shows high concentration especially with regard to Ozone (O3). High-speed ferries and international shipping are responsible for significant air pollution too. The above is added to the fact that, as also mentioned above, air quality is mostly affected by the transport sector in both countries. Air pollution is also the cause of monuments deterioration and buildings degradation and it affects visibility in many areas interested by tourism, therefore joint actions on mitigating air pollution shall have benefits on health but also on economic activities related to tourism in the Programme area.

With regard to the impact of COVID-19 in air quality, concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) - a pollutant mainly emitted by road transport - have decreased in many European cities where lockdown measures have been implemented. In Puglia, as well as Calabria and Basilicata regions, all cities showed a considerable decrease between March - August when compared to the same months in 2019¹³. The city of Patras in Western Greece showed a considerable decrease only in the month of April that has increased again in the summer months.

Energy

The Programme area shows potential in certain aspects of this area and faces challenges in other. While the Greek regions seem to generate more than 80% of the energy from renewable sources in 2015 according to the JRC, Puglia only generates 29,5% (2016)¹⁴, while Calabria 79,2% of total energy production at regional level and Basilicata 96,3% (2019).

At national level, the share of renewables in gross inland energy consumption (2017 data) is below the EU average in Greece (12%), but higher than the EU average in Italy (18,1%). Biofuels and renewable wastes are the largest single source accounting for 48% in Italy and 41% in Greece. With regard to hydro-power, the situation is similar in Greece (12% of renewables) and Italy (11%). On the contrary, geothermal energy is 19% in Italy, but zero in Greece, while wind power is 16% of the total renewables in Greece, but just 5% in Italy. Solar energy is 21% of total renewables in Greece and just 8% in Italy. Italy has a higher share of renewable energy sources in transport than Greece, although both countries are below the EU average level of 7,6%. Renewable energy sources as a share of heating and cooling are above, or equal to, the EU average in both countries. The highest share is in Greece at 24,6%, with Italy at 18,9%.

Transport

Considering the maritime dimension of the Programme area that is divided by sea, transport and existing limitations in this regard consist of a joint challenge in territorial terms. This is

¹¹ www.eea.europa.eu

¹² <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/air/country-fact-sheets/2020-country-fact-sheets/greece>

¹³ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/air/air-quality-and-covid19>

¹⁴ <http://www.comunirinnovabili.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ComuniRinnovabili-Puglia.pdf>

added to the fact that most of the area is rural and there are also mountainous and isolated areas in the participating regions.

Maritime freight and passenger movements have been reduced in the programme area for the period 2012-2016. Between the years 2016-2018 there was a slight increase in domestic traffic with additional 242.297 passengers, whereas international traffic still reduced by 7.730 passengers.

With regard to the number of total goods that were loaded and unloaded between the years 2010-2016, considerable decrease has been noted in the regions of Puglia, at 30%, and Western Greece, at 11%. On the contrary, Epirus has seen an increase of 10% but with a low overall share in the Programme area and particularly with regard to the total goods loaded and unloaded.

Air transport of passenger in the Programme area has altogether increased between the years 2010-2019, mostly due to the Ionian Islands airports and to Puglia region. It is to be noted that there are no direct flights between Calabria region and Matera and Greek regions. In the case of Western Greece region there was a slight decrease between 2018 and 2019¹⁵.

In the frame of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bari Airport was ranked first among the medium-large airports of the area, by implementing a number of measures including: the use of personal protective equipment, thermal scanners at the entrance and exit of the terminal, separation of passenger flows, arrivals and departures, continuous sanitation, anti-droplet physical protections for front office positions, meetings of the Emergency Committee established by Aeroporti di Puglia¹⁶ proving thus its readiness and responsiveness to health crises.

The Programme area is divided by sea, and thus there are transport limitations that consist of a joint challenge in territorial terms. Additionally, railway accessibility varies strongly in the Programme area since the railway axis of Greece does not provide connections to the ports of Igoumenitsa and Patras, further hindering thus the multimodality potential.

Overall road infrastructure is in a good condition, added to the connectivity via Trans-European Axes with the existence of Egnatia highway and Ionia Odos.

Considering the maritime dimension of the Programme area, the cruise sector plays also an important role. This is linked to both economic as well as social and environments aspects. According to the available data and for the year of 2019¹⁷, the Regions of Western Greece and Epirus were mostly affected in a negative way. Still, in all cases no negative percentages were noted. In the case of Puglia¹⁸, for the year of 2019, the region is ranked 7th at national level. Its share to the total amount of passengers at national level was 6.3% accordingly.

HORIZONTAL ISSUES

Tourism

Tourism sector is key for the Programme area and is linked to economic, social and environmental aspects. The importance of the sector was also raised by the stakeholders during public consultations.

¹⁵ Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT)

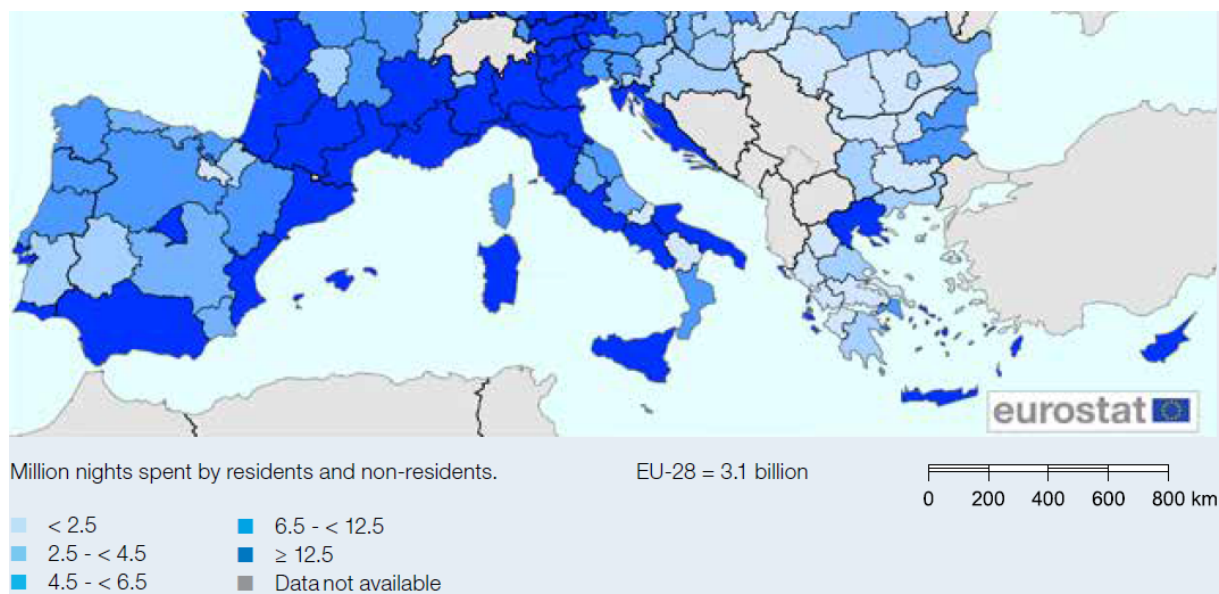
¹⁶ <http://www.aeroportidipuglia.it/>

¹⁷ Institute of the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (INSETE), October 2020

¹⁸ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/623583/cruise-industry-italy-passenger-traffic-by-region/>

As depicted in the following chart, tourism is geographically concentrated in the regions of Ionian Islands and Puglia.

CHART 7. Nights spent in accommodation establishments by NUTS 2 regions, 2015



Source: EUROSTAT

This is also validated by employment and economy indicators. On the basis of 2019 data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), employment rates in accommodation and food and beverages sector in Western Greece and Epirus are very low (8.5%-9% of the total employment, respectively), while in Ionian Islands 25%. In 2018, the contribution of the Western Greece region's tourism in the region's GDP was among the lowest at national level, at 3%, followed by the Region of Epirus with a percentage of 7%. On the contrary, tourism in the Region of Ionian Islands contributed to its GDP by 71%, the second highest at national level. Accordingly, in the regions of Basilicata and Calabria in 2019, the contribution was 3.4% and 4.1% respectively.

Arrivals and nights spent in total and by non-residents have improved significantly during 2012-2017, with the exception of Western Greece where in 2018 there were more (~214.000) arrivals from non-residents when compared to the residents¹⁹. The highest percentage in arrivals was recorded in Ionian Islands, 59% (mainly foreigners), and Epirus, 39% (residents and non-residents). Both are above the EU28 average (22%). Puglia region is close to the EU average with a percentage of 21%. For 2019, Calabria recorded 8.820.489 arrivals and an average of 5,08 nights, while Matera 730.434 arrivals nights and an average of 2,90 nights.

Tourism demand varies considerably throughout the year. Occupancy rates at accommodation establishments in coastal areas, are higher in the summer months than in any other period of the year. The seasonality problem persists in the Programme area.

Sustainable Tourism plays also a key role for all the regions of the Programme area. Greece's strategic tourism plan for the 2021-2030 period places the element of safety in the strategic planning together with sustainable growth and digital reform²⁰. Similarly, in Italy a Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017-2022²¹, launched in 2017, recognises the need to have a lasting and sustainable approach to Italian environmental and cultural heritage on the basis of: Sustainability, Innovation, and Accessibility. Thus, there is a clear common challenge in the

¹⁹ Institute of the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (INSETE), 2020

²⁰ Greece's 4th International Hospitality Forum held on 23.11.2020

²¹ turismo.beniculturali.it

Programme area to promote interventions that will contribute to achieving sustainable development goals in tourism.

Cultural and Creative Industries

The Programme area has huge potential in terms of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) at its disposal, according to the Italian and Greek public policies. The evidence of that is coming from the projects approved during the past programming period (19 projects with budget over 51 MEUR). It should be underlined that CCIs-related projects funded in the period 2014-2020 are closely interlinked; through their implementation the Programme created and supported several hubs in order to increase the impact in the labour market of the area. The connection between culture, creative industries and tourism is a fact in the eligible area. With over 22.000 enterprises (5,1% of the total in Italy) and over 57.000 employees (4,1% of the total in Italy) (ISTAT data - 2019) Puglia is considered a leader in South Europe in this sector. This is confirmed by the dynamism of Apulia Film Commission Foundation with four “Cineporto” (Bari, Lecce, Foggia and Taranto) where it is possible to match creativity, culture, artists and produce several films. The experience of the Apulia Film Commission was transferred also to Greece with the project CIAK that financed the creation of film offices in all Greek eligible regions (Ionian Islands, Epirus and Western Greece). Furthermore, in Puglia the creativity cluster is very active, where all the enterprises of the sector can have a dialogue; over 150 entities (including enterprises, cooperatives and NPOs) are associated to the cluster, all of them are operating in Puglia. We should add also that the cluster was very active as beneficiary during the past programming period by exchanging experiences and transferring knowledge at cross-border level.

The experience of Matera as European Capital of Culture 2019 should be also underlined; this great experience developed not only skills in order to manage cultural events but also provided clear evidence of the impacts of culture in the whole area. The average income in the Province of Matera increased by 2,10% in five years (2015-2019), while in the same period the bank deposits and average stock of the family increased by 32%, the number of the creativity industries by 8,1% and the rate of young entrepreneurs by 3% (approximately).

Moreover, in Calabria there are a lot of cultural realities. There are numerous directors and producers who have chosen Calabria for their sets. In Lamezia Terme (Catanzaro) every year in June the Trame festival comes to life, which has become an appointment for discussion, analysis and comparison on the issues of legality and law, while Castrovillari (CS), between May and June, hosts the Primavera contemporary dramaturgy festival dei Teatri that explores the new languages of the contemporary scene to make its voice heard, even from the deep South, in the process of renewal of the scenic language in Italy.

The quality of the relationship between Greece and Italy will be further improved by the enlargement of the eligible area (Province of Matera and the most part of the Calabria region), because there are several territories with the same tradition and Hellenic roots. The area of the Grecia Salentina and some areas close to Taranto in Puglia, the municipalities of Bernalda, Scanzano Jonico, Policoro, Rotondella e Nova Siri and the areas of the Metaponto and Marina di Pisticci in the Province of Matera, the Municipalities of Bova, Reggio Calabria, Cardeto, Motta San Giovanni, Montebello Jonico, Melito Porto Salvo, Bagaladi, San Lorenzo, Roccaforte del Greco, Roghudi, Condofuri, Bova Marina, Palizzi, Staiti Brancaleone and Samo have clear Hellenic roots. It should be also noted that the Calabria Region has a specific regional law (n. 15/2003) which identifies these areas and recognises the specific Hellenic roots. Additionally, in Calabria there is a specific Local Action Group “Area Greca” where all the Majors of the area may have dialogue and create specific projects in order to valorise their roots. Furthermore, according to the database kept by the

Hellenic Ministry of Interior, since 2006 the competent interministerial committee has approved 43 town-twinning agreements between Greek and Italian municipalities.

The added value of CCIs in Interreg VI-A Greece-Italy is more than evident on the basis of the aforementioned facts. Additional facts that support this choice are summarised as follows:

- In the case of the Greek regions, Western Greece received the annual European Commission EDEN (European Destinations of Excellence) award in 2017. Patras' application in the 2016-2017 competition titled 'Cultural Tourism' ranked first among other Greek participants. The region also offers several information with regard to such experiences via its platform 'Western Greece Collection. Inspirations'.
- For the year of 2019²², all Greek regions saw an increase in visits to museums. In the same year Western Greece showed the highest number of visits to archaeological places, followed by the Ionian Islands (236.897 visits).
- As mentioned above, Puglia is a leader in South Europe in the CCIs sector. The initiative "Distretto Produttivo Puglia Creativa" (Puglia Creative Production District) plays a key role in promoting relevant actions and activities via the region's participation in several projects for the enhancement and reinforcement of the cultural dimension and CCIs interrelated to the tourism sector. This sector is also interlinked to innovation, entrepreneurship and finance promoting the enhanced sustainability and competitiveness of SMEs. In this framework, Puglia's regional strategy fosters the creativity chain, yields result and supports the Creative Europe framework.

Therefore, the cultural and creative industries represent a significant economic sector that should be horizontally addressed by the Programme strategy, priorities and specific objectives.

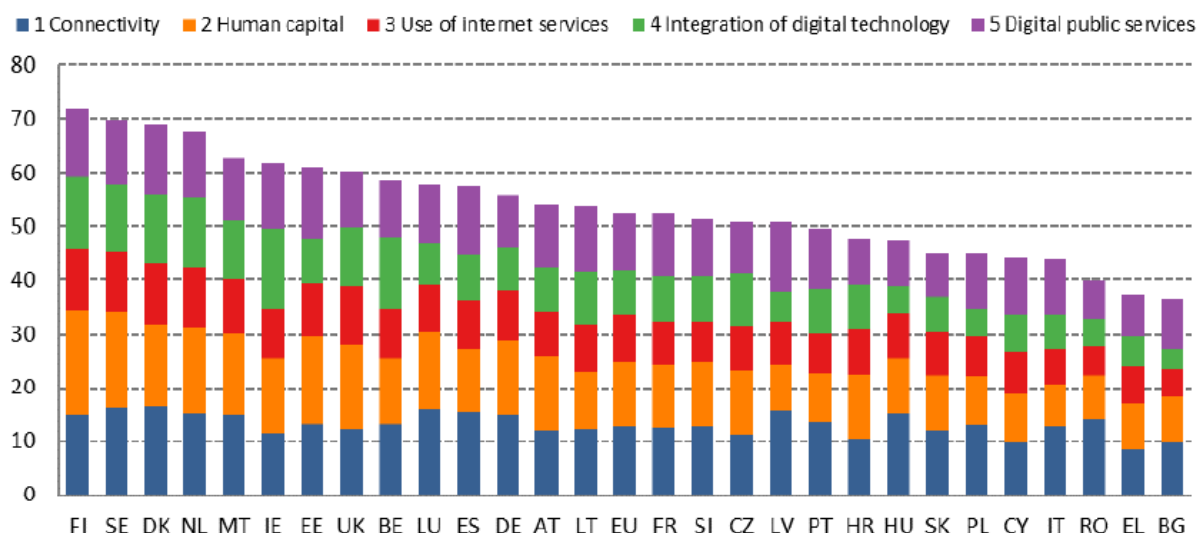
Digitalisation

The Programme area is still lagging behind in terms of the application of digital technologies (daily internet use, use of e-banking services, e-Government, digitalisation in business and commerce). The Italian regions seem to perform better showing high digital competence, but overall, the differences are slight.

According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) that summarises indicators on Europe's digital performance and tracks the progress of EU countries, in 2020 Italy and Greece have the lowest scores on the index.

CHART 8. Digital Economy and Society Index, 2020

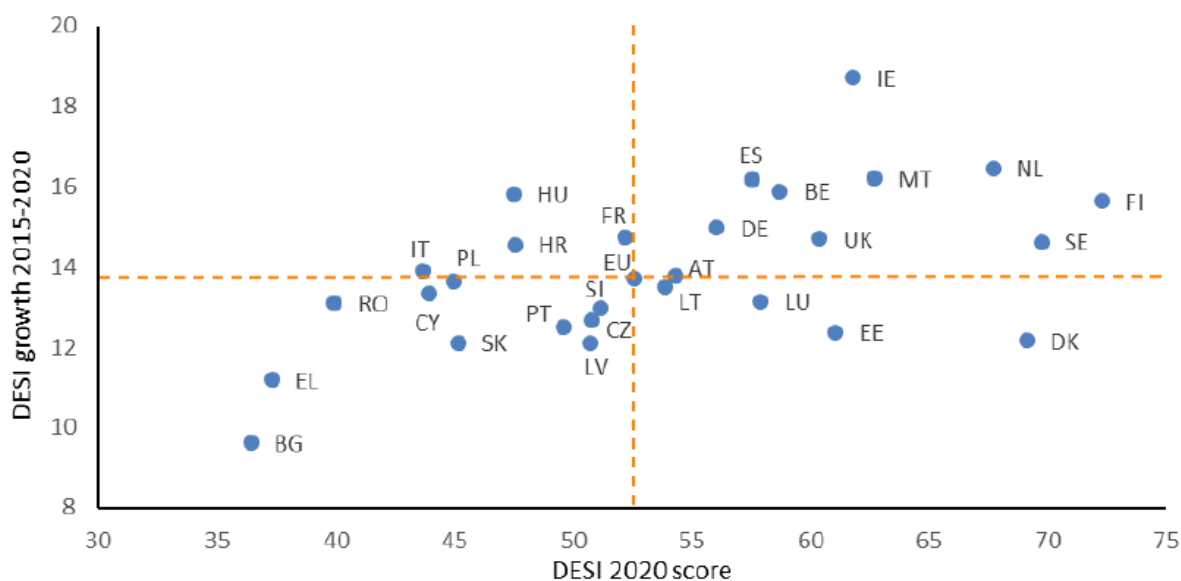
²² Institute of the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (INSETE), October 2020



Source: DESI 2020, European Commission

The following chart shows the progress of Member States as regards the overall level of digitalisation of the economy and society over the last 5 years (2015-2020). It is measured in terms of the progression of their DESI score over that period of time. Significantly, the majority of the countries, which are below the EU average in the level of digitalisation have not progressed much in the last five years. This is the case notably for Greece.

