



EU Strategy for the  
Adriatic and Ionian Region  
**EUSAIR**



***Monitoring and Evaluation of the  
European Strategy of Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR)***

***Task T 3.1: Building the Knowledge Base relevant to  
Pillar 4 „Sustainable Tourism“***

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**ZAGREB, CROATIA, 17/08/2020**

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## **INTROUCTION**

The project “EUSAIR Monitoring and Evaluation for Pillar 4 - Sustainable Tourism“ was assigned to the consortium comprising Institute for Development and International Relation – IRMO and Ecorys Ltd. The contract with The Croatian Ministry for Tourism was signed on July 17th, 2020.

The project includes three (3) main tasks:

Task T 3.1: Building the Knowledge Base relevant to Pillar 4 „Sustainable Tourism“,

Task T 3.2: Establishing the EUSAIR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework,

Task T 3.3: Capacity building for public authorities.

During the first month of the project intensive data gathering activities have been performed with the aim to build the strong framework for the knowledge database.

This report represent the summary of the key findings collected and elaborated according to the template suggested in the Terms of References, Annex 1: Guidance for the preparation of the EUSAIR Monitoring pillar reports 2019, and the first project meeting held on July 23th 2020 with the task Coordinator LKN ANALYSIS Ltd and University of the Aegean.

Additionally, four annexes are submitted as a separate excel tables:

- EUSAIR relevant projects (their summaries, project partners, contracting authorities, geographical coverage – 165 projects have been listed and described)
- EUSAIR research institutions and research studies relevant for identification of TSG4 key indicators (their specific area of research and web page links – 137 research institutions and research studies have been listed and described),
- EUSAIR list of sustainable tourism networks (28 networks have been listed and described and web page links provided where available; 8 of them is still yet to be established), and
- EUSAIR list of key group of stakeholders relevant for the TSG4 topic 19 stakeholder groups have been listed and their role described).

Zagreb, August 2020

## **CHAPTER 1: SWOT ANALYSIS**

### **1.1 MAIN FEATURES OF THE MACRO-REGION REGARDING THE PILLAR TOPICS**

The Macroregional approach is an innovative mode of territorial cooperation among regions and nations, with balanced and sustainable development as a shared goal. The base of its philosophy is that common challenges and opportunities can better be faced through multilevel and more focused cooperation. The Macroregion which is based on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is not a geographical entity, but a functional area, composed of national, regional, and local bodies pooling their energies to tackle a number of shared issues. The Macroregion is not a further institutional level within the European Union (like states, regions, municipalities, etc.) but rather a network, an operating mode or, more precisely, a joint Initiative involving several European, national, regional and stakeholder policies and funding programmes.

Therefore, it is a functional area primarily defined by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas basin. Covering also an important terrestrial surface area, it treats the marine, coastal and terrestrial areas as interconnected systems. Home to more than 70 million people, the Region plays a key role in strengthening geographical continuity in Europe. The Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) concerns nine countries – four EU countries, Croatia, Italy, Greece and Slovenia, and five candidate-countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia<sup>1</sup>.

On 2 April 2020, EUSAIR, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, embraced the Republic of North Macedonia as its ninth participating country.

All of the countries strive to accomplish global attractiveness and recognition aimed at developing all-year round tourism, attracting new investment and subsequently more employment. The emphasis is on high-quality, authentic, green, diverse and sustainable tourism. In order to achieve this, but also other strategic goals, tools and strategies are considered that will increase tourism flows and expenditure, upgrade/ensure the quality (greening) of tourism products and services, improve accommodation and tourism education and attract investment. The results of the survey demonstrate a high level of awareness of the main internal problems that currently block the further development of sustainable tourism. These include high seasonality of tourism activity, poor infrastructure

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2014) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region. Available at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/adriat\\_ionian/pdf/com\\_357\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/adriat_ionian/pdf/com_357_en.pdf)

and/or accommodation quality, regional differences (administration, level of development) lack of investment, strong grey economy, lack of adequate marketing strategies, unsustainable use of natural resources and legislative issues, among other problems. Sustainable tourism development is primarily seen as a means for employment and investment that will, in time, result in a higher quality of life for the local population.

**Figure 1. Map of EUSAIR countries**



Source: European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionician/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionician/)

Pillar 4 of the Strategy, Sustainable tourism, focuses on developing the sustainable and responsible tourism potential of the Adriatic-Ionian Region, through innovative and quality tourism products and services. Another aim is promoting responsible tourism behaviour on the part of all stakeholders across the Region. The specific objectives for this pillar are:

1. Diversification of the macro-region’s tourism products and services along with tackling seasonality of inland, coastal and maritime tourism demand.
2. Improving the quality and innovation of tourism offer and enhancing the sustainable and responsible tourism capacities of the tourism actors across the macro-region.