CHART 9. Digital Economy and Society Index - Member States' progress, 2015-2020



Source: DESI 2020, European Commission

At regional level, the Italian regions seem to perform better showing high digital competence, but overall, the differences are slight.

Thus, there is a clear joint challenge in the Programme area for the deployment of digital technologies, services and applications across several sectors addressed by the Programme, with the aim to contribute to regional, national and EU ambitions, as those are summarised below:

- The Digital Strategy paper published by the EC in 2020 sets out how it intends to position Europe as a leader in the digital world with respect to data, specifically via key objectives relating to digital technologies over the next five years. The released

documents include the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence (AI), the European Strategy for Data and the Digital Strategy. The EU's Digital Strategy takes an ambitious approach toward digital technological development, as well as toward the ways in which technology will be used to meet climate-neutrality objectives.

- Greece developed the National Digital Policy 2016-2021, in order to support country's digital development. The national policy focuses in particular on seven areas of intervention with specific priorities corresponding to acknowledged gaps in the Greek public administration, the economy and society and form a coherent framework for ICT interventions which focus on producing results and optimising the use of available public resources.
- In the case of Italy, in line with the Action Plan 2019-2021²³, the Region of Puglia is designated as a Local Aggregator for Digitalisation aiming at supporting the local authorities in adopting a public system of digital identity that will have access to web portals and encourage its use among the citizens to access local and national digital public services. Additionally, Puglia Digital Agenda 2020²⁴ supports the commitment to ICT highlighted in the S3 (smart specialisation), defining the regional strategy to meet the objectives set in the Digital Agenda for Europe. The Digital Agenda focuses on two areas:
 - Investments in digital infrastructures, improving access to ICT and their quality, extending broadband access; and
 - Investments in digital growth, developing ICT, e-commerce, demand for ICT, and their application to e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health.

One of the main priorities for Calabria is the development of the region's digital agenda²⁵. Similarly, Basilicata's ROP places as priority the enhanced use and quality of ICT technologies and ICT applications (e-government, e-health and e-procurement)²⁶.

Migration

With regard to migration and refugee flows, there was a significant increase towards Europe since 2014/15, with Greece and Italy as main entry points by sea, thus consisting of a joint challenge also for the Programme area.

Between 2010 and 2016 about 4.150.000 (extra-EU28) first-time asylum requests were registered in EU MS²⁷. First-time asylum applicants in Greece and Italy accounted for 28% of the total EU-28 number in 2017 and for 20% in 2018.

In Greece the peak was reached in 2016, and in Italy it was in 2016 and the first half of 2017.

According to ESPRON²⁸, the regions of the Programme area are characterised as poorly attractive to migrants and refugees, as depicted in the following chart.

CHART 10. Map of Territorial Attractiveness

²³ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Italy-Action-Plan-2019-2021-English.pdf>

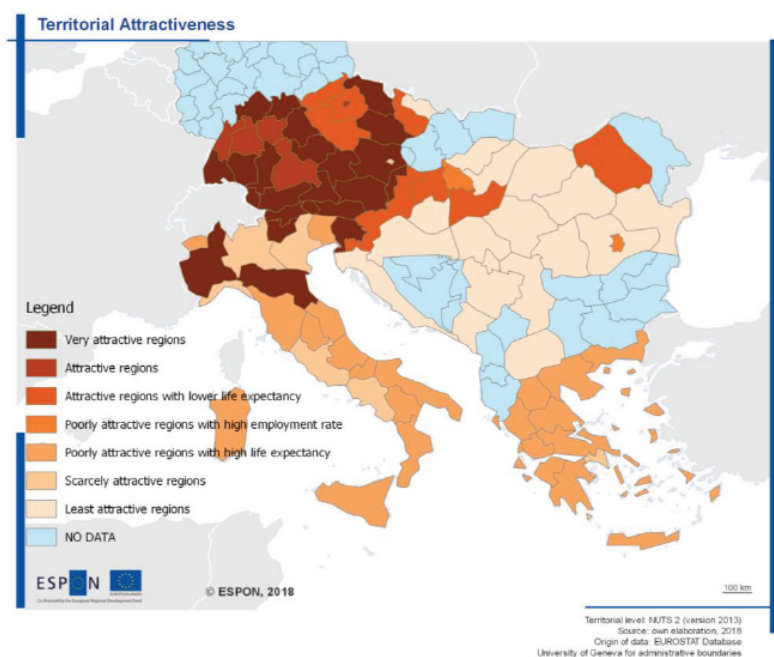
²⁴ www.innova.puglia.it

²⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2014-2020/italy/2014it16m2op006

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2014-2020/italy/2014it16rfop022

²⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics

²⁸ ESPON, Topic Paper "Migration and asylum seekers: ESPON evidences", August 2020



Source: ESPON

Health and Social Aspects

At national level, and according to the latest data of 2019²⁹, both countries are ranked among the ones with the highest level of people at risk of poverty.

Within the Greece-Italy maritime border area there are a large number of locations where access to core services of general interest (SGIs, e.g., hospitals, primary schools and train stations)³⁰ is generally poor, but with higher concentrations of services and relatively easy accessibility in some of the coastal areas of Puglia.

With regard to health, life expectancy at birth in the Greece-Italy participating areas is approximately at 83 years and all regions in the area are equal to, or above, the EU average of 81 years. The following table depicts the regional figures.

TABLE 9. Life Expectancy at Birth in the Programme Area

REGION	Life expectancy at birth (2018)
Western Greece	81,7
Ionian Islands	81,3
Epirus	83,6
Puglia	83,6
Basilicata	83,1
Calabria	83,0

Source: EUROSTAT

Health is also affected by air pollution and other forms of pollution (caused by shipping etc.).

The Region of Puglia is ranked among the ones with the highest regional poverty line at national level on the basis of available data from European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EUSILC) 2017.

²⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion

³⁰ territorial-review.espon.eu

The poverty rate in Basilicata and Calabria for 2019 was 16% and 29,2% accordingly.

In the case of the Greek regions and based on the latest data of ELSTAT on the risk of poverty for the year 2019, the regions of Ionian Islands and Epirus are ranked among the Greek regions with the lowest percentages (13,9% and 17,4%, respectively) when compared to the national percentage of 17,9%. On the contrary, the Region of Western Greece shows the second highest percentage at national level that is 23,8%.

Evidently the joint challenge in the Programme area is to reinforce the health sector and services at cross-border level, in order to ensure better access to such systems in the area.

Do No Significant Harm Principle

A Strategic Environmental Assessment - SEA screening has been carried out for the programme and conclusions have been drawn from it. The SEA takes into account the principle of Do No Significant Harm - DNSH (Article 9(4) of the CPR) in line with the objective of promoting sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU. The methodology consists of a two-step approach, (1) Screening and (2) substantive assessment. Step 1 corresponds to Part 1 of the checklist provided in the technical guidance, filtering the six environmental objectives to identify those that require a substantive assessment. The SEA conclusions are: “Consequently, the programme has been designed in order not to harm any of the above aforementioned environmental objectives; it is in line with the “do no significant harm” principle.

Step 2 corresponds to Part 2 of the checklist, providing a substantive DNSH assessment for environmental objectives and impact. Strategic Environmental Assessment - SEA- Study completed and submitted by MA to relevant authority. Under Public Consultation. The SEA conclusions state: “it is estimated that the implementation of the programme will create a strong positive synergy with the objectives of environmental policy. In order, however, the degree of this synergy to be maximized and in order to avoid the identified negative impacts, some measures are taken to prevent and control the environmental effects as analytically described in the report”.

Moreover, it is emphasized that during the OP implementation, **monitoring achievements on meeting the DNSH principle requirements and criteria will be performed.**

Biodiversity and Climate Change

The Programme reflects the objective of tackling the loss of biodiversity as set out in Recital (11) of CPR and contribute to mainstream biodiversity action in the Union policies and to the achievement of the its overall ambition. The contribution to biodiversity is not a target but an ambition and it refers to the whole EU budget. The Programme will contribute 13% of tis expenditure towards biodiversity

The Programme is over performing in expenditure contribution showing its clear commitment towards meeting environmental objectives (42%). The OP contribution to climate objectives is slightly lower than the ERDF target (25%), however, it should be noted that the OP contributes to climate objectives not only directly but also indirectly; governance actions under ISO1 target clearly climate change. **Additionally, it is expected that during the implementation of the program and approaching the closing, the overall expenditure supported for the achievement of the climate objectives set for the Union budget will be met by the participating Member States.**

COVID-19 Pandemic

The outbreak of the pandemic is a factor that has affected and is going to affect the Programme area. Italy was the first European country where it was emerged.

According to the data available, up to the month of April 2020³¹, Italy was the country among the other EU countries mentioned that was affected the most, showing a decrease in expenditure in all categories of travel activities. There was a decrease in international flights of 81% and a decrease of 78% with regard to the domestic flights. In terms of traffic in the cruise sector, there was a smaller decrease of 68%, while there was a higher decrease, of 83%, in movements by car. With regard to accommodation, there was a decrease in expenditure in hotels sectors by 84%, while the respective decrease in short-term rental accommodation of 64%. The trips are also expected to show a decrease of 74% in terms of expenditure.

In the case of Greece country's travel receipts in 2020 decreased by 76,5% compared to 2019 and reached 4.280 MEUR. The number of inbound visitors to Greece fell by 76,5% to 7.375 thousand against 31.348 thousand in 2019. The smallest decrease was recorded in arrivals from the Eurozone countries with the number of travellers and revenue dropping by 69%.

Other than that, the importance of digitalisation has become more evident during the pandemic since many sectors and projects have managed to continue their activities and implementation via the application of digital and smart tools. Thus, the joint challenge in the Programme area is to further support digital solutions and enhance digital skills.

Public procurement

Public procurement is an important tool for the implementation of public policies. In implementing the programme, the managing authority will promote the strategic use of public procurement to support strategic objectives (including professionalisation efforts to address institutional capacity gaps). Beneficiaries should be encouraged to pay more attention to quality and life-cycle cost criteria. Where possible, environmental (e.g. green public procurement criteria) and social aspects and incentives for innovation should be included in public procurement procedures.

Cooperation and Governance

While the Programme has many strong elements in this regard, including the long cooperation between the countries on the basis of the common challenges, adding to the successful governance among the programme bodies (as described in the next chapter), there are still challenges in relation to the overall governance, which are further hindered due to the division of the participating regions by sea and maritime dimension of the Programme area.

More specifically, these challenges refer to the administrative and legal differences issues, cultural differences (language) and the capacity building and skills (including digital skills) of public authorities. These were highlighted also during the consultations and the analysis that took place on the basis of the previous experience. Such challenges may be tackled via the reinforced linkages to the EUSAIR and via arrangements at governance level that will enable joint coordination and planning in areas of common interest (meetings, participation of the programme authorities in relevant events, etc.).

³¹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/survey-italian-consumer-sentiment-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>

1.2.2. Lessons Learnt

The cross-border cooperation between Greece and Italy has formally begun in 2000. The three predecessors of the Interreg VI-A Greece-Italy 2021-2027 offer valuable experience upon which the current programme will build in addressing both pertaining and emerging challenges and trends, as those mentioned above. These challenges include megatrends such as climate change and digitalisation, transformation towards an innovation-based economy, regional disparities and last but not least the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic. The design of Interreg VI-A Greece 2021-2027 embraces and addresses all these aspects.

In order to increase the impact of the Programme, emphasis is put on the capitalisation of project outputs and results, both from the current programming period as well as the previous one. The Programme will support capitalisation actions (e.g., via targeted calls) in order to activate synergies and complementarities with projects funded in the previous programming period and/or between projects of the period 2021-2027 and consequently multiply their territorial impact.

In the programming period 2014-2020, Interreg V-A Greece-Italy supported 60 projects that cooperated on innovation and competitiveness, environment and culture, as well as transport topics.

The decision to allocate more than 43% of the Programme budget to strategic projects (i.e., projects that undertake the implementation and attainment of planned goals, objectives and targets of multi-sectored programmes) proved to be quite challenging, taking into consideration the requirements and complexities of such projects. In the programming period 2021-2027 the balance between ordinary, strategic and targeted projects should be carefully assessed.

On the other hand, the responsiveness and adaptability of the Programme to the COVID19 outbreak (that heavily affected the Programme area) with a dedicated call for proposals as well as special provisions for ongoing projects, is a valuable asset that can be further exploited in extraordinary circumstances that may arise in the future.

Apart from that, delays in staffing Programme Bodies that occurred in the previous programming period are not expected in the current one, because the governance of the Programme remains intact. Provisions for enhancing this structure (detailed in Chapter 7) will further improve the efficiency and effectiveness in monitoring, coordination and administration of Interreg VI-A Greece-Italy 2021-2027. To the same direction, the use of the Management Information System (MIS) has improved application and monitoring process and is considered adequate and in place. Last but not least, the wide participation of the actors of the eligible area in the Programme's calls verifies the high degree of awareness of the Programme and the cooperation opportunities it offers.

1.2.3. Complementarity and Synergies (including Contribution to Macro-regional Strategies)

The Programme Area is covered by:

- (i) EU Macro-regional strategy: EUSAIR,
- (ii) Two Transnational Cooperation Programmes: ADRION³² and MED³³,

³² <https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/>

³³ <https://interreg-med.eu/>

- (iii) Two CBC Maritime Programmes: Italy-Croatia³⁴ and Greece-Italy³⁵ (and other land border Programmes in the area: Italy-Slovenia³⁶ and Slovenia-Croatia³⁷),
- (iv) Three IPA CBC Programmes with a maritime dimension: Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina - Montenegro³⁸, Greece - Albania³⁹ and Italy - Albania - Montenegro⁴⁰, and
- (v) A multilateral CBC Programme: ENI CBC Med⁴¹.

Complementarity and synergies with such funding programmes and instruments were taken into account during the consultation phase and in the process of programming future actions in the area in order to ensure alignment with the main axes and priorities on the basis of the existing needs and challenges of the Programme Area. As the Commission's Orientation Paper⁴² suggests, 2021-2027 Interreg Programmes around the Adriatic-Ionian area need to coordinate their actions at an early stage, including during the programming period. The recent (2019) reports on Blue Economy⁴³ and Emissions Gap⁴⁴ were also taken into account together with all the relevant results at national level as well as in relation to the Adriatic-Ionian area.

The macro-regional EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) was taken into consideration during consultations and on the basis of its main four pillars:

1. Blue growth,
2. Connecting the region,
3. Environmental quality,
4. Sustainable tourism⁴⁵,

along with the Communication COM(2014) concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region⁴⁶, EUSAIR Action Plan⁴⁷ as well as the EUSAIR Flagships 2021-2027 that were adopted on 12th Extraordinary EUSAIR Governing Board meeting on 10 June 2020⁴⁸, all in the frame of the area's needs and challenges.

The Programme aims at strengthening further its alignment with EUSAIR thematic priorities and its contribution to the flagship implementation, in coordination with the other ETC programmes of the Adriatic-Ionian area. EUSAIR priorities and flagships are incorporated horizontally in the Programme under each Priority and specific objective.

The level of contribution of the projects to EUSAIR flagships will be assessed upon selection criteria. The Programme shall promote actions and interventions that will enhance the level

³⁴ <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/>

³⁵ <https://greece-italy.eu/>

³⁶ <https://www.ita-slo.eu/en>

³⁷ <http://www.si-hr.eu/en2/>

³⁸ <https://www.interreg-hr-ba-me2014-2020.eu/>

³⁹ <https://greece-albania.eu/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/>

⁴¹ <http://www.enicbcmed.eu/>

⁴² 2021-2027: available the Adrion orientation paper - Greece Italy (greece-italy.eu)

⁴³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/676bbd4a-7dd9-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/>

⁴⁴ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30797/EGR2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁴⁵ <https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/about-eusair/>

⁴⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0357&from=EN>

⁴⁷ <https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/EUSAIR-SWD-2020.pdf>

⁴⁸ https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/EUSAIR-flagships-GB_F.pdf

of integration and connectivity of the cross-border area with key fields of the EUSAIR ensuring full complementarity with other Interreg programmes of the Adriatic and Ionian area. Inter-programme coordination modalities (for example, joint communication events by targeted theme/policy, capitalization activities across different programs, such as with ADRION, alignment in project selection criteria and guidance towards capitalisation and EUSAIR to project applicants) can be defined within informal coordination tools between JS/MAs, which will eventually be established at the EUSAIR level in 2021-2027.

The Programme will also consider participation in coordinated projects undertaken at the Mediterranean level, in particularly strategic cooperation areas (such as for example, sustainable tourism).

Equally important, the Programme has great potential to foster the implementation of national and regional programmes supported by the ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and EMFF by enabling stakeholders to address common challenges and needs across administrative borders.

Complementarity with other programmes funded by the Cohesion Policy is critical, particularly in terms of investment planning and preparation, which can be accomplished by regional and local levels and be supported by the GR-IT Programme.

Complementarities and synergies are recognised by the programme as very important, common sectors of investment with the mainstream operational programmes are being taken into account at the strategic planning and policy levels. Identification of specific actions with the potential to fulfil the requirements for complementarity and synergy will be addressed with particular implementation provisions.

Accordingly, the Programme will seek complementarities and synergies with the interventions of other sectoral or regional operational programmes within the eligible CBC area. Moreover, coordination actions will be planned, such as encouraging representatives of the MAs of the Regional Operational Programmes funded by the European Structural Funds of the territories involved to participate in the Programme Monitoring Committee.

Synergies will be explored when drafting calls for proposals / projects by relevant authorities with the EU framework-programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe under priority 1. Therefore, regarding Priority 1, Authorities will fully exploit the synergy potential of Horizon Europe with CPR funds and the complementarities between the proposed R&I investments and Horizon Europe. In particular, the key strategic orientations and expected impacts identified in the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan, as well as the new missions and partnerships, are an appropriate reference point for developing complementarities.

Authorities will seek, at the stage of calls, as much as possible synergies/ complementarities with the EMFAF programmes and other ESI Funds, especially for investments that could be covered through other instruments (e.g. the RRF -notably when it comes to measures related to e-health, telemedicine, e-care, ERDF/CF for infrastructural interventions/interventions on Natura 2000 areas and Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs), investments in the biodiversity monitoring and management of land/rural/coastal ecosystems, ESF+ for education, training and skills development, etc.). In this respect, there will be very clear complementarity and synergy with other funding instruments and EU ambitions' for investments in the Blue Economy under the EMFAF programmes, RRF, other ESIFs, EAFRD, with the CLLD approach under the CAP Strategic Plan, Horizon Europe and LIFE programme.

The Managing Authority will establish a horizontal structure to monitor all possible synergies with other OPs. Furthermore, the Managing Authority will participate in the Monitoring Committees as an observer, ensuring that potential synergies with other programmes will be identified and pursued.

The selection criteria for the implementation of the Programme will ensure the respect of the horizontal principles in the programmes (EU Cohesion Policy Legislation 2021 - 2027, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, gender equality, non-discrimination, sustainable development, accessibility) and will guide as appropriate all stages throughout the preparation, implementation, monitoring reporting and evaluation of programmes.

Moreover, selection criteria will ensure that the Programme and all its actions contribute to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including clear references to the targeted SDGs.

Due to the nature of the proposed indicative actions, SMEs shall mainly indirectly benefit from the programme support and no direct support is foreseen

With reference to the complementarities and synergies to be developed, where relevant, with the cohesion regional and national programmes, as well as with the interventions planned under the respective Recovery and Resilience National Plans (RRNP), the Greece Italy programme is committed to join any initiative carried out at the appropriate level (national/regional/other) by each participating country meant at implementing the coordination principle, also in view of the macro-regional and sea basin strategies. To this end, it will be the responsibility of the Managing Authority of the Greece Italy programme to liaise with the competent authorities with the support of each participating country.

Moreover, specific selection and evaluation criteria will ensure complementarity and synergies for every action at the call level, once all co-financed programmes are finalised and approved.

1.2.4. Joint Programme Strategy

The above territorial analysis was conducted on the basis of a desk and field research adding to the results that came out of the public consultations and the decisions of the Programming Committee (PC).

In the frame of the policy orientations of the new Cohesion Policy, the analysis indicates the persisting common challenges that the Programme area faces in several areas such as:

- economic disparities and inequalities,
- high unemployment rates,
- regions mostly considered as moderate innovators,
- the vast majority of enterprises is of micro and small size,
- competitiveness underperformance in the areas of macroeconomic stability, institutions, labour market efficiency and technological readiness,
- environmental, namely resource efficiency, climate change vulnerability, waste management

Common challenges further hinder the area's potential for smart economic transformation, green transition (including carbon footprint, circularity and biodiversity preservation) as well as social inclusion also due to the pandemic.

Regions in the programme area share a high potential opportunity in:

- Cultural and creative industries
- Tourism
- Blue economy

Challenges and opportunities identified in the territorial analysis, offer ground for cooperation to jointly address problems and reap mutual benefits. Policy objectives is are chosen as more relevant to provide for exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building, identification, dissemination and transfer of good practices into regional and local development within the European context.

It is important to enhance further the competitiveness and smart resilience of SMEs in key sectors of the Programme area. The importance of sustaining strong sectors like tourism and culture is likewise pertinent, also in the frame of ensuring an inclusive and more social GR-IT area, always taking into consideration the maritime dimension and sustainability of coastal zones.

Moreover, the strong maritime dimension expands its influence on key sectors such as security, trade, environment energy, or transport. Coastal areas and islands development are important links for cross-border regional cooperation. The new approach for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the EU and in the concept of the implementation of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy will be taken into account.

Cross-border cooperation is encouraged in order to build the resilience of the participating regions regarding the common challenges being among others economic transition, climate change, and digitalisation. At the same time, cooperation will enable the regions to eliminate their economic and social disparities identified by the territorial analysis.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria and monitoring mechanism will ensure that the risks and factors that may affect the ability of

the enterprises supported under the programme to achieve long-term results will be assessed and relevant measures will be taken to mitigate potential problems.

The Programme will bring together several types of actors including public authorities, higher education centres, business support organisations, agencies and the civil society. Efficiency of the expected results will also depend on the capacity of the involved stakeholders in the frame of digitalisation and the development of relevant skills.

Against this background, the Programme envisages enhanced cooperation in the GR-IT area in order to become:

- **more competitive and smarter**, including the continuous support to SMEs in key fields of the area to make them more competitive and enable their resilience and smart transition (digital skills, access to research and innovation);
- **greener and low carbon**, including climate change mitigation, circularity of activities, multimodality;
- **more social and inclusive**, including better employment conditions, reinforced health services and reinforced tourism and culture sectors;
- **enhanced in terms of governance for cooperation** in the Greece-Italy region through improved institutional infrastructure of public authorities and the ability to implement macro-regional and other related strategies.

1.3. Justification for the Selection of Policy Objectives and the Interreg Specific Objectives, corresponding Priorities, Specific Objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure

Reference: point (c) of Article 17(3)

TABLE 10. Justification of POs / ISO / PAs / SOs of INTERREG VI-A Greece-Italy 2021-2027

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
PO1 - A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity	SO1.1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies	P1 - Enhanced cooperation for a more competitive and smarter GR-IT area	<p><u>Justification for the selection of PO1</u></p> <p>The Programme area is characterised by relative strengths in terms of innovation: significant non-R&D innovation expenditures, collaboration between innovative SMEs, innovative products and innovation in business processes. Still there are persisting challenges linked to competitiveness and innovation, resulting to low scores in regional innovation and competitiveness indexes.</p> <p>The regions will also need to be more competitive in the frame of the ongoing transition to a more digitalised, greener and more resilient economy.</p> <p>Given the maritime dimension of the Programme area and the border between the two participating regions covered by sea, the specificities and relevant benefits coming out of this resource shall be taken into consideration as cross-cutting in all the priorities of the Programme.</p> <p>Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<p>in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO1.1</u></p> <p>The programme prioritises blue economy and the common RIS3 sectors. During consultations the importance of the maritime dimension, the need to promote innovation in blue economy, blue technologies at macro-regional level and the development of blue SMEs and skills were stressed (in line with the flagship 1 on blue technologies under EUSAIR, Pillar 1, as well as the flagship of the Pillar 2 “Smart and Green Ports”).</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting research and innovation capacities in economic sectors with great potential identified by RIS3 ● Enhancing cooperation and know-how transfer (tools, platforms) between enterprises, research centres and higher education) ● Fostering quadruple helix ties in the fields of marine technologies and blue bio-technologies for advancing innovation, business development and business adaptation in blue bio-economy whereby there is a great potential as well as in and around ports (contribution to EUSAIR pillars 1 and 2 as mentioned above). <p>The actions envisaged will also result to technology transfer thus strengthening the regional competitive system in the cross-border area in mainly the sector of blue economy. Given the weak innovation systems in the programme area, cooperation can create the critical mass for creating, adopting and diffusing innovation.</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			It must be highlighted that cross-innovation between sectors has proven to be successful in the current programming period; certain sectors in the cross-border area are mainly dominated by micro-enterprises, that often lack the means and capabilities to create innovative products of higher added value. Cooperation allowed the adoption of cross-innovation, resulting in better external market orientation and higher internationalisation of the sectors.
PO1 - A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity	SO1.2 - Reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies and governments	P1 - Enhanced cooperation for a more competitive and smarter GR-IT area	<p><u>Justification for the selection of PO1</u></p> <p>Same as above</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO1.2</u></p> <p>Digital transition is at the core of EU policies. According to the territorial analysis and the consultation process, common challenges for the area to be addressed in cross-border cooperation are in the areas of digital technologies application (as daily internet use, use of e-banking services, e-Government, digitalisation in business and commerce). The selected SO will contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR establishing knowledge innovative communities and IT platforms for sharing data and exchanging knowledge (Flagship 1.3 on Maritime and marine governance and services; Flagship 3.3 on MSP/ICZM).</p> <p>Digital and smart tools corresponding to common needs will be addressed by cooperation following the cross-border cooperation best practices of the 2014-2020 period where the programme has financed digital applications targeting common touristic products, thus fully exploiting the cooperation dimension.</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing the area's potential in the application of digital technologies in key sectors such as: creative industries and culture, cross-border actions on agro-food industry, environment, energy and logistics, and transport - including digital connectivity Enabling and promoting the collection of data and big data, including cross-border maritime data in order to achieve evidence-based policy-making (contribution to EUSAIR pillars 1 and pillar 3 as mentioned above). <p>Actions will clearly demonstrate that they provide solution to the identified problems of the cross-border area that are not covered by EMFF and EARDF. Added value: enhancing cross border maritime and marine governance and services, share data platforms and methodologies. Cross border cooperation to promote compatible digitalisation in selected economic sectors of the cross-border regions.</p>
PO1 - A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity	SO1.3 - Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs	P1 - Enhanced cooperation for a more competitive and smarter GR-IT area	<p><u>Justification for the selection of PO1</u> Same as above</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO1.3</u> The Programme area has a start-ups potential, especially in Puglia. Consultations confirmed that SMES growth and competitiveness is a strategic priority as well as the maritime dimension for all participating regions. Projects implemented during the period 2014-2020 show very good results with regard to young entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Actions will encourage the smooth cross-border growth of SMEs, their engagement in cross-border e-commerce and enhanced integration into cross-border blue economy activities, thus strengthen SMEs'</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<p>competitiveness. Stronger participation by SMEs in cross-border markets will create opportunities to scale up and enhance productivity, accelerate innovation and job creation.</p> <p>The selected SO will contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR flagship 1 (Blue Technologies) under Pillar 1, for advancing inter alia business development and business adaptation in blue bio-economy. This SO contributes also to flagship 4 (Air cultural routes) under Pillar 4, especially in terms of support to CCIs and SMEs for the creation of innovative diversified tourism products.</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the competitiveness of SMEs, start-ups and young entrepreneurs in key common RIS3 sectors at cross-border level • Supporting the development of SMEs networks and clusters in key common RIS3 sectors (contribution also to flagship 1 under EUSAIR Pillar 1,) • Promoting digital skills in the Programme area in order to increase the capacity of the SMEs focusing on blue economy (contribution also to flagship 2 under EUSAIR pillar 1). <p>Added value: networking and forging cooperation links to upgrade regional competitiveness of cross-border coastal areas; modernisation of SMEs through best practices, creating economies of scale to promote smart solutions, mainly in the sector of blue economy.</p>
PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero	SO2.4 - Promoting climate change adaptation and	P2 - Enhanced cooperation for a	<u>Justification for the selection of PO2</u>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation and risk prevention and management	disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account ecosystem-based approaches	greener and low carbon GR-IT area	<p>Concerning the environment, the Programme Area shows potential in certain areas (large number of Natura 2000 sites and nationally protected areas) while facing challenges in others (climate change vulnerability, waste management, disaster risks, soil degradation, or tourism). EU Green Deal and the Territorial Agenda 2030 call for responses to such challenges via more efficient use of the existing resources, the protection of the environment and biodiversity, disaster risk prevention and resilience, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy.</p> <p>Given the maritime dimension of the Programme area and the border between the two participating regions covered by sea, the specificities and relevant benefits coming out of this resource shall be taken into consideration as cross-cutting in all the priorities of the Programme. Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO2.4</u></p> <p>Some of the elements identified as key for the green transition of the Programme area, are climate change, in terms of risk preservation for certain areas (including coastal areas), as well as biodiversity. Climate change still remains an important challenge for the area, especially because of the increased level of risks due to extreme weather conditions.</p> <p>During the consultations it was highlighted the need to focus on coastal management related to water management but also to activities that take place on land (agriculture, households' waste, industries, etc.). The selected SO is expected to contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR and more specifically the flagships 1 (Development and</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<p>implementation of Adriatic-Ionian sub/regional oil spill contingency plan) and 2 (Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems).</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and cross-border management of climate-related risks • Enhancing protection and preservation measures in terms of nature and biodiversity • Increasing risk awareness, preparedness and forecasting methods. <p>Added value: identify select and develop common approaches to address common concerns, with a view to adopting mutually reinforcing measures. Common strategies and common solutions to management and awareness to interregional and coastal issues.</p>
PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy,	SO2.6 - Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy	P2 - Enhanced cooperation for a greener and low carbon GR-IT area	<p><u>Justification for the selection of PO2</u></p> <p>Same as above</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO2.6</u></p> <p>European Green Deal and Territorial Agenda 2030 highlight the ecological dimension of economic transformation and circular economy. The need to promote green and circular economy was also highlighted during consultations. This can be achieved via building upon and capitalising on previous experience. Waste of sources (agro-business,</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
climate change mitigation and adaptation and risk prevention and management			<p>industrial development etc.) is also linked to the coastal management and to water management.</p> <p>Considering the maritime dimension that is important for the Programme, the promotion of blue circular economy is highlighted in this regard in the frame of marine technologies and blue biotechnologies. The selected SO is expected to contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR and more specifically flagship 1 under Pillar 1 to promote actions for the development of novel eco-friendly end products that serve circular economy, as well as under Pillar 2 the flagship “The Adriatic-Ionian Multi-modal Corridors” that includes the “Smart/Green Ports” concept, in order to promote the role of ports as “hub” of circular economy.</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promoting jointly developed circular economy and blue circular economy policies and measures (contributing to flagship 2.1 Smart/Green Ports as mentioned above) ● Increasing resource efficiency and waste recycling across sectors at cross-border level (contributing to flagship 2.1 Smart/Green Ports as mentioned above) ● Promoting enhanced cross-border research and innovation capacities as well as the uptake of advanced technologies and blue technologies in circular economy on key sectors identified by RIS3 (contributing to flagship 1 under EUSAIR Pillar 1 as mentioned above) ● Strengthening the skills in the area of circular economy for SMEs in all key sectors (also contributing to flagship 3, DES_AIR under

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<p>Pillar 4, for continuous education for SMEs employees in the tourism sector).</p> <p>Value added: Address common interregional problems related to resource management, develop multi-dimensional methodological approaches particularly for the transition to Smart / green ports and circular economy. Results to highlight potential for further cooperation.</p>
<p>PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation and risk prevention and management</p>	<p>SO2.7 - Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution</p>	<p>P2 - Enhanced cooperation for a greener and low carbon GR-IT area</p>	<p><u>Justification for the selection of PO2</u></p> <p>Same as above</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO2.7</u></p> <p>Important strengths of the Programme area are nature and natural habitats (Natura 2000, Ramsar protected areas) and biodiversity. The previous successful experience was the establishment of environmental control system along with a toolkit of policy instruments, a web-based participatory GIS/SIT tool empowering citizen communication with relevant authorities, a set of shared indicators, decision support tools for operational mapping and monitoring coastal erosion risk. Other results from previous experience are the introduction of environmentally friendly sustainable technologies and process to manage plastic waste, the reduction of environmental impact of economic activities related to coastal areas' touristic exploitation, the promotion of citizen's active participation and the introduction of new technologies in plastic materials recycling.</p> <p>Selected SO will contribute to EUSAIR implementation: flagship 2, Pillar 3, promote green corridors activities for terrestrial habitats and eco-</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<p>systems protection; flagship 3 same Pillar, promote sustainable development and facilitate coastal and maritime spatial plans' adoption, reduce conflicts between maritime uses and environmental protection and preservation.</p> <p>Cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of joint management plans for marine protected areas and coastal ecosystems (contributing to Pillar 3 - Flagship 3.3) • Joint elaboration of maritime spatial plans (MSP) in areas of common interest (i.e., coastal protection, conflicts of aquaculture with maritime and coastal tourism, etc.) capitalising on previous projects outputs and results (contributing also to Pillar 3 - Flagships 3.2 and 3.3) • Improving the accessibility to and integration of data regarding biodiversity in the Programme area • Development of Green/Blue corridors for improved quality of life and protection of terrestrial and marine natural habitats and ecosystems (contributing also to Pillar 3 - Flagships 3.2 and 3.3). <p>Added value: Joint development of maritime spatial plans, smart urban environment solutions, coastal and island sustainable tourism practices, with respect to cross-border common characteristics at macro-regional level.</p>
PO4 - A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the	SO4.2 - Improving equal access to inclusive and quality	P3 - Enhanced cooperation for a more social and	<u>Justification for the selection of PO4</u>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
European Pillar of Social Rights	services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and online education and training	inclusive GR-IT area	<p>The Programme area is still characterised by population stagnation and ageing population. This is added to the fact that all regions, especially in Italy, show high number of NEETs. At the same time, there is high level of unemployment, especially for young people and high-levels of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.</p> <p>There is a prominent need in the Programme area to support quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare especially due to the pandemic.</p> <p>Given the maritime dimension of the Programme area and the border between the two participating regions covered by sea, the specificities and relevant benefits coming out of this resource shall be taken into consideration as cross-cutting in all the priorities of the Programme. Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO4.2</u></p> <p>The transition to a more social Europe is linked to the general improvement of employment rates and conditions, and the decrease of unemployment. Demographic challenges are also very important elements in the direction of socioeconomic development in the Programme area. High number of NEETs and high number of working population with low educational achievement underline the need for enhanced social policies linked to education and training, while shortening the gap between education and the labour market. The selected SO is expected to contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR and more specifically flagship 1.2 on Fisheries and Aquaculture under</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<p>Pillar 1 for the development of professional skills and capacities in the sector, as well as to flagship 1.1 with particular focus on blue skills.</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the development of skills and digital skills, especially for young people in the cross-border area • Supporting the development of blue skills and blue careers marine professional skills at cross-border level (contributing also to flagships 1.1 and 1.2 under EUSAIR Pillar 1 as mentioned above) • Promoting better access to employment at cross-border level. <p>Added value: Establishment of enhanced accessibility to high quality education networks and learning facilities in the macro region, improved employability and job opportunities, as part of the growth and jobs strategy as well as free movement of citizens.</p>
PO4 - A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	SO4.5 - Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care and promoting the transition from institutional to family- and	P3 - Enhanced cooperation for a more social and inclusive GR-IT area	<p><u>Justification for the selection of PO4</u> Same as above</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO4.5</u> The outbreak of the pandemic is a factor that has affected and is going to affect the Programme area. At national level, Italy was mostly hit by the pandemic, and Greece by the financial crisis, while at the cross-border area experience shows that cooperation can address gaps in scientific research but also in health care systems in order to be able to respond effectively in any future scenario.</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
	community-based care		<p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforcing the health sector and services ensuring better coordination of and access to such systems in the Programme area ● Increasing the resilience of health systems by promoting cross-border capacity building, improve the strategic capability of civil society and communities in general, cooperate in designing and testing innovative solutions, adapted to the needs of the cross-border regions ● Cross-border cooperation to improve access to health services for all and addressing health inequality, reducing social exclusion and facilitating active participation in the Programme area, <p>Added value: Reviewing governance issues related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring better coordination of and access to health systems in the Programme area, support the enhanced delivery of public services in the health and social care sector, specifically in relation to ensuring equality of access and reduced social exclusion as well as improved management of health risks on a cross-border basis. Share good practices, reinforce comparable data exchange, coordinate decisions avoiding asymmetries and involving local governments.</p>
PO4 - A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the	SO4.6 - Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social	P3 - Enhanced cooperation for a more social and	<p><u>Justification for the selection of PO4</u> Same as above</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ERDF SO4.6</u></p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
European Pillar of Social Rights	inclusion and social innovation	inclusive GR-IT area	<p>Tourism sector is key for the Programme area and is linked to economic, social and environmental aspects. The importance of the sector was also raised during public consultations by the stakeholders.</p> <p>Sustainable Tourism plays a key role for all the regions of the Programme area considering the persisting effect of massive tourism. Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) of the participating areas promote sustainability in tourism development via, inter alia, the promotion and enhancement of thematic tourism, such as thermal tourism, health tourism etc.</p> <p>Culture as part of the tourism experience is recognised at EU level as an element that can enhance its profile as a global destination. Indeed, Cultural and Creative Industries constitute a strong asset of the Programme area.</p> <p>The selected SO is expected to contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR. More specifically, it will contribute to the flagships 5 (AIR Cultural Routes) and 3 (DES_AIR) under Pillar 4, for the promotion of training and skills in the field of tourism businesses. Additionally, it will contribute to flagship 2 (Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems) under Pillar 3.</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of sustainable and thematic cultural routes at regional and macro-regional level (contributing to flagship 5 under Pillar 4 as mentioned above)