Pillar 4 aims to contribute to smart growth through stimulation of competitiveness in the tourism sector of the Adriatic Ionian Region, as well as optimisation of the potential of EU policies and available financial instruments. It also aims to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth through the promotion of resource-efficient, responsible and high-quality

tourism with new, better and more long-term jobs and to consolidation of the Adriatic-Ionian Region's profile as a sustainable and high-quality destination<sup>2</sup>.

The potential of the Region’s rich heritage is not yet fully exploited. Advantage can be taken of climate and market for creating a strong business-oriented dynamic based on best practices. Alternative, and all-year tourism, can be promoted in territorial development action plans. Diversifying and improving the quality of the tourism offer are key to sustainable tourism products and services.

More measures are needed for sustainable and responsible development among tourism stakeholders. They include common standards and rules, reducing the environmental impact of mass tourism, improving skills and involving all stakeholders (public, private, visitors) in promoting the sustainable and responsible tourism concept.

## 1.2 PRESENTATION OF SWOT ANALYSIS

As mentioned, the EUSAIR Pillar 4 is divided in two topics – diversified tourism offers and sustainable and responsible tourism management. The SWOT analysis of Pillar topic and subtopics is presented in the following tables:

**Table 1. SWOT analysis of sustainable tourism**

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable (green) competitive economic potential</li> <li>• Tourism as one of the fastest growing economic activities in the region and main GDP contributor</li> <li>• Regional weather and climate</li> <li>• Rich cultural, historical, archaeological and natural heritage</li> <li>• Functional areas with joint characteristics</li> <li>• Knowledge on innovative tourism products and services such as cultural/creative industries</li> <li>• Critical mass of niches of excellence</li> <li>• Strong potential of nautical sector</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism brings vitality to local economy</li> <li>• Top quality attractions</li> <li>• Safe tourism destination</li> <li>• Slow tourism potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich natural, cultural, historic and archaeological heritage but not exploited in a sustainable and responsible way or not exploited at all</li> <li>• Inadequate knowledge and skills on sustainable tourism</li> <li>• Inadequate level of quality in tourism offer</li> <li>• Poor implementation of sustainable tourism development policies and responsible tourism concepts</li> <li>• Low level of stakeholders' involvement (local population, visitors)</li> <li>• Insufficient ecological awareness of tourism participants</li> <li>• Seasonality</li> <li>• Lack of common branding strategies of macro regional tourism potentials</li> <li>• Complex and not harmonized regulatory framework</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2014) Commission Staff Working Document Action Plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of diversification of the tourism offer</li> <li>• Low level of accessibility of attractions to the visitors with special access needs</li> <li>• Inconsistency in the quality of infrastructure</li> <li>• Low labour productivity</li> <li>• Insufficient entrepreneurial and managerial skills</li> <li>• Low innovation capacity</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in cross-border cooperation</li> <li>• Infrastructure improvement</li> <li>• EU funding for sustainable tourism cross-border cooperation</li> <li>• Evolution towards “experience” economy</li> <li>• Development of circular economy concept in sustainable tourism</li> <li>• Development of information and communication technology (ICT)</li> <li>• Cooperation in efficiency and effective cooperation of tourism and R&amp;D sector, innovation networks</li> <li>• Improving employment and education in tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong dependency on the EU as a source market</li> <li>• Changing demography</li> <li>• Low level of integrated development initiatives and good governance policies</li> <li>• Tourism as a vulnerable activity</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• COVID 19</li> <li>• Area that is at high risk of Earthquake</li> </ul>

### 1.3 SUMMARIZING SWOT ANALYSIS

Tourism is already a fast-growing and main GDP contributing activity in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Moreover, the Adriatic-Ionian Region has sustainable (green) competitive economic potential, as well as the good weather and climate conditions. Rich cultural, historical, archeological and natural heritage provide a strong basis for sustainable tourism development. The Region is also characterized as a functional area with joint characteristics. Other strengths of sustainable tourism in Adriatic-Ionian Region are knowledge on innovative tourism products and services such as creative/cultural industries, critical mass of niches of excellence such as UNESCO sites, strong potential of nautical sector, top quality attractions (such as antique and Roman archeological sites, unique natural heritage sites) and security of tourist destinations. In addition, sustainable tourism brings vitality to local economy.

On the other hand, development of sustainable tourism in the Region is facing many obstacles, such as inadequate knowledge and skills on sustainable tourism forms, inadequate level of quality in tourism offer, poor implementation of sustainable development policies and responsible tourism concepts, as well as the low level of

stakeholders' involvement. Moreover, even though the Region is rich in natural, cultural, historic and archeological heritage, the potential is not exploited in a sustainable and responsible way. Besides, a number of heritage assets remain very poorly exploited, while some of them are overly exploited (e.g. Dubrovnik, Venice). Other weaknesses are insufficient ecological awareness of tourism participants, lack of common branding strategies, complex and not harmonized regulatory framework. There is also a huge need to combat seasonality in the Region, as well as the low level of diversification of the tourism offer, low level of accessibility of attractions to the visitors with special access needs and inconsistency in the quality of infrastructure. The Region is also characterized by the low labour productivity, insufficient entrepreneurial and managerial skills and low innovation capacity.