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Harmonised distribution of tourism flows using cultural routes in the Programme Area (contributing to flagship 5 under Pillar 4 as mentioned above) ● Promotion of local blue culture heritage in sustainable tourism ● Development of skills and digital skills in the Programme area in order to increase the capacity of the workforce in the tourism and culture sectors (contributing to flagship 3 under Pillar 4 as mentioned above). <p>Added value: Developing best practices and demonstration for cross-border destination actions and marketing, strengthening the attractiveness and competitiveness of regions. Culture and heritage, as an increasingly important element of the tourism product, can create distinctiveness and attractiveness.</p>
ISO1 - A better cooperation governance	ISO1.1 - Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and all stakeholders	P4 - Enhanced governance for cooperation in the GR-IT area	<p><u>Justification for the selection of ISO1</u></p> <p>Fostering cross-border cooperation and exchanges across borders at governance levels are essential elements of Interreg A Programmes. Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders is strongly needed for successful cooperation.</p> <p>The Programme area shares common features rooted in longstanding functional, cultural and historical ties between its cities and regions. The area however faces numerous challenges and barriers for regional development that do not stop at borders nor administrative units.</p> <p>Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			<p><u>Justification for the selection of ISO1.1</u></p> <p>There is a persisting need in the Programme area for enhanced institutional capacity of the public authorities as well as enhanced application of digital technologies (including e-Government). Still there are policies at national level for the support of digital development and support of the local authorities and the public sector in this transition.</p> <p>The selected SO is expected to contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR and more specifically flagship 3 on Maritime and marine governance and services under Pillar 1, in order to enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities and bodies for the development of common understanding and harmonised standards as well as good practices.</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing the area’s potential in the application of such technologies in the public sector and the civil society for the development of common understanding and harmonised standards as well as good practices (contributing also to flagship 3 under EUSAIR Pillar 1 as mentioned above) ▪ Enhancing multi-level governance and strengthening citizen and stakeholder involvement. <p>Added value: A set of best practices, commonly agreed principles for public authorities’ capacity building at all levels. Improved coordination.</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
ISO1 - A better cooperation governance	ISO1.4 - Enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies	P4 -Enhanced governance for cooperation in the GR-IT area	<p><u>Justification for the selection of ISO1</u></p> <p>Same as above</p> <p><u>Justification for the selection of ISO1.4</u></p> <p>During consultations many interlinks were noted with regard to areas such as transport, environment and sustainable tourism under EUSAIR and specifically flagship 2 (Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems) under Pillar 3, flagship 1 (Green Mapping for the Adriatic-Ionian Region) under Pillar 4 and flagship 1 (The Adriatic - Ionian Multi-modal corridors) under Pillar 2. Thus, this specific objective has been integrated under this PO to provide for enhanced capacity of the institutions to manage macro-regional strategies.</p> <p>The selected SO is further expected to contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR and more specifically flagship 3 on Maritime and marine governance and services under Pillar 1, in order to enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities and bodies for the development of common understanding and harmonised standards as well as best practices.</p> <p>Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in addressing a number of joint needs, among others, identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the green mapping for the development of sustainable tourism destinations and networks (also contributing to flagship 5 under EUSAIR pillar 4 as mentioned above) • Improving coordination and cooperation in risk management between territories and beyond borders

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection <i>[2000 per objective]</i>
			Added value: Management and swift implementation of joint programmes / projects by enhanced institutional capacities of stakeholders.

2. Priorities

Reference: points (d) and (e) of Article 17(3)

2.1. Title of the priority (repeated for each priority)

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

Priority 1: Enhanced cooperation for a more competitive and smarter GR-IT area

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO1.1. Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO1.1. Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in the GR-IT area

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

There is a clear need for enhanced innovation capacities in all participating regions, however, the added value of the cooperation actions lies in facilitating/creating critical mass for the improvement of the innovation eco-system of the programme area in sectors of high added value (i.e. blue economy and the common RIS sectors) in the cross border area. The enhancement of the research and innovation capacities forms a key element for the smart and economic transformation of the Programme area. The territorial analysis stressed the necessity for enhanced innovation capacities in all participating regions as well as the increase of R&D investments in the area. In this context, the area has a number of sectors (like tourism, creative industries, etc. identified in RIS3) that can offer a great potential. The area further shows potential with regard to SMEs and start-ups that will need to be further enhanced on the basis of the smart and innovative transition.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support synergies at cross-border level among enterprises, R&D centres and higher education institutions. The main aim is to improve and reinforce the innovation capacities of the stakeholders as well as to increase the level of coordination and collaboration between key actors and systems at cross-border level. In this frame, marine and maritime research and innovation for the protection and rehabilitation of the marine ecosystems, should be also promoted in line with the 2050 long-term strategy, along with EUSAIR priorities under Pillar 1 - Blue Growth. Actions will include the creation of research platforms and other forms of networks that will enable knowledge transfer and allow also the development of tools, pilot actions as well as joint strategies and action plans in this frame. It is important that such actions promote the uptake of advanced and novel

technologies and solutions for the enhanced smart economic transition. Actions should also promote cross-sector linkages by improving cooperation among innovation stakeholders with similar challenges. Where applicable, they will need to be aligned to the relevant smart specialisation strategies of the participating regions. It is important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results.

The Cooperation programme's actions will be strongly focused so that projects complement those of the mainstream programmes. There is a clear emphasis on the cross border added value of the envisaged actions. The added value from cross-border cooperation consists of Joint research projects that are expected to forge synergies and facilitate the market uptake of innovative solutions. Cross-border cooperation will support and promote entrepreneurship in RIS3 through best practices and common methodological approaches.

More specifically, the Programme is going to fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Blue economy
- Common areas of RIS3 strategies
- Tourism
- Creative and Cultural industries
- Green economy and Bio-economy
- Industry 4.0, Digital technologies, Key enabling technologies
- Social innovation
- Technology and innovation
- Innovative financing
- Energy
- Transport.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Exchange/transfer of good practices in the area of smart technologies, including green, blue and bio-technologies
- Cross-border cooperation among innovation stakeholders at different governance levels (e.g., public, private, national, regional) to improving capacities and facilitate market uptake by providing for an SMEs friendly framework of sustainable transition to industry 4.0
- Development of tools, pilot actions as well as joint strategies and action plans for the uptake of advanced and novel technologies and solutions for the enhanced smart economic transition
- Facilitating/creating critical mass for the improvement of the innovation cross border eco-system, by technology and innovation transfer, between research and business; foster new cooperation along value chains in order to support the roll out of innovative solutions
- Enhancing support services for improved accessibility to research, technological innovations and advanced technologies uptake, especially for SMEs and entrepreneurs
- Strengthening cross-border innovation networks, clusters and platforms for enhanced cooperation among innovation hubs and living labs
- Improving collaboration along value chains of sustainable innovative products and services in coherence with smart specialisation strategies

- Fostering quadruple helix ties in the fields of marine technologies and blue biotechnologies for advancing innovation, business development and business adaptation in blue bio-economy whereby there is a great potential as well as in and around ports.

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension where applicable. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. Last but not least, where possible, actions should capitalise upon the outputs and results of projects funded in the previous programming period, as well as in the current one.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasis on cross border added value.

Given the relevance of ERA for Priority 1, particular attention will be paid during the implementation of the Italy-Greece programme to its potential contribution to ERA and its policy objectives.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result in more strengthened capacities in terms of research and innovation for the application of advanced technologies for the smart economic transformation of the Programme area and in key fields. They will further enable the transfer of good practices and the access of SMEs to innovative research and technologies in key sectors, via cross-sector cooperation, technology transfer and coordination, making them more competitive.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

EUSAIR flagships

Pillar 1 - Flagship 1.1 Fostering quadruple helix ties;

Pillar 2 - Flagship 2.1 Smart/ Green Ports.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO1.1	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	3	6
1	SO1.1	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	Actions	15	30

Table 3: Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Base-line	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO1.1	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	6	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (for example young entrepreneurs). More specifically:

- All stakeholders involved in the economic districts and clusters of the cross-border area: industry, research community, academia, tourism, creative culture industries, agriculture and fisheries sector and other key fields.
- Key actors of the innovation system (universities, laboratories, policy departments, regulators, research institutes, chambers of commerce, development agencies, business networks and incubators, private and public institutions, SMEs, enterprises, etc.).
- Single researchers and entrepreneurs.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

The incentive effect of grants (e.g., pre commercial phase) can stimulate development of cross-border cooperation clusters.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
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1	ERDF	SO1.1	012	861.291,27
1	ERDF	SO1.1	024	861.291,27
1	ERDF	SO1.1	025	861.291,27
1	ERDF	SO1.1	026	861.291,27
1	ERDF	SO1.1	028	861.291,27

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO1.1	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions	4.306.456,35

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO1.2. Reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies and governments

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO1.2. Reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies and governments

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

Digitalisation is key for the transformation of the Programme Area in smart and economic terms. Its importance has become evident even further during the pandemic since many sectors and projects have managed to continue their activities and implementation via the application of digital and smart tools. There is the need for the Programme area to promote the application of digital technologies, including the daily internet use, the use of e-banking services, e-Government, digitalisation in business and commerce. While there is a slight disparity between the participating regions, further improvements and promotion of digitalisation are joint challenges for the area. It is important that the current national policies promote digital development in order to support the public authorities, the economy and the society, at national and local level, to be able to apply enhanced ICT interventions, access and development for optimised results in this field.

Digital and smart tools corresponding to common needs will be addressed by cooperation following the cross-border cooperation best practices of the 2014-2020 period where the programme has financed digital applications targeting common touristic products, thus fully exploiting the cooperation dimension.

Cross-border actions

Against this background, cross-border cooperation can contribute in order to address a number of joint needs and challenges in this regard. Under this SO, the Programme is going to support synergies at cross-border level in order to promote and enhance the application of such technologies in key sectors of the area, such as tourism, creative industries and culture, agriculture and fisheries sector, the environment, etc. In this frame, it is also essential to enable and promote the collection of data and big data, including cross border maritime data in all key actors in order to achieve evidence-based policy making. Actions will further include the support of digitalisation initiatives and interventions in the area of e-learning, e-health, e-government, etc., as well as the development and promotion of education and awareness raising tools with regard to such applications and their benefits in economic and social terms. Actions should also promote cross-sector linkages by improving cooperation among key stakeholders with similar challenges also at cross-sectoral level with the aim to ensure a great level of resilience. Where applicable, they will need to be aligned to the relevant smart specialisation strategies of the participating regions.

Added value: enhancing cross border maritime and marine governance and services, share data platforms and methodologies. Cross border cooperation to promote compatible digitalisation in selected economic sectors of the trans-border regions.

More specifically, the Programme is going to fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Tourism
- Creative and Cultural industries
- Blue economy, Green economy and Bio-economy
- Industry 4.0, Digital technologies, Key enabling technologies
- Energy
- Transport.
- Agro-food

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Develop common approaches in cross-border actions aiming at adapting regional skills to industrial transition, involving policy makers and all stakeholders of the Programme area.
- Developing cross-border knowledge hubs and innovative learning systems contributing the technology priority areas of relevant regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3)
- Cross-border cooperation to share benefits of digitalisation in order to improve capacities and competences of SMEs and entrepreneurs in innovation management
- Strengthening cross-border cooperation with the view to promote the collection of data and big data, including cross-border maritime data in order to achieve evidence-based policy making.

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension, where applicable. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. It is also important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results. Actions will clearly

demonstrate that they provide solution to the identified problems of the cross-border area that are not covered by other Programmes.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Given the relevance of ERA for Priority 1, particular attention will be paid during the implementation of the Italy-Greece programme to its potential contribution to ERA and its policy objectives.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result in more strengthened capacities and skills in terms of digitalisation and the application of relevant technologies for the smart economic transformation of the Programme area in key fields. They will further enable the transfer of good practices among public authorities, businesses and business support organisations, as well as higher education institutions and citizens, via cross-sectoral cooperation, knowledge transfer and coordination, making them also more competitive.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

EUSAIR Flagships

Pillar 1 - Flagship 1.3 Maritime and marine governance and services;

Pillar 3 - Flagship 3.3 MSP/ICZM.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO1.2	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	2	6
1	SO1.2	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	Actions	10	30

Table 3: Result indicators

Prio ri ty	Specific obje cti ve	ID	Indicator	Measure ment unit	Base- line	Refer ence year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
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1	SO1.2	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	6	Programme monitoring system	
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2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (for example young entrepreneurs). More specifically:

- All stakeholders involved in the process of digital transformation and application of relevant policies at national, regional and local level.
- Business support organisations and businesses (e.g., cultural and creative industries, tourism, agriculture and fisheries sectors, SMEs, enterprises etc.).
- Higher education institutions and citizens.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

The incentive effect of grants (e.g., pre commercial phase) can stimulate development of cross-border cooperation clusters.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO1.2	016	967.743,00
1	ERDF	SO1.2	018	967.743,00
1	ERDF	SO1.2	023	967.743,00
1	ERDF	SO1.2	024	967.743,00

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO1.2	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions	3.870.972,00

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO1.3. Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO1.3. Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

The territorial analysis showed that the Programme Area shows potential with regard to start-ups, especially in Puglia. Enhanced entrepreneurship is also ranked high on the strategic priorities of all Greek regions on the basis of the smart and innovative transition. During the consultations, it was mentioned that there is still interest in this frame despite of the difficulties faced, linked to the economic situation and the pandemic. Implemented projects during the period 2014-2020 show very good results with regard to young entrepreneurship. The low level of the Regional Competitiveness Index of the regions in the Programme Area further highlights the necessity to reinforce key sectors, enhancing further their resilience. A number of sectors (like tourism, creative industries, etc.) can offer a great potential in improving the levels of growth and competitiveness of SMEs for the smart transition of the Programme Area.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support synergies at cross-border level among SMEs, other emerging enterprises and young entrepreneurs. The main aim is to enable them to apply smart technologies as well as smart blue technologies through increased level of coordination and collaboration between key actors at cross-border level, also building upon previous experience and existing structures.

Actions will include the creation of clusters and smart clusters and networks that offer the space for knowledge transfer and allow the development of tools, pilot actions as well as joint strategies and action plans in this frame.

It is important to build entrepreneurial eco-systems that will support also the creation of innovative, smart, competitive and resilient incubators and start-ups in the Programme area.

Actions should also promote cross-sector linkages by improving cooperation among SMEs, emerging enterprises and young entrepreneurs with similar challenges. Where applicable, they will need to be aligned with the relevant smart specialization strategies of the participating regions. It is also important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results.

Added value: networking and forging cooperation links to upgrade regional competitiveness and modernisation of SMEs through best practices, creating economies of scale to promote smart solutions.

More specifically, the Programme is going to fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Tourism
- Creative and Cultural Industries
- Blue economy, Green economy and Bio-economy
- Industry 4.0, Digital technologies, Key enabling technologies
- Social innovation
- Technology and knowledge transfer
- Novel schemes for financing innovation
- Energy
- Transport.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Schemes to scale up smart economic transition by enabling cross-sectoral cooperation to help SMEs, other emerging enterprises (start-ups, incubators) and young entrepreneurs in key sectors of the area to increase the level of sustainable growth and competitiveness. Compare and assess.
- Promote cross-border platforms and networks to enhance SMEs modernisation and support their internationalisation through business environment improvements and cooperation.
- Enabling the creation of entrepreneurial eco-system, cross-border cluster development, networking and exchange of know-how and good practices
- Exchange good practices and explore cross-border business support services, especially support business to access finance.

Best practices to be put forward as actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme Area, taking into account the maritime dimension. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. Last but not least, where possible, actions should capitalise upon the outputs and results of projects funded in the previous programming period, as well as in the current one. Effective support organisations, frameworks and schemes will enhance the potential for SMEs growth.

Added value expected in networking and forging cooperation links to expand in further and beyond the programme period, enhancing competitiveness, creating economies of scale, proving and promoting smart solutions.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Given the relevance of ERA for Priority 1, particular attention will be paid during the implementation of the Italy-Greece programme to its potential contribution to ERA and its policy objectives.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result in more strengthened SMEs, other emerging enterprises (start-ups, incubators) and young entrepreneurs in the process of smart economic transformation of the Programme Area in key fields. They will further enable the transfer of good practices and the access of SMEs to finance. It is important to enable the creation of entrepreneurial eco-systems and networks in this frame that may support the creation of smart incubators and start-ups in the Programme area. It is also important to build upon previous experience and capitalise on the results of previous projects reinforcing the existing synergies.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature

EUSAIR flagships

Pillar 1 - Flagship 1.1 Fostering quadruple helix ties; Flagship 1.2 Fisheries and aquaculture;
Pillar 4 - Flagship 4.5 - Air cultural route.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO1.3	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	3	8
1	SO1.3	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	Actions	10	40

Table 3: Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Base-line	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO1.3	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	8	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (for example young entrepreneurs). More specifically:

- All stakeholders involved in the economic districts and clusters of the cross-border area: industry, research community, academia, government.
- Key actors of the innovation and business system (universities, laboratories, policy departments, regulators, research institutions, chambers of commerce, development and innovation agencies, business networks and incubators, private and public institutions, SMEs, enterprises etc.).
- Single researchers, entrepreneurs (young entrepreneurs), incubators.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

The incentive effect of grants (e.g., pre commercial phase) can stimulate development of cross-border cooperation clusters.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO1.3	021	1.330.646,63
1	ERDF	SO1.3	024	1.330.646,63
1	ERDF	SO1.3	026	1.330.646,63
1	ERDF	SO1.3	027	1.330.646,63

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO1.3	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the	5.322.586,50

			envisaged types / nature of actions	
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2.1. Title of the priority (repeated for each priority)

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

Priority 2: Enhanced cooperation for a greener and low carbon GR-IT area

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO2.4. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO2.4. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

In the frame of transitioning to a greener and low carbon Europe, the territorial analysis showed that the Programme area faces a number of challenges linked to climate change, regarding also risk preservation for certain areas (including coastal areas). Climate change still remains an important challenge for the area with certain areas showing high sensitivity in this regard with increased level of risks due to extreme weather conditions.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support synergies in order to adapt climate change measures as well as prevent and manage related risks that the area faces (mainly linked to storms and drought, but also fires and floods). It is important to raise the awareness and education in this regard as well as take cross-border actions towards civil protection and disaster management, promoting the implementation of early warning systems.

Actions will include the creation of platforms and other forms of networks that will enable the interaction among key stakeholders for the exchange of knowledge and best practices. The development of tools, pilot actions as well as joint strategies and action plans are promoted also in this frame. It is important that the uptake of advanced and novel technologies and solutions is promoted. Actions should also promote cross-sector linkages by improving cooperation among key actors and areas with similar challenges. All will be aligned with the EU Green Deal priorities as well as the national, regional and local policies and strategies. It is also important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results. According the good

results of the project LIFE VEG-GAP we will focus the Programme activities through multi-scale and multi pollutant approaches resembling the real-world as much as possible.

We aim to: -make available a framework of instruments (guidelines, support tools and information platform) that consistently consider the linkages between climate change, air pollution and vegetation characteristics to address climate change as well as to promote the development of effective joint risk management strategies in the Programme area;

-provide recommendations for improving the legislation aimed to maintain and improve air quality in European cities when addressing climate change

-to build a strong cross border network in order to share experiences, knowledge and expertise and to explore options for organising joint activities with a cross-border dimension

Expected value added: identify select and develop common approaches to address common concerns, with a view to adopting mutually reinforcing measures. Common strategies and common solutions to management and awareness to interregional issues.

There will be no specific activities foreseen, but the programme promotes the New European Bauhaus as relevant.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

Increasing awareness and information of policy makers about local and regional implications of climate change, in order to foster a better understanding and integration of climate change concerns into policy design and implementation

- Promote the use and transfer of innovative and digital solutions in addressing climate change as well as raising awareness of climate change among stakeholders and local communities in the cross-border region.
- Developing common integrated strategies and common solutions to improve cross-border capacities for preparing and adapting to climate change and its negative impacts on society, economy and the environment
- Cross-border actions including pilot actions for civil protection and disaster management, promoting the implementation of early warning systems
- Integrating climate change aspects into water management strategies on cross-border level
- Exchange of knowledge and good practices among key stakeholders on climate change adaptation measures at cross-border level
- Development and adoption of joint management, governance and monitoring plans especially for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

An OSI is foreseen under SO 2.4 on the provision of a surveillance system and civil protection network to respond to natural and maritime risks

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension and blue economy. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. Last but not least, where possible, actions should capitalise upon the outputs and results of projects funded in the previous programming period, as well as in the current one.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result in increased capacities that will further contribute in more ecological resilience and less negative effects due to climate change in the Programme area. It is also expected that adaptation and prevention measures with regard to risks linked to natural events (including storms and droughts) will be improved and solutions will be found on the basis also of pilot actions and joint forces, joint agreements and plans that will be implemented and can also be capitalised taking into consideration complementarities with the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

EUSAIR flagships

Pillar 3 - Flagship 3.2 - Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems; Flagship 3.1 - Adriatic and Ionian sub-regional oil spill plan.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO2.4	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solutions	1	16
1	SO2.4	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	Strategies	15	80

Table 3: Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO2.4	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solutions	0	2021	16	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (for example young entrepreneurs). More specifically:

- Policy-makers
- Research institutions
- Environmental organisations
- Public sector
- Civil society
- Citizens.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

The type of projects and the relatively small scale do not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO2.4	058	4.515.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.4	059	2.000.000,00
1	ERDF	SO2.4	060	3.915.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.4	061	1.415.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.4	064	1.915.161,98

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO2.4	01 Grant is considered the most relevant form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the	13.760.647,91

			envisaged types / nature of actions.	
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2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO2.6. Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO2.6. Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

The territorial analysis as well as the consultations that took place demonstrated that waste remains a challenge for the area. The need to promote and enhance the existing capacity of the Programme area in the circular economy sector as well as resource efficiency was highlighted during the consultations. The Programme area can build upon previous experience in the area in the frame of the new reality caused by the pandemic. The role of the circular economy in the green economic transition is highlighted by the EU Green Deal and the Territorial Agenda 2030. In this frame the new Circular Economy Action Plan provides a future-oriented agenda for a cleaner and more competitive Europe in co-creation with economic actors, consumers, citizens and civil society organisations.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support synergies at cross-border level in order to enhance the implementation of circular economy policies and approaches in the Programme area. Cooperation actions may include joint action plans and strategies, education and awareness-raising campaigns, trainings and the development of relevant tools, pilot actions and other relevant solutions. Behavioural change of all actors involved (producers / consumers) is important in this regard. Waste of several sources is also linked to the coastal management as well as to water management. Considering the maritime dimension that is important for the Programme, actions for the promotion of the blue circular economy should be promoted in this regard and in the frame of marine technologies and blue biotechnologies. Coastal areas, islands and ports will play a major role in this context, enhancing cross border cooperation and elaborating common approaches. It is important that such actions will promote the uptake of advanced and novel technologies and solutions. Actions should also promote cross-sector linkages by improving cooperation among key stakeholders with similar challenges. Actions should be aligned to the main priorities under the EU Green Deal and the EU Circular Economy Action Plan. It is important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results.

Value added: Address common interregional problems related to resource management, develop multi-dimensional methodological approaches particularly for the transition to

Smart / green ports and circular economy. Results to highlight potential for further cooperation.

There will be no specific activities foreseen, but the programme promotes the New European Bauhaus as relevant.

More specifically, the Programme is going to fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Tourism
- Agro-food
- Blue economy, Green economy and Bio-economy
- Ports
- Waste management.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Cross-border cooperation for knowledge building in awareness-raising of policy makers and stakeholders regarding environmental and economic opportunities of blue circular economy
- Develop common methods and practices for enhancing the capacities of key stakeholders to implement blue circular economy, marine technologies approaches in all key fields where those be adopted (e.g., sustainability advisors for SMEs)
- Common strategies and action plans at the cross-border area for developing and implementing integrated blue circular economy, marine technologies and blue bio-technologies.
- Best practices and demonstration for improving waste management policies and competences of the public and private sector at the cross-border area, including the prevention, processing and recycling of waste tackling specific types of waste (maritime, micro-plastics, textiles, waste related to pandemic equipment, construction, etc.)
- Promotion of joint actions among key stakeholders for the monitoring of marine litter (joint clean-up campaigns) that is linked also to coastal management
- Setting-up joint policy frameworks for sustainable products and supporting local and regional governance structures that encourage blue circularity, eco-innovation and eco-design approaches in the entire life-cycle of products

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. Last but not least, where possible, actions should capitalise upon the outputs and results of projects funded in the previous programming period, as well as in the current one.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to increase resource efficiency and waste recycling across sectors. The enhanced cross-border research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in circular economy will be further promoted. On the basis of the behavioural change of single actors, knowledge and awareness raising will be achieved. Skills in the area of circular economy in all sectors will be strengthened.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

EUSAIR flagships

Pillar 1 - Flagship 1.1 - Fostering quadruple helix ties;

Pillar 2 - Flagship 2.1 Smart/Green Ports;

Pillar 4 - Flagship 4.3 DES AIR.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO2.6	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solutions	2	16
1	SO2.6	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly develop	Strategies	10	80

Table 3: Result indicators

Prio rity	Specific objecti ve	ID	Indicator	Measure ment unit	Base- line	Refer ence year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO2.6	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	16	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (for example young entrepreneurs). More specifically:

- Stakeholders related to circular economy policies and practices: regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners, and civil society organizations
- Research and innovation actors
- Education and training organisations
- Infrastructure owners and operators as well as other organisations such as intermediaries

- Regional development agencies, environmental institutions, NGOs, Natura 2000 areas
- Citizens.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

The type of projects and the relatively small scale do not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO2.6	065	1.315.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.6	067	1.415.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.6	069	1.915.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.6	071	1.915.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.6	075	2.415.161,98

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO2.6	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific condition and to the envisaged types / nature of actions	8.975.809,89

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO2.7. Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO2.7. Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

The Programme area shows potential due to the current status of natural habitats (Natura 2000, Ramsar protected areas) and biodiversity. At the same time, it faces challenges due to the climate change and air pollution that call for protection measures and enhanced preservations of these areas that are also increased due to the enlargement of the Programme. Thus, it is important to continue to take actions for the protection of the coastal and marine ecosystems of the area with a focus to the existing resources via the development of environmental protection measures. There is a strong strategic focus on EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 and its targets in term of protected marine and terrestrial areas, since the programme area is lagging behind in this sense.

The Programme' activities of the SO 2.7 will be linked wherever appropriate with the NEC Directive in order to improve the system of evaluation of the impacts of air pollution and climate change on forest, freshwater and coastal ecosystems and develop new indicators and protocols to increase the knowledge in the eligible area on the effects of air pollution on ecosystems under the pressure of climate change.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support synergies at cross-border level in order to enhance practices and activities to promote sustainable development. The main aim is to improve and reinforce the capacities for the protection of biodiversity as biodiversity may reduce the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere, and that reduction may help to address climate change. Moreover, degraded ecosystems release more carbon thereby increasing the mitigation burden of climate change. The process contributes to the transition to a green and low carbon GR-IT area. Increased level of coordination and collaboration between key actors and systems at cross-border level via joint management and action plans will contribute to common solutions and integrated approaches in the area. In this frame emphasis is put on coastal ecosystems that effect the environment (air quality, litter, etc.) with the development of joint management plans and maritime spatial plans in areas of common interest. It is also important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results.

Added value: Joint development of maritime spatial plans, smart urban environment solutions, coastal and island sustainable tourism practices, with respect to cross-border common characteristics at macro-regional level.

There will be no specific activities foreseen, but the programme promotes the New European Bauhaus as relevant.

More specifically, the Programme is going to fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Tourism
- Blue economy, Green economy and Bio-economy
- Agro-food industry
- Behavioural change of all actors involved.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Improve policy frameworks for biodiversity and implement common strategies at the programme area level to conserve and restore ecosystems with macro-regional and broader effects. Address jointly degraded ecosystems that release more carbon thereby increasing the mitigation burden of climate change
- Foster joint integrated management of natural resources with a focus on reducing all forms of pollution, especially noise and air pollution and protecting biodiversity at the cross-border area, by forging common strategies and by improving skills and competences of stakeholders.
- Develop and test joint integrated environmental action plans at the cross-border area targeting pollution prevention and adopting remediation measures.
- Drafting and implementing joint management and governance plans for coastal ecosystems, marine protected areas and their shared biological resources
- Improving the accessibility to and integration of biodiversity databases, storing taxonomic information alone or also other information like distribution (spatial) data and ecological data, to provide information on the biodiversity of the macro-region
- Development of common Green/Blue corridors for improved quality of life and protection of terrestrial/marine natural habitats and ecosystems

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. Last but not least, where possible, actions should capitalise upon the outputs and results of projects funded in the previous programming period, as well as in the current one.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result in more strengthened capacities for enhanced preservation and protection of the natural habitats and biodiversity. This is important for the transition to a greener and low carbon GR-IT area. Enhanced cooperation for the promotion and implementation of policies and joint actions and plans in this area will enable key sectors to contribute to the green transformation and enhanced integrated approaches in this regard.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

EUSAIR flagships

Pillar 3 - Flagship 3.2 - Terrestrial Habitat and ecosystem protection; Flagship 3.3 - MSP/ICZM.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO2.7	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	1	11
1	SO2.7	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	Strategies	10	55

Table 3: Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Base-line	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO2.7	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	11	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (for example young entrepreneurs). More specifically:

- Local, regional, national authorities
- Environmental organisations
- Academic and research institutes
- Development agencies at local/regional level
- NGOs
- Citizens.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

The type of projects and the relatively small scale do not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO2.7	059	1.915.161,98
1	ERDF	SO2.7	064	1.570.652,42
1	ERDF	SO2.7	077	2.070.652,42
1	ERDF	SO2.7	078	2.070.652,42
1	ERDF	SO2.7	079	2.070.652,42

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO2.7	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions	9.697.771,66

2.1. Title of the priority (repeated for each priority)

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

Priority 3: Enhanced cooperation for a more social and inclusive GR-IT area

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO4.2. Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and online education and training

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO4.2. Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and online education and training

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

The territorial analysis as well as the discussions during the consultations demonstrated the fact that there is still population stagnation and ageing population in the Programme area. At the same time, the high level of unemployment calls for improved equal access to inclusive education, lifelong learning quality services. The programme's clear focus is strengthening equal access to education and training with a commitment to de-segregation in support for education and training.

Furthermore, the programme will strengthen the market relevance of support for skills development with a particular focus on professional, entrepreneurial, green and sustainability and digital skills, required for green and digital transformation of the economy and society. Given the maritime dimension of the cross-border area, the programme will prioritise the blue sector employment.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support partnerships/initiatives for enhanced access to employment for groups that may face constraints (women, youth, migrants, etc).

In this frame, it is essential to promote actions at cross-border level to improve access to finance, enable information and enhanced entrepreneurial and other skills. Actions will include also networking and exchange of information and good practices where applicable.

Actions will focus on structural actions on education, for instance networking between secondary or higher education bodies, training capacities for blue economy. Moreover, actions should promote cross-sector linkages by improving cooperation among individuals facing similar challenges. Considering the high level of unemployment, especially for young people as well as the high number of NEETs in the Programme Area, actions will need to target such groups. It is also important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results.

There will be no specific activities foreseen, but the programme promotes the New European Bauhaus as relevant.

Added value: Establishment of enhanced accessibility to high quality education networks and learning facilities in the macro region, improved employability and job opportunities, as part of the growth and jobs strategy as well as free movement of citizens.

More specifically, the Programme is going to fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Tourism
- Creative and Cultural Industries

- Blue economy, Green economy and Bio-economy
- Circular economy
- Social innovation
- Agro-food
- Energy
- Transport.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Support partnerships/initiatives at cross-border level for enhanced access to employment for groups that may face constraints (women, youth, migrants, etc.)
- Design schemes or joint facilities for support actions at cross-border level to improve access to finance, enable information and enhance entrepreneurial skills
- Promote collaborative cross border cooperation for a better understanding of the economic and social integration of women, young people and NEETs and to encourage them either side of the border to become more involved in education and capacity building schemes as well as in the labour market.
- Support the development of joint platforms or other type of digital infrastructure (e-learning, e-education, e-trainings, etc.)
- Promote actions for networking and exchange of information and good practices in the field of inclusive and quality education services.

It is necessary that actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. Last but not least, where possible, actions should capitalise upon the outputs and results of projects funded in the previous programming period, as well as in the current one.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result better access to education and training and better quality services. An indirect positive impact will be the enhanced access to employment for groups that may face constraints. The actions will result in enhanced professional and entrepreneurial. Capitalisation projects are expected to increase the respective capacities and synergies.

Proposed actions will tackle high levels of unemployment as well as high levels of NEETs of the area and the consequences related to ageing population.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

EUSAIR Flagships

Pillar 1 - Flagship 1.1: Fostering quadruple helix ties; Flagship 1.2: Fisheries and aquaculture;
Pillar 4 - Flagship 4.3 DES AIR.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO4.2	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	0	3
1	SO4.2	RCO 82	Participants in joint actions promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion	Participants	0	1500
1	SO4.2	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects Number of cultural and tourism sites supported	Actions	10	15

Table 3: Result indicators

Prio rity	Specific obje ctive	ID	Indicator	Measure ment unit	Base- line	Refer ence year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO4.2	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	3	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (e.g., NEETs, socially vulnerable groups etc.).

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Nature of operations and type of projects do not allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO4.2	134	527.475,74
1	ERDF	SO4.2	135	527.475,74
1	ERDF	SO4.2	136	527.475,74
1	ERDF	SO4.2	137	527.475,74
1	ERDF	SO4.2	142	527.475,74

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO4.2	01 Grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area state of play specific conditions and to the envisaged types/nature of actions	2.637.378,70

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO4.5. Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care and promoting the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives

and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO4.5. Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care and promoting the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

The outbreak of the pandemic is a factor that has affected and is going to affect the Programme area. At national level, Italy was mostly hit by the pandemic, and Greece by the financial crisis, while at the cross-border area experience shows that cooperation can address gaps in since it was the first European country where it was emerged. Experience shows that coordination is necessary in this regard both in scientific research but also in health care systems in order to be able to response effectively in any future scenario. Considering the maritime dimension of the Programme area it is essential in this regard to enhance safety in maritime connectivity. The territorial analysis demonstrated that the area is still lagging behind in terms of the application of digital technologies (including e-health). In this frame there is also the need to integrate ICT also in the health systems in order to foster their resilience.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support joint synergies for the reinforcement of the health sector and services in order to ensure better access to such systems in the GR-IT area. It is also important to support networking and cooperation for the promotion of equal access to healthcare; exchange and share data on cross border movements (respecting DGPR) best practices to reinforce health services especially in coastal and disadvantaged areas, (e.g., mountain areas of the Programme area which should also benefit from cross-border actions and joint strategies undertaken under this specific objective through networks created for this purpose) for the transition to a more social and inclusive GR-IT area, capitalising where relevant also on previous projects and actions.

Added value: Reviewing governance issues related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring better coordination of and access to health systems in the Programme area, **support the enhanced delivery of public services in the health and social care sector, specifically in relation to ensuring equality of access and reduced social exclusion as well as improved management of health risks on a cross-border basis.** Share good practices, reinforce comparable data exchange, coordinate decisions avoiding asymmetries and involving local governments. Facilitating the sharing of health data of public health, treatment, research and innovation in the Programme area.

There will be no specific activities foreseen, but the programme promotes the New European Bauhaus as relevant.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Building a common vision to improve health care provision and enhance equal and timely access to quality services, through the development of joint platforms and other cross-border digital tools, innovations, applications and services.
- Networking and exchange of information and good practices at cross-border level that will allow to prepare and adapt in case of pandemics and other types of health crisis
- Reinforcement of the quality of and the access to health sector and services in the Programme area. Cross-border cooperation in healthcare can guarantee quality and equality in the supply of joint public health services, as this type of cooperation decreases fixed costs, increases the number of patients that can receive treatments and improves efficiency.

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension. Last but not least, where possible, actions should capitalise on the outputs and results of projects funded in the previous programming period, as well as in the current one.

All actions supported under public services will be in line with identified needs and priorities of relevant public authorities.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Moreover, selection criteria will ensure that actions and / or investments envisaged will contribute to strengthening the resilience and long-term sustainability of the healthcare sector.

Investments in social and health care infrastructure will have to be fully in line with the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), including General Comment 5 and CRPD committee concluding observations, with due respect for the principles of equality, freedom of choice, the right to independent living, accessibility and prohibiting all forms of segregation.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result in more strengthened capacities and more resilient health systems in the Programme area in order to be able to operate efficiently and to react in possible future pandemics and not only. Resilient health systems for all the population target groups and equal access to them (e.g., through reinforced services and existing capacities of hospitals also in disadvantageous areas of the Programme area) is core for the social and just transition of the GR-IT area.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO4.5	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	0	5
1	SO4.5	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	Actions	10	25

Table 3: Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO4.5	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	5	Programme monitoring system	
1	SO4.5	RCR 72	Annual users of new or modernised e-health care services	Users	0	2021	200	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups (e.g., people at risk of poverty, elderly people, socially vulnerable groups etc.).

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Nature of operations and type of projects do not allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
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1	ERDF	SO4.5	131	2.273.602,35
1	ERDF	SO4.5	160	2.273.602,35

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO4.5	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions	4.547.204,70

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

SO4.6. Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

SO4.6. Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

The territorial analysis and the consultations demonstrated the importance of both tourism and sustainable tourism due to effect of massive tourism in the Programme area for the period up until the outbreak of the pandemic. Therefore, it is necessary that ***culture and sustainable tourism*** be further sustained and reinforced in the frame of transitioning to a more social and inclusive GR-IT area. Tourism sector is linked to economic, social and environmental aspects. Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) of the participating territories promote the sustainable element in tourism development via also the promotion and enhancement of thematic tourism, such as thermal tourism, health tourism, archaeological tourism, architectural tourism, festivals etc. Prioritised thematic tourism areas will be identified along the implementation development of the programme at the stage of calls' specifications. Culture as part of the tourism experience is recognised at EU level as an element that can enhance its profile as a global destination. Indeed, Creative and Cultural Industries are strong elements of the Programme area (Puglia Creative Production District, Western Greece 'Collection. Inspirations').

The Programme will take into account the environmental sustainability of tourism, including circular economy. This is relevant for the Italian and Greek Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRP) and other cohesion programmes; for example, the Italian NRRP is encouraging applying Minimum Environmental Criteria for cultural events. A Minimum of Environmental Criteria will be adopted for cultural events. This means we will invite all the beneficiaries

and also when we will organize events to respect the protocols of the Environmental: i.e. green tenders, promote to use recyclable material and/or recycled material, accessibility to the people with special needs; equal gender approach.

We would like to underline that the Minimum Environmental Criteria is not still approved in Italy. We are waiting the specific action plan for the criteria of the green tender. This action plan will publish from the Italian Government within the end of the 2022.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme will support synergies at cross-border level in order to enhance the role of culture and tourism with a focus to sustainable tourism taking into account advanced technologies and the potential offered in the frame of the new reality that has occurred since the pandemic outbreak. The proposed actions will aim in this frame to promote sustainable and thematic cultural routes at regional as well as macro-regional level by further distributing tourism flows. In the frame of promoting sustainable tourism the promotion of cultural heritage including blue cultural heritage is also vital. Against this background, the workforce that is employed in the sectors of tourism and culture will need to have the necessary capacities and enhanced skills.

Added value: Developing best practices and demonstration for cross-border destination actions and marketing, strengthening the attractiveness and competitiveness of regions. Culture and heritage, as an increasingly important elements of the tourism product, can create distinctiveness and attractiveness.

Investments will respond to the digital and green transformation and long-term resilience and environmental, social and economic sustainability needs of the sectors

There will be no specific activities foreseen, but the programme promotes the New European Bauhaus as relevant.

More specifically, the Programme is going to fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Tourism
- Creative and Cultural Industries
- Social innovation
- Cultural routes
- Creative cultural hubs
- Blue cultural heritage.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Development of skills with regard to tourism contemporary trends with a focus on innovation, social inclusion and economic development, green and digital upskilling and reskilling, though common action aiming at strengthening common identity attraction factors.
- Clustering actions on tourism and culture linked to territories with a focus on development of new models of sustainable tourism with a focus on development of new models of sustainable tourism in coastal areas and islands.
- Support actions in the field of cultural and creative industry, enabling the exchange of good practices and networking among stakeholders of different backgrounds (teachers, actors, architects, etc.), in the field of sustainable tourism and culture, to promote a shared sense of common cultural roots and create new tourism experiences. The action also addresses the unequal geographical and seasonal extent of the tourism product, as a

way to reduce the risks of over-tourism and seasonality. It will also support lesser-known destinations of high potential.

- Support actions for the development of sustainable and thematic cultural routes and harmonised distribution of tourism flows, promote common tourist destinations. Support for the valorisation of common cultural heritage sector and the creation of new cultural products contributing to broadening equal access to culture and cultural heritage and mobilise new audiences through digital tools and services, with particular attention to facilitate inclusion of more vulnerable people /groups.

An OSI under this SO4.6 is foreseen on the cooperation in the context of science-backed tourism based on common cultural identity.

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme area, taking into account the maritime dimension. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects, as mentioned below. It is also important to capitalise successful projects that were funded during previous calls by exploiting and building upon their outputs and results.

Any action should respect the recommendations for quality standards on preservation, protection and promotion of cultural heritage along the different programming stages of EU funding as in “EUROPEAN QUALITY PRINCIPLES for EU-funded Interventions with potential impact upon Cultural Heritage” drawn by ICOMOS under the mandate of the European Commission and in the framework of the European Union (EU) Flagship Initiative of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

At the call stage, consideration should be given by relevant authorities to encouraging the use of private funds when supporting cultural sites so as to improve their financial self-sustainability. This might include steps to generate some revenue to support the activity developed in the renovated heritage or cultural sites that receive ERDF support by, for example, diversifying the use and including revenue-generating activities generated either directly by the site, or indirectly as economic gain for the region.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to foster the role of culture and tourism for a more social and inclusive GR-IT area. The update of new technologies will enable the measurement of sustainability of SMEs in tourism sector and the clean transition of the industry in this regard. Capitalising on projects results will enable also to sustain and reinforce existing hubs as well as to develop new ones with the involvement of stakeholders and individuals of different backgrounds.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

EUSAIR flagships

Pillar 4 - Flagship 4.3 DES AIR; Flagship 4.5 Air Cultural Route.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	SO4.6	RCO 77	Number of cultural and tourism sites supported	Sites	4	19
1	SO4.6	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	Actions	15	95

Table 3: Result indicators

Prio rity	Speci fic objec tive	ID	Indicator	Measure ment unit	Base- line	Refer ence year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO4.6	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	19	Programme monitoring system	
1	SO4.6	RCR 77	Visitors of cultural and tourism sites supported	Visitors	0	2021	20.00 00	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include all private and public stakeholders involved as well as population groups. More specifically:

- Local, regional, national authorities
- Development agencies at local/regional level
- Enterprises and organisations in the tourism and culture sectors
- Local communities and citizens.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Nature of operations and type of projects do not allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO4.6	165	9.094.409,32
1	ERDF	SO4.6	166	9.094.409,32

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO4.6	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions	18.188.818,65

2.1. Title of the priority (repeated for each priority)

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

Priority 4: Enhanced governance for cooperation in the GR-IT area

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

ISO1.1. Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and all stakeholders

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

ISO1.1. Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and all stakeholders

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

The territorial analysis as well as the results that came out from public consultations demonstrated that there is a persisting need for enhanced institutional capacity of the public authorities. While the Programme has many strong elements, including the long cooperation between the countries on the basis of the common challenges, adding to the successful governance by the Programme bodies, there are still challenges in relation to the overall governance and implementation. These were highlighted during the consultations and the analysis that took place on the basis of previous experience. Among others, they relate to differences in administrative and legal issues, cultural differences (language) and the need for enhanced capacity building and skills of public authorities.

Climate change topics are very important in the field of coordination and cooperation between public authorities at cross-border level focusing on the adaptation of joint strategies and plans, maritime spatial plans and common management schemes in the climate mitigation.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support synergies at cross-border level for the enhanced institutional capacity of the public authorities. The aim is to improve and reinforce the existing capacities of the public authorities, as well as to increase the level of coordination and collaboration at cross-border level taking always into consideration the maritime dimension of the Programme area. Actions will include the support of the public authorities, especially of small Municipalities, in order to simplify administrative procedures, cut red-tape (e.g., bureaucracy) and, thus, contribute to more flexibility. Actions should enhance the efficiency of governance including multi-governance and networking in order to also tackle the language barrier.

Added value: A set of best practices, commonly agreed principles for public authorities' capacity building at all levels. Improved coordination.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Enabling the simplification of the procedures, eliminating administrative and linguistic barriers and increasing the efficiency of governance on the basis of the existing structure
- Promotion of cooperation actions aiming at enhancing capacity building and skills of public authorities
- Improving the definition and adoption of joint strategies, joint plans, common management schemes by the public authorities in the key sectors of the area
- Promotion of civic engagement and citizens participation in decision-making processes with a focus on the cross-border area
- Promotion of synergies and integration with other Interreg Programmes and other EU funded Programmes, also strengthening capitalisation activities and results sharing.
- Jointly elaborating maritime spatial plans (MSP) in areas of common interest (i.e., coastal protection, conflicts of aquaculture with maritime and coastal tourism, etc.).

It is necessary that the actions will seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in the Programme Area, taking into account the maritime dimension. Additionally, actions will need to take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies, and specifically EUSAIR action plan and flagship projects.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	ISO1.1	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	0	3
1	ISO1.1	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	Strategies	15	15

Table 3: Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Base-line	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	ISO1.1	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	3	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include the Programme Bodies and key stakeholders.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Nature of operations and participating bodies do not allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	ISO1.1	170	819.479,15
1	ERDF	ISO1.1	171	819.479,15
1	ERDF	ISO1.1	173	819.479,15

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	ISO1.1	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged types / nature of actions	2.458.437,44

2.1.1. Specific objective (repeated for each selected specific objective, for priorities other than technical assistance)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

ISO1.4. Enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies

2.1.2. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

ISO1.4. Enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies

Territorial needs of the Programme Area

During consultations it was highlighted the need to better interlink the transition to a greener and low carbon Programme Area to the macro-regional priorities and flagships. It is thus important to enhance the capacity of the relevant authorities in managing macro-regional strategies via enhanced governance but also the promotion of actions under the relevant Pillars, 2, 3 and 4 of EUSAIR. Moreover, climate change topics are important in the field of enhancing the capacity of relevant authorities to address the need to better interlink the transition to a greener and low carbon Programme area, also linked to the EUSAIR priorities and flagships.

Cross-border actions

Under this SO, the Programme is going to support actions that will enhance the capacity of the institutions to manage the macro-regional strategies (EUSAIR) due to the potential offered with regard to interlinkages to other areas (nature, risk management, green infrastructure, sustainable tourism, etc.).

Added value: Management and swift implementation of joint programmes / projects by enhanced institutional capacities of stakeholders.

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Developing and implementing solutions to enhance cooperation and organisation processes within the EUSAIR governance structure
- Fostering the use of available funding instruments for governance support and EUSAIR implementation
- Developing and implementing joint solutions for monitoring, reporting and evaluating multilevel policy instruments
- Developing mechanisms for the uptake and implementation of multilevel governance focussing on the cross-border strategies.

During the programming and implementation of the programme, selection criteria will ensure that actions and projects complement those of the mainstream programmes with a clear emphasise on cross border added value.

Expected results

Cooperation actions at cross-border level are expected to result in more strengthened capacities for the management of the macro-regional strategy of EUSAIR on the basis of its main priorities and flagships and will enhance the complementarity and synergies with the strategy.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.3. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
1	ISO1.4	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	0	1
1	ISO1.4	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	Strategies	5	5

Table 3: Result indicators

Prio rity	Specific objecti ve	ID	Indicator	Measure ment unit	Base- line	Refer ence year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	ISO1.4	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up- scaled by organisatio ns	Solution	0	2021	1	Programme monitoring system	

2.1.4. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of the mentioned actions include the Programme Bodies and key stakeholders.

2.1.5. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the GR-IT programme area.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of participating regions.

2.1.6. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

Text field [7000]

Nature of operations and participating bodies do not allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

2.1.7. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	ISO1.4	170	203.494,81
1	ERDF	ISO1.4	171	203.494,81
1	ERDF	ISO1.4	173	203.494,81

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	ISO1.4	01 Form of support: grant is considered the most suitable form of support in relation to the programme area specific conditions and to the envisaged nature / types of actions	610.484,44

3. Financing plan

Reference: point (f) of Article 17(3)

3.1. Financial appropriations by year

Reference: point (g)(i) of Article 17(3), points (a) to (d) of Article 17(4)

Table 7

Fund	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ERDF incl. TA	0,00	13.595.169,00	13.813.543,00	14.036.292,00	14.263.495,00	11.819.027,00	12.055.402,00	79.582.928,00
Total	0,00	18.123.685,47	18.420.795,07	18.717.904,67	19.015.014,26	15.757.419,74	16.075.751,46	106.110.570,67

3.2. Total financial appropriations by fund and national co-financing

Reference: point (f)(ii) of Article 17(3), points (a) to (d) of Article 17(4)

Table 8

PO No or TA	Priority	Fund	Basis for calculation EU support (total or public)	EU contribution	Indicative breakdown of the EU contribution		National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total (e)=(a)+(b)	Co- financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)	Contributions
		(as applicable)		(a)	without TA pursuant to Article 27(1) (a1)	for TA pursuant to Article 27(1) (a2)		National public (c)	National private (d)			
	Priority 1	ERDF	Total eligible cost	14.445.016	13.500.015	945.001	4.815.005	4.815.005	0	19.260.021	75%	25%
	Priority 2	ERDF	Total eligible cost	34.704.626	32.434.229	2.270.396	11.568.209	11.568.209	0	46.272.834	75%	25%
	Priority 3	ERDF	Total eligible cost	27.149.540	25.373.402	1.776.138	9.049.847	9.049.847	0	36.199.387	75%	25%
	Priority 4	ERDF	Total eligible cost	3.283.747	3.068.922	214.825	1.094.582	1.094.582	0	4.378.329	75%	25%
	Total	All funds	Total eligible cost	79.582.928	74.376.568	5.206.360	26.527.643	26.527.643	0	106.110.571	75%	25%
		ERDF	Total eligible cost	79.582.928	74.376.568	5.206.360	26.527.643	26.527.643	0	106.110.571	75%	25%
	Total	All funds	Total eligible cost	79.582.928	74.376.568	5.206.360	26.527.643	26.527.643	0	106.110.571	75%	25%

4. Action taken to involve the relevant programme partners in the preparation of the Interreg programme and the role of those programme partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Reference: point (g) of Article 17(3)

Text field [10 000]

The programming process for the preparation of the Greece-Italy programme has been coordinated by the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat in line with the legal requirements laid down in Article 8 of the new CPR, involving a significant number of relevant programme partners and stakeholders. The Greek and Italian authorities constituted the Programming Committee (PC) for the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece - Italy 2021-2027”, that was established following the agreement of the MA and the national authorities for the effective planning and drafting of the Cooperation Programme INTERREG “Greece-Italy” 2021-2027. The PC’s members include representatives from the:

- Greek Ministry of Development and Investments
- Union of Greek Municipalities
- Italian Department for Cohesion Policy
- Italian Agency for Territorial Cohesion
- Italian National Association of Municipalities (ANCI)
- Participating regions from Greece and Italy
- MA and JS of OP "Greece-Italy" 20014-2020
- European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy

All PC meetings took place online due to the pandemic. The PC assembled for its 1st meeting on 03/07/2020. It approved the Rules of Procedure (RoPs) and held a first discussion with regard to the key characteristics of the new programming period on the basis of the Orientation Paper that was published by the Commission, as well as the possible territorial enlargement of the eligible area of the programme to include the regions of Basilicata and Calabria. It was agreed that the terms of reference of the tender concerning the technical expert who will support the MA to the drafting of the programming document for 2021-2027 will be translated and sent to the PC for information. Due to the persistence of the pandemic, the 2nd meeting of the PC was held on 09/12/2020. In line with the approved agenda, the PC during this meeting approved the territorial analysis of the Programme as well as certain updates to the questionnaires that would be used during the first round of the public consultations that would take place online. During the 3rd PC that took place on 04/03/21, the PC defined the main strategy and policy priorities of the Programme on the basis also of the results that came out from the public consultation. The PC also decided the initiation of the 2nd round of the consultations and the timeframes for the next period until the final submission of the Programme to the Commission. All PC were attending by representatives of the Greek and Italian authorities as mentioned above.

On the basis of the agreed methodology and the respective decisions of the PC two rounds of Public Consultations took place in the period between December 2020 and May 2021. The consultations were coordinated by the MA as assisted by the technical consultant.

The 1st round of Public Consultations that took place between 28/12/2020 and 15/01/2021 and it was further extended until 29/01/2021. The consultation took place in the form of a web-survey and via the use of google forms. On the basis of the approved methodology, the stakeholders were separated in three categories (one questionnaire and separate web-survey for each) on the basis of the level of involvement in the programming process:

- Category A: all main stakeholders that either participated in the formation of the Programmes of the previous programming periods or their participation in the drafting of the new Cooperation Programme is considered to be essential,
- Category B: all stakeholders who participated as partners in projects of the current period 2014-2020 and
- Category C: other stakeholders who have no experience so far in projects but have still the potential to participate.

In total, 380 stakeholders were invited to participate from all categories, A, B and C and a total number of 84 responses were received. Overall, there was a highest rate of participation from Italy, 25% of the ones invited, followed by 19% on behalf of Greece. Stakeholders were mainly representatives from National, regional and local public authorities (42%), Higher education and research institutions (25%), Business support organisations, including chambers of commerce, net-works and clusters (9.5%), Interest group including NGOs and citizen's associations (3.6%). The main aim of this public consultation was to validate the results that came out from the territorial and needs assessment analysis in order to define the main policy orientations and the strategy of the Programme based also on lessons learnt by the previous Programme. The 3rd PC meeting approved the results and it has defined the main policy orientation and strategy of the new Programme on this basis.

The 2nd round of Public Consultations took place between 15/04/2021 and until 14/05/2021. The consultation period was extended to 04/06/2021. The main aim was to select the Specific Objectives under the Policy Objectives that were defined already as well as specific types of actions, target groups and beneficiaries that will participate as project applicants. On the basis of the approved methodology as well as the decisions of the PC, in the frame of the consultations, a web-survey, two workshops and a number of targeted interviews took place. More specifically:

- Web-survey: it took place online between 15/04/2021 and 14/05/2021 and it was addressed stakeholders from Categories A and B as these were defined in previous stages. Google forms was also used in this case and one single questionnaire for both categories. The survey was launched before workshops and interviews, so as to collect initial findings concerning the identification and classification of the main specific objectives of the new Programme under each of the identified Policy Objectives that will facilitate the latter. A total number of 57 stakeholders participated in the web-survey out of the total 244 who were invited to participate from both participating countries. This amounts to a total of 23% who participated in the survey out of the ones who were initially invited from both categories A and B. The highest percentage that participated from this category of stakeholders was on behalf of Greece, 73.7%, while 26.3% was from Italy. National, regional and local public authorities participated the most and recorded a percentage of 43,9%. The web-survey provided useful insights for the selection of the SOs under each PO and also in relation to the examination of the PO3 to be included in the new Programme. Insights were also provided with regard to interlinks among the POs and SOs as well as with regard to EUSAIR priorities and flagships and priority areas of maritime dimension.

- Workshops: two workshops took place online as follows:

The first workshop evolved around Policy Objective 1 and Policy Objective 2. It took place on 13th May 2021. A total of 112 participants submitted their details. A number of four polls took place under each session with regard to the region of residence of the participants, the

SOs under this POs, types of actions and selected beneficiaries followed by respective interventions, providing useful insights in this frame.

The second workshop evolved around Policy Objective 4 and Interreg Specific Objective 1, as well as the potential integration of SOs under PO3 into the selected POs and ISO1. The workshop took place on 14th May 2021. A total of 145 participants submitted their details. A number of four polls took place under each session with regard to the region of residence of the participants, the SOs under this POs, types of actions and selected beneficiaries followed by respective interventions, providing useful insights in this frame.

- Targeted Interviews: a number of targeted interviews took place either online via live interview or via written contribution. Interviews took place with EUSAIR representatives from both countries, representatives of transnational programmes (ADRION, MED) and other cross-border programmes (Greece-Albania, Italy-Albania-Montenegro) as well as MAs of Regional Operational Programmes.

Public consultations were organised according to the principles stipulated in the EC “*European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds*” (2014).

The Programme envisages the continuous involvement of relevant partners in the implementation in order to contribute with their knowledge and expertise and increase transparency in decision-making processes. It is also required in order to increase the alignment and coordination with other programmes as well as the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, main priorities and flagships.

Encouraging representatives of the MAs of the Regional Operational Programmes funded by the European Structural Funds of the territories involved to participate in the Programme Monitoring Committee is already foreseen by the Programme (chapter 1.2.3 “*Complementarity and Synergies (including Contribution to Macro-regional Strategies)*”). The Monitoring Committee will be established according to the provisions of the Interreg Regulation 2021/1059 (articles 28, 29 and 30).

Finally, according to the European Code of Conduct, the Managing Authority uploaded the following on its webpage:

The Managing Authority of the INTERREG V-A Cooperation Program Greece-Italy 2014-2020 in the context of the writing of the new Cooperation Program for the Programming Period 2021-2027 and with the aim of further developing the partnership conducted 3 phases of public consultation as follows:

The 1st phase of the Public Consultation was carried out with the aim of highlighting the needs and challenges of the intervention area, gathering information not only on the strengths and weaknesses, but also the opportunities and threats presented in it. In addition, the contribution of the bodies was obtained through their experience from the design, but also the implementation of the current Interreg V-A European Cooperation Program “Greece - Italy 2014-2020”.

The 2nd phase of the Public Consultation focused on prioritizing the Specific Objectives of the Program Strategy to meet the needs of the cross-border area, submitting proposals for relevant actions through which these Objectives will be met, linking the specific objectives with the rest selected Policy Objectives, as well as in the selection of objectives and their interconnection with the identified Policy Objectives in the context of the Marine Dimension of the Program.

Finally, the 3rd phase of Public Consultation was conducted at executive level, during the period from 1 to 13 July 2021. More specifically, the contribution of the bodies was requested, through written interviews regarding:

→ the promotion of synergies and / or complementary actions of the new Interreg VI-A Program Greece-Italy 2021-2027, with the other Programs implemented in the cross-border cooperation area,

→ the areas of Blue Growth in which the new Program should focus

→ the proposals regarding the Strategy of the new Program.

It is noted that the relevant invitations for the consultations were posted on the website of the Program (<https://greece-italy.eu/>), as well as the results of all phases of the consultation.

The Programming Committee of the Interreg VI-A Cooperation Program "Greece- Italy 2021-2027 based on the results of the above consultations and within the framework of its responsibilities, formulated the present draft Program which was sent informally to the relevant bodies of the EU.

In order to monitor the implementation of the Interreg VI-A Program "Greece - Italy 2021-2027", the Member States, in agreement with the Managing Authority, will set up a "Monitoring Committee" within three (3) months from the date of the European Commission's notification of its decision for the approval of the programme (in accordance with Article 28 of the Interreg Programme Regulation). The composition of the Monitoring Committee is agreed by the Member States and ensures the balanced representation of the relevant authorities and bodies in the intervention area. Partners, including nationally recognised professional organisations and chambers, may also be represented on the Cooperation Program Monitoring Committees. Member States may ensure that partners are involved in the preparatory work of the Monitoring Committee, in particular through their participation in the work of national coordination committees organised in the participating Member States.

5. Approach to communication and visibility for the Interreg programme (objectives, target audiences, communication channels, including social media outreach, where appropriate, planned budget and relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation)

Reference: point (h) of Article 17(3)

Text field [10 000]

From results to outcomes: cohesion policy to tell a new idea of Europe

Communicating the achievements of cohesion policy cooperation projects and strengthening the European identity on the territories: this is the challenge that awaits Greece-Italy programme in the 2021-2027 programming period.

In the 2014-2020 period, communication has taken a step forward by assuming a strategic function: no longer a simple compliance with regulatory requirements, but a new effective narrative that is able to offer an accurate analysis of the impacts on the territories. The aim is to shorten the distance between citizens and Europe and to explain, with a simple and immediate language, how European policies become part of everyone's daily life.

In order to enhance the storytelling of cohesion policy, and to paint a positive picture of the idea of "Europe", the communication in the 2021-2027 will focus on the concrete impact of the operations.

It is extremely important to give continuity to the communication activities and tools performed during the previous Programming Period and spreading them to the eligible Programme areas, by capitalising these experiences, avoiding all possible mistakes made in the past; carrying out new, more effective and pervasive actions.

Main Objectives of the Communication Strategy:

- Inform potential applicants about funding opportunities and guide them in the application process with clear, complete and timely information
- Support beneficiaries in the implementation of their projects, and guide them to respect the programme and EU rules, including communication obligations
- Highlight the results with concrete and visible achievements that emphasize the Programme impact in the citizens' life
- Demonstrate the role of EU and the way how and where the European funds are spent, ensuring transparency about the use of public money
- Engaging citizens to strengthen European identity and democracy by storytelling the cooperation.

Target

- Potential applicants and Partners and lead partners of approved projects;
- Stakeholders, Decision-makers of state members dealing with national policies in the fields of regional development; Representatives of national, regional and local authorities from participating Countries in the eligible areas;
- General public (Citizens of the eligible areas);

- Media from member countries at regional and national level (web, written radio, tv, newspapers);
- EU institutions - Officials from different EU bodies.

Communication Channels

1. Logo and Visual identity

A visual identity will make sure all communication activities are visually aligned and easily recognised, in order to ensure greater visibility of the Programme. Gr-It visual Identity Brand Manual will be the only reference guide to explain the main rules to respect in the use of programme graphic identity.

2. The Programme website

The Programme website www.greece-italy.eu is the primary information and communication channel, addressed to all target groups. The website will host funded project websites to avoid fragmentation of information, ensure lasting availability of results, maintain coherent appearance in line with the Programme visual identity, and strengthen the link between the Programme and its projects. The website will host the banners that link to the national website <https://interreg.gr/en/#Welcome> and <https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/>.

The programme's website will be linked to the single website portal providing access to all programmes of the Member States, as requested by Article 46(b)) CPR.

3. Social media

In the 2014-2020 Programming Period, the Programme managed 4 social media accounts that reached a good level of interaction with stakeholder and citizens.

Social Media	Followers August 2021
Facebook	3346/3018 like
Twitter	1003
Instagram	717
Youtube	115

In the 2021-2027 PP, the Programme can add also a LinkedIn account.

4. Events

Info-day and seminars to facilitate beneficiaries to understand Programme rules and manuals, about project implementation, communication, first level control. Other events will promote the project results as European Cooperation Day, European Week of Regions and Cities.

5. Mass Media and Public Relation

Media is the best tool to increase awareness and interest towards the benefits of the Programme and European funds in general.

6. Video/animation production/gifs/infographics/storytelling video

Video presentation of Programme will be implemented to highlight the programme priorities and objectives. Animation production will represent the programme results and Infographics will explain the procedures, the workflow of financial management. Storytelling video will tell the results and the stories of cooperation.

7. Participation in European Campaigns

#EUinmyregion, Interact contests and competitions, ASOC, At the School of Open Cohesion, RegioStars

8. Promotional materials and newsletter

Communication Phases

The communication phases foreseen follow the lifecycle of the Programme (introduction, preparation, development, maturation, closure). In particular:

- Phase A: General information about the Programme and its actions; launch event.
- Phase B: Creating knowledge about the Programme and its actions in the various target audiences; easy access to the individual actions and the opportunities the Programme offers.
- Phase C: Dissemination of achievements and benefits; promotion of Good Practices.

More specifically, for this Programme the MA appoints a Communication Officer, while within six (6) months from its approval by the European Commission the MA ensures the operation of a Programme website, in accordance with the provisions of Article 49 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

Based on the lessons learned from the Programme's previous experience, communication activities will start earlier (long before the first call for proposals) and will make greater use of new technologies and social media.

In addition, it is foreseen to activate beneficiaries in order for them to act as multipliers of the communication effort, but also to create a permanent mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the results of the communication effort through:

A. The submission of a detailed communication strategy at the same time with the submission of the application for funding. The communication strategy should include at least: i) communication audiences of the project; ii) communication targets; iii) communication message (per audience and/or target); iv) indicative communication tools to be used; and v) indicators for monitoring and evaluating the strategy.

B. The submission of an Annual Report of activities / results of the relevant communication actions.

C. The submission of a Final Report of activities / results of the relevant communication actions.

Additionally, on an annual basis, good project communication practices shall be published on the Programme's website.

Last but not least, the communication strategy of both the MA and the beneficiaries will take into account the accessibility of disabled persons and will be further specialised in the relevant documents.

Monitoring and evaluation

Budget

The implementation of communication activities (with special attention to the results and the added value of the support) is financed under the Technical Assistance of the Programme and the relevant budget amount will be established within the definition of the T.A. financial plan by the two Member Countries.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Action	Implementation Indicator	Result Indicator
Promotion on Social Media	Number of social media Number of posts	Number of followers, engagement (comments, reactions), views, shares etc.
Programme Website	Number of entries / posts	Visits
Promotional Activities / Technical Meetings and Events	Number of meetings / events	Number of participants per meeting/event Level of satisfaction from meeting/event
Promotional Material	Number of material / productions / printings	Number of distributed productions / diffusion

Evaluation tools

Monitoring and evaluation of communication actions can increase their effectiveness and impact in terms of knowledge, learning and message retention. Here the evaluation toolkit:

Metric Website	Social Media	Mass Media and PR	Events	Promotional materials	Video/gift animations	Newsletter
Unique visitors	Number of followers/likes	Article date	Number of participants: physical and online	Number of download	Views	Subscribers
Visits	Engagment rate: share, likes, comments	Press category	Follow up questionnaire	Number of spread publications	Time views	Unsubscribers
Page Views	Number of mentions	Media title	Registrations		Subscription of channel	Open rate
Return Visit Rate	Coverage	Article position				Forward rate
Time spent per visit	Nazionality and age of the followers	Audience				Bounce rate
Page views per visit		Readership numbers				
Bounce rate						

Appointment of a Communication Officer

The MA will appoint a communication officer for ensuring visibility and transparency of the Programme's communication activities, according to the provisions of the Regulation 2021/1060 (article 48).

6. Indication of support to small-scale projects, including small projects within small project funds

Reference: point (i) of Article 17(3), Article 24

Text field [7 000]

With the objective to simplify and decrease administrative burdens, according to the Interreg Regulation 2021/1059 (26) where it is stipulated that “*Under cross-border cooperation programmes, people-to-people and small-scale projects are important and successful instruments, with high European added value, for eliminating border and cross border obstacles, fostering contacts between people locally and, bringing border regions and their citizens closer together*” and article 24(1) point a), the Programme supports also Small-Scale Projects (SSPs).

The Programme intends to attract new partners and to encourage inter alia the participation of smaller organisations, such as NGOs, the civil society, associations and small municipalities. These organisations do not have administrative, financial capacity and human resources to manage complex cooperation projects. The entire SSP will be managed through simplified costs. This extremely simplified reporting and controlling is expected to decrease administrative burdens and costs and decrease the error risk. Additionally, the short time necessary to start this type of projects and their short duration enable a more efficient implementation and a timely achievement of outputs, therefore the Programme could timely reach the 2024 targets of the performance framework.

Bearing this in mind, the 2021-2027 Programme will:

- effectively communicate to potential new partners and small organisations the SSPs call/s;
- allocate sufficient programme funds to SSPs (5% of the total programme budget);
- keep the simplified approach, i.e., project reporting exclusively on the basis of simplified costs, according art. 53 (1) c) of the Regulation 2021/1060;
- assess the availability of statistical data to calculate lump sums;
- launch the first SSPs call in 2022, in order to have first outputs in 2024, and therefore to make the achievement of 2024 targets of the Programme performance framework possible.

Based on the above the key features of the SSPs call will be as follows:

ALLOCATION TO THEMES:

- SO2.6. Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
- SO4.6. Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation
- ISO1.1. Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and all stakeholders
- ISO1.4. Enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies.

FINANCING AND PAYMENTS:

The Programme envisages the use of simplified cost options for small scale projects, potentially using annex 1 in a future modification.

AMOUNTS:

Amounts are calculated on a fair, equitable and verifiable methodology, pre-discussed with the Audit Authorities and the Group of Auditors.

In order to take the different costs of living in the two countries into account, adjustments may be necessary through the application of a country correction coefficients.

PROJECT SIZE, PARTNERSHIP & DURATION:

Project size, partnership and duration will be identified at a later stage, during the implementation period in order to respond to specific needs and particular circumstances.

7. Implementing provisions

7.1. Programme authorities

Reference: point (a) of Article 17(6)

Table 9

Programme authorities	Name of the institution [255]	Contact name [200]	E-mail [200]
Managing authority	Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, Hellenic Ministry of Development and Investments	Head of the Managing Authority	interreg@mou.gr
National authority (for programmes with participating third or partner countries, if appropriate)			
Audit authority	Financial Control Committee (EDEL), Ministry of Finance - General Accounting Office of the State, Greece	Executive Director of EDEL	
Group of auditors' representatives			
Body to which the payments are to be made by the Commission	Special Service "Certifying and Verifications Authority of Co-funded Programmes", Units A, B and C, Ministry of	Head of the Special Service "Certifying and Verifications Authority of Co-funded Programmes"	spa@m nec.gr

	Development and Investment		
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The audit authority has the authority to carry audits throughout the Programme area. Moreover, the programme has set up a system ensuring that all exchanges between beneficiaries and all the programme authorities are carried out by means of electronic data exchange in accordance with Annex XIV of the Common Provisions Regulation

7.2. Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

Reference: point (b) of Article 17(6)

The JS undertakes the day-to-day implementation of the Programme and assists the MA and the MC carrying out their duties. The functions and role of JS are determined its RoPs. The JS is composed by a core body in Puglia and two decentralized structures in Greece. The JS core is hosted by Puglia Region and located in Bari and two decentralized structures in Greece. An indicative number of thirteen (13) staff members supports its operation in various capacities related to project monitoring, and communication activities. The JS recruitment is activated by a joint recruitment committee and on the basis of the principles of transparency, equal opportunity and gender equality and non-discrimination. Puglia Region, in agreement with the MA, recruits the core JS staff in line with EU and Italian public procurement procedures, taking into consideration the agreed ToRs laying down individual job descriptions suitable for the implementation of the JS tasks.

Contracting procedures are in compliance with the legal procedures provided by Italian law for the recruitment and contracting of experts/staff.

The JS decentralised structures are set up in Greece as follows:

- One (1) **branch** in Thessaloniki within the MA
- One (1) **antenna** in Kerkyra.

The JS branch bridges the gap between the core JS and MA, at least by ensuring:

- Daily representation of JS to the MA
- Daily information provision and support to the MA
- Project national co-financing, and
- Solving issues raises regarding the MIS, financing, participating in relation to the CA.

All responsibilities of the core JS are applicable to the branch as requested by the MA.

The antenna in Kerkyra has a continuous overview of the Programme implementation and represent the JS in the Greek regions. The staff of the decentralised structures were selected and recruited by the MA according to the European and Greek public procurement rules. The daily function of all JS structures is set up in agreement with and under the supervision and guidance of the MA. The entire JS system supports the MA and reports to it.

Additionally, two (2) **info contact points** are already established in Greece (located in Ioannina and Patras, respectively), while three (3) new info contact points will be setup in Italy (one in Matera and two in Calabria, one located in Cittadella Regionale site in Catanzaro and the other in Regional Council in Reggio Calabria), in order to ensure that the goals of the Cooperation Programme are communicated to potential beneficiaries and other

stakeholders in Greece. Moreover, these structures serve as national information points for the project's preparation, submission and implementation steps. Their activities are in synergy with the ones undertaken by the JS and more specifically these were set as follows:

- provide support to the applicants and partners at local level
- assist on the project generation, application and implementation process
- contribute to information and publicity actions in Greece.

The two (2) info contact points were also selected and recruited by the MA, according to the European and Greek public procurement rules. Both national authorities will be setting up national coordination points in the frame of the Greece-Italy Programme.

7.3. Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States and where applicable, the third or partner countries and OCTs, in the event of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Reference: point (c) of Article 17(6)

The recommendations and corrective measures might result from any type of control implemented (checks by the Managing Authority and by the Member States, by the Certifying Authority, system and operation audits, audits by the European Commission and by the European Court of Auditors). Anti-fraud checks will be performed for all operations likely to be proposed for funding. The results will be communicated to the Monitoring Committee. The Managing Authority shall ensure that any amount paid out as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the project via the Lead beneficiary.

In line with article 69 (2): “Member States shall ensure the legality and regularity of expenditure included in the accounts submitted to the Commission and shall take all required actions to prevent, detect and correct and report on irregularities including fraud. Those actions comprise the collection of information on the beneficial owners of the recipients of Union funding in accordance with Annex XVII. The rules related to the collection and processing of such data shall comply with applicable data protection rules. The Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office and the Court of Auditors shall have the necessary access to that information”.

In line with article 52 (1) of Interreg Regulation, the Managing Authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the lead or sole partner. Partners shall repay to the lead partner any amounts unduly paid. In line with paragraph 3 of the same article, 3, where the lead partner does not succeed in securing repayment from other partners or where the managing authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead or sole partner, the Member State, third country, partner country or OCT on whose territory the partner concerned is located or, in the case of an EGTC, is registered, shall reimburse the managing authority any amounts unduly paid to that partner. The managing authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union, in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States, third countries, partner countries or OCTs set out in the Interreg programme. In accordance with Article 52 (4) of the same regulation, once the Member State has reimbursed the Managing Authority any amounts unduly paid to a partner, it may continue or start a recovery procedure against that partner under its national law. Should the Member State not reimburse the Managing Authority, in accordance with Article 52 (5) the amounts shall be subject to a recovery order by the European Commission that, where possible, will be executed by offsetting with amounts due to the Member State. Such recovery shall not constitute a financial correction and shall not reduce the support from

the ERDF to the respective Interreg programme. The offsetting shall concern subsequent payments to the same Interreg programme. In such an eventuality, the Managing Authority will start bilateral discussions with the concerned Member State until a joint solution is found on how and from where to offset the amount deducted by the European Commission.

The Member State will bear liability in connection with the use of the programme ERDF as follows:

- Each Member State bears liability for possible financial consequences of irregularities caused by the Lead beneficiaries and project partners located on its territory;
- For a systemic irregularity or financial correction on programme level (the latter decided by the European Commission), the Member States will bear the financial consequences in proportion to the relevant irregularity detected on the respective State territory. Where the systemic irregularity or financial correction cannot be linked to a specific State territory, the Member States will be responsible in proportion to the ERDF contribution paid to the respective national project partners involved.
- For technical assistance expenditure incurred by the Managing Authority, the liability related to administrative irregularities shall be borne by the Managing Authority.
- For the technical assistance expenditure incurred by the Member States the liability shall be borne by the Member State concerned.

If the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, the Certifying Authority, any Member State becomes aware of irregularities, it shall without any delay inform the liable Member States or Managing Authority. The latter will ensure the transmission of information to the Certifying Authority and Audit Authority/Group of Auditors, where relevant. As stated in Article 69 (12) of the CPR, irregularities shall be reported by the Member State. The Member State shall also inform the Managing Authority who will in turn inform the Audit Authority. Specific procedures in this respect will be part of the description of the programme management and control system to be established in accordance with Article 69 of the CPR.

8. Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

Reference: Articles 94 and 95 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR)

Table 10

Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

Intended use of Articles 94 and 95	YES	NO
From the adoption the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates under priority according to Article 94 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
From the adoption the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on financing not linked to costs according to Article 95 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNEX 1. Map of the Programme Area

Map of the programme area



ANNEX 2. SWOT Analysis of the Programme Area

SWOT analysis on the basis of the five policy objectives under the new Cohesion Policy

The below SWOT analysis presents the main characteristics of the Programme Area based on the analysis that was provided above, and as per the decisions and processes that took place during the drafting phase.

PO 1: A SMARTER EUROPE

Strengths

- Sufficient number of academic and research entities
- High quality of existing academic entities
- Tourism one of the strongest sectors of the Programme Area (esp. Greek region of Ionian Islands).
- Puglia's regional strategy fostering the creativity chain yields results and can be replicated on the Greek side of the borders (Puglia is a strong supporter of the creative Europe framework)
- Increase in population aged 24-30 with tertiary education in the Programme Area
- Increase in employment in the blue economy in Greece in the period from 4% in 2009 to 9.4% in 2017.
- Good number of new enterprises (start-up) in the territories
- Good results from the projects- start-ups with younger people (CRAFT LAB, INCUBA, PIT STOP, TRACES, YESS, CREATIVE CAMPS)
- Great number of high grow enterprises in Puglia (963 - 16,5% source ISTAT)
- Good enterprise birth rate in Puglia (7,7); sufficient in Greece (4,5)
- Good level of digital skills of women (19% in Puglia, 16,1% as national rate)
- Presence of nr. 10 Universities on the eligible area (Bari, Lecce, Foggia, Polytechnic of Bari, Lum, Patras, Ioannina, Ionian, Peloponnese, Open Hellenic University)

Weaknesses

- GDP per capita in the Programme area still lagging behind the EU-27 average
- Regional Competitive Index (RCI) of the programme area's regions has remained far below the EU average (lowest negative for Greek regions and second lowest for the Italian)
- Regions are characterized as moderate performers in terms of innovation (Regional Innovation Scoreboard, 2019)
- Levels of R&D intensity and employment in this area are in general very low
- Still lagging behind R&D investments
- Low levels of international patent applications in the programme area
- Lagging behind in terms of the application of digital technologies (daily internet use, use of e-banking services, e-Government, digitalisation in business and commerce)

- Seasonality of Tourism persists as well as its concentration in specific regions (Ionian Islands and Foggia and Lecce provinces)
- Lagging behind in SME competitiveness performance
- High number of NEET in Puglia region
- Low exploitation of blue growth potential
- Poor connection between research and innovation business

Opportunities

- New investment law (Greek) 4399/2016
- RIS3 Strategies providing support to a number of sectors such as: primary, agro-food, tourism, culture, maritime economy, ICT, digitalisation etc
- Improved performance in innovation for Western Greece and Ionian Islands
- Key metrics of arrivals and nights spent in total and by non-residents have improved significantly during 2012-2017
- EU Digital Strategy
- EUSAIR strategy
- Increasing involvement of young people in the innovation and competitiveness system
- Increasing entrepreneurship support infrastructures for young skilled people
- Strong existing network between the universities (Bari, Lecce, Foggia, Polytechnic of Bari, Patras, Ioannina, Ionian and Peloponnese)
- Presence of Patras Science Park
- Bio-economy and Circular Economy
- Opportunities offered by blue economy/blue jobs

Threats

- Stagnant economic growth
- Unemployment remains high
- Increase in the long-term structural unemployment
- Large share of employment in low-tech manufacturing
- Low share of human resources in science/technology and knowledge intensive services
- Rapidly increasing unit labour costs in manufacturing over the past decade
- Large share of working-age population with low educational attainment
- Decline in employment in industry between 2000 and 2014
- COVID-19 pandemic outbreak
- Low rate of innovation of the regional productive system (42,5% in Puglia, 48,7% in Italy)
- Climate change

PO2: A GREENER, LOW-CARBON EUROPE

Strengths

- Favourable conditions for the production of renewable energy (Greek regions generate more than 80% of the energy from renewable sources in 2015)
- Lead position of Puglia in producing Resource Efficiency Systems (RES) - (second electricity producer in Italy and the first exporter)
- Rich environmental heritage (sea, mountains, rivers, water courses, forests, wetlands)
- Large number of Natura 2000 sites and nationally protected areas ("Ramsar" (wetland) sites and areas that are rated "high" on the Wilderness Quality Index)
- Greece top performer in the ecological status of transitional and coastal water
- Increased blue economy's share in Greek national gross value added (GVA) is 3.8% in 2017 when compared to 2,2% in 2009 (in Italy it has been stable 1,3% in 2019 compared to 1,2% in 2009)
- Biofuels and renewable wastes are the largest single source accounting for 48% in Italy and 41% in Greece.
- Solar energy is 21% of total renewables in Greece
- Italy has high share of renewable energy sources in transport
- Sustainable Tourism as a priority in national and regional policies
- High level of separate waste collection in Puglia (37,2% Puglia rate, 21,5% Italy rate)

Weaknesses

- Air pollution caused by emissions coming from shipping
- Cruise ships raise issues in relation to emissions of sulphur and nitrogen oxides
- Negative effects of air pollution on fisheries and biodiversity
- Ecological status of rivers and lakes in the programme area is less than good (water quality assessed to be the worst in Puglia)
- Recycling of municipal waste in Greece is substantially below EU average
- Greece puts a significantly higher share of waste into landfill (at 81%) while Italy, at 21%, is below the EU average.
- No transboundary ecosystems among the programme area's regions
- Bad water quality assessed in the Italian region of Puglia.
- Air pollution is also the cause of monuments deterioration and buildings degradation as well as it affects visibility in many areas interested by tourism
- Soil degradation and climate change

Opportunities

- RIS3 Strategies providing support to a number of sectors such as: energy applications, green and blue economy, sustainable manufacturing (Puglia region: intelligent factory, aerospace, mechatronics)
- Both countries are engaged under the Barcelona Convention framework towards the establishment of a SOx ECA in the Mediterranean Sea
- Circular Economy policies
- EU framework and national policies for the reduction of CO2 emissions
- EUSAIR strategy
- Green Deal

Threats

- COVID-19 pandemic outbreak
- Medium-to very high environmental sensitivity to climate change for some parts. Highest risk in parts of Epirus, Western Greece and Ionian Island
- Continuous increase of tourism flows creates pressure in the area's marine and coastal environment
- High concentrations of mercury are present in many coastal areas of the Adriatic and, to a more limited extent, in the coastal areas of the Ionian Sea
- Lack of knowledge and awareness regarding related issues

PO 4: A MORE SOCIAL EUROPE

Strengths

- Dominant tertiary sector in the area
- Increase in population aged 24-30 with tertiary education in the Programme Area
- In Puglia, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion have decreased by 22% from 2012 to 2017, still the percentage is high at national level
- High rate of life expectancy at birth in the Greece-Italy border area (all regions in the area are equal to, or above, the EU average of 81 years)
- Experience coming from the interaction with immigrants and relevant best practices

Weaknesses

- Low employment levels for people aged 15-64, for the year 2018 below EU average (highest in Greek regions and lowest in Puglia, at 45,5%)
- Low youth employment rate, below EU average
- High unemployment rates for all regions in the area, especially in Western Greece and Puglia region
- Health issues linked to air pollution
- Ageing of population
- Unemployment remains high
- High shares of working population with low educational achievement, compared to the EU average (Puglia has by far the highest with 49.8%, more than double the EU average of 21.9%).
- Low rate of adult participation in learning (lowest level in Epirus at 2%)
- High level of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (especially in Puglia and Western Greece regions)
- High number of NEET in Puglia region
- Low level in the use of second language

Opportunities

- EUSAIR strategy
- EU Youth Strategy and Youth Employment Support Package
- Potential for social innovation
- Good presence of no profit organization in Puglia (rate in Puglia 42,4%, in Italy 57,9%)
- Good rate people with degree (age 30-34) (Puglia 21,8, Italy 27,8)
- Good presence of employees in the learning sector (15,4% in Puglia, 17,3% in Italy)

- Increasing participation long life learning (Puglia +5,4% 2019)

Threats

- COVID-19 pandemic outbreak
- Significant increase in migration/refugee flows
- Increase in the long-term structural unemployment
- Seasonal employment
- Low connection between education and labour market
- Risk of people living in poverty which is high both in Greece and Italy
- Low employment rate for women (35,6% in Puglia, 53,1% in Italy)
- Great n. of graduates who moves in other regions or countries for search work (Puglia 23,9%, Italy 4,0%)
- Lack of services in small settlements
- Population decline
- Low levels of mobility

ISO 1: A BETTER INTERREG GOVERNANCE

Strengths

- Programme history
- Existence of Info-points
- Excellent cooperation between the MA and JS

Weaknesses

- Administrative and legal differences issues
- Cultural differences (language)
- Capacity building and skills (including digital skills) of public authorities

Opportunities

- Close coordination with the macro-regional strategy EUSAIR, the ADRION transnational programme, the IPA CBC programmes
- Simplified procedures
- Involvement of the society
- Capitalisation activities

Threats

- COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

ANNEX 3. Appendix 1 (Interreg Regulation)

Appendix 3

List of planned operations of strategic importance with a timetable - Article 17(3)

The Programme intends to finance targeted projects under Priorities 1, 2 and 3. As targeted are considered the projects meeting the objectives and scope as mentioned below.

For all the proposed projects the main communication objectives are:

1. Highlight the results with concrete and visible achievements, that emphasize the Programme impact in the citizens' life;
2. Demonstrate the role of the EU and the way how and where the European funds are spent, ensuring transparency about the use of public money;
3. Engaging citizens to strengthen European identity and democracy by storytelling the cooperation

In particular, the scope of targeted projects is summarised per Priority / SO as follows:

PRIORITY 1 - SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.3 (Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs)

- Focus on the blue economy and especially ship building, coastal and thematic tourism, training in blue economy, etc. Actions: Encouragement & creation of clustering, especially of quadruple helix; Enabling cross-sectoral cooperation to help SMEs, other emerging enterprises (start-ups, incubators) and young entrepreneurs in key sectors of the area to increase the level of sustainable growth and competitiveness and scale up in the frame of the smart economic transition; One-stop-shops' operation for the SMEs support; Supporting start-ups of young entrepreneurs by the realisation of hubs, promotion of local employment through the cross-border partnership and the creation of specific cross-border job centres.

PRIORITY 2 - SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.4 (Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches)

- Capitalising on successful results/experience of the 2014-2020 period, which focused on the common ecosystems and threat (forest fires, cost erosion) and provided a cross border surveillance system and civil protection network to respond to natural and maritime risks, the OP will further developing the network civil protection and logistics platforms dedicated to civil protection in the eligible areas. Furthermore, the OSI aims to a comprehensive network, including maritime and fires' risk management in small infrastructures (i.e. small fishing shelters, peripheral airports etc). Actions: Sharing methodology for preventing and fighting wildfires in the forests and rural areas; Implement small scale pilot infrastructural activities for the prevention of maritime erosion in small rural infrastructures. Promotion of open decision-making processes for the territorial planning, the risk management and the maritime risk management, the protection of sensitive biodiversity and climate change adaptation in rural maritime areas; Building of common logistics platforms and sharing of common information technology tools of civil protection also to prevent the maritime risk; Promoting a common intervention approach for maritime risk management.

PRIORITY 3 - SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.6 (Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation)

Following Based on the experience of the 2014-2020, some key results were the creation of cross sectoral cooperation in the cross-border context for science-backed tourism for economic development based on common cultural identity and heritage; creation of a strong network of CCI for economic development; creation of cultural coastal routes. Actions: Supporting the promotion of quality-assessed Micro & SME tourism operations and destinations in the eligible areas; provide a wider visibility and market uptake of tourism and culture economic operators through the cross border networks based on common touristic product and identity; Elaboration of cross border Destination Management Plans, for sustainable cruise destinations in order to link the ports of the cross border area; Harmonisation of tourism flows through the territories using Cultural Routes as tools for the creation of innovative and diversified tourism product; Pilot actions in critical touristic areas which could operate as models for further expansion and touristic development (e.g. underwater and diving tourism in coastal areas, silver tourism, thematic tourism such as slow tourism, cultural, mountain / sustainable etc.); Moreover, actions will focus on the rehabilitation/ renovation/upgrading of buildings of great historical /cultural value that will be revived and turned into vivid touristic/cultural points. The sites will have single or multipurpose use and will be able to host alternative touristic activities (spaces of wellbeing, art and local culture, slow tourism, cultural, mountain / sustainable etc). The aim of the interventions is to boost the further expansion and the touristic development, capitalize and contribute to the thematic cross border networks and routes that are created during the current programming period.

The timetable for the targeted projects is indicatively as follows:

- Partnerships building: Q1 2022
- Analysis of the common needs & potentials: Q2 2022
- First draft objectives & actions: Q2 2022
- Agreement on draft projects: Q3 2022
- Partners eligibility check by JS: Q3 2022
- Developing detailed work plan and budgets: Q3 2022
- Submission of final projects: Q3 2022
- Decision by the MC & contracting: Q1 2023
- Projects launch: Q2 2023.