However, there are many opportunities for development of sustainable tourism in the Region, such as infrastructure improvement, increase in cross-border cooperation encouraged by the European Union, as well as the EU funding for sustainable tourism cross-border cooperation. Moreover, evolution towards “experience” economy, development of circular economy concept in sustainable tourism, development of information and communication technology (ICT), cooperation in efficiency and effective cooperation of the tourism and R&D sector, innovation networks, improvement in employment and education in tourism are additional opportunities that can help the realisation of the EUSAIR goals.

Threats to realisation of the EUSAIR's Pillar 4 goals include restrictions in the tourist mobility, especially to non-EU countries, strong dependency on the EU as a source market, changing demography, low level of integrated development initiatives and good governance policies, vulnerability of tourism as an economic activity and climate change.



## **CHAPTER 2: LABELLING, CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES**

Evaluation criteria for project concepts receiving the EUSAIR TSG4 support were divided in three categories – relevance, impact and quality. **Relevance** criteria included the extent to which the project is based on the EUSAIR Action Plan; real transnational dimension of the project (e.g. cross-border, transnational or macro-regional impact, inclusion of relevant partners from two or more EUSAIR countries); the extent to which the expected results of the project contribute to the sustainable tourism specific objectives and the extent to which the expected results of the project contribute to the EUSAIR Pillar 4 priority actions.

**Impact** evaluation criteria were project’s tangible and intangible impact on at least two of three aspects – economic, socio-cultural and environmental; and the extent to which the project contains potential multiplier effects, including possibilities for replication and extension of project outcomes, streamlining already existing initiatives in the area and connecting with complementary projects from Pillar 4 and other Pillars, dissemination of information, as well as self-sustaining structures beyond the co-financing period.

**Quality** criteria included the extent to which the project/project idea has been well thought out or prepared (e.g. supported by a market analysis, a business plan, etc.); clarity and feasibility of the plan of actions, the extent to which the project involves the non-governmental sector (e.g. civil society, non-profit organizations and/or private sector) and whether their tasks are properly allocated; the extent to which the project contains specific elements of added value, such as innovative approaches, models for good practice, knowledge – exchange mechanisms, creation of tourism clusters; specificity, appropriateness and practicality of proposed activities, (e.g. whether the projects results are specific, achievable, measurable and time-based); the extent to which the budget estimation is clear, detailed, reasonable and realistic (to implement the planned activities); whether the funding is ensured, foreseen and from which source(s); and whether the sustainability and further use of the project is ensured.

Maximum total score a project could be awarded with was 100 – 35 in categories relevance and quality and 30 in category impact. Necessary score for receiving the EUSAIR TSG 4 support were minimum 60 points in total and more than 50% of points in each category (relevance, impact, quality).

## **CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION**

### **3.1 THE WIDER FRAMEWORK OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The emergence of macro-regional strategies (MRS) has been driven by a number of EU countries and regions as a complement to traditional country policies on territorial management. They are designed to tackle common challenges e.g. innovation-driven growth, environment or climate change, using a bottom-up approach involving national, regional and local actors. The European Council endorsed the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) in 2014 in order to add value to the cooperation dimension of cohesion policy<sup>3</sup>.

Until 2016, given its short life span, the EUSAIR activity focused primarily on the set up of governance structures and rules. This required extensive discussion and consultation among key stakeholders, primarily national coordinators. At the beginning of the implementation phase, four thematic steering groups had identified the priority actions on which to concentrate their work in the initial period (e.g. maritime spatial planning, developing motorways of the sea or fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage), as well as specific guidance and selection criteria to help choose the right projects. Efforts were also made to promote sustained cooperation between ESIF and Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) programme authorities and EUSAIR key implementers.

Activities of Pillar 4 included developing of a basket of common products, development of evaluation criteria and a template for project proposals/concepts, identification of 6 top priorities, evaluation of over 40 project proposals, preparation of the Report on EUSAIR national tourism strategies with 8 actions proposed, development of three mono-pillar and four cross-pillar project ideas and selection of two cultural routes for the Routes4U project.

In the framework of the EUSAIR Pillar IV ‘Sustainable tourism’, 2 main topics and 6 priority actions (including cross cutting issues), with additional 3 possible priorities represent the starting point for setting up the baseline data and defining the specific targets<sup>4</sup>. As already mentioned, two main topics are diversified tourism offer and

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2016) Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/macro\\_region\\_strategy/pdf/report\\_implementation\\_macro\\_region\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/report_implementation_macro_region_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2017) EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region – pillar IV, report/analysis of the EUSAIR national tourism strategies for identifying common priorities and actions in relation to the EUSAIR action plan-pillar IV: "sustainable tourism". Defining

sustainable and responsible tourism management, and for both of the topics, three top priorities were set. Priorities of topic 1 are development of sustainable and thematic routes, fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage and improvement of SMEs performance and growth-diversification, R&D. Topic 2 priorities are training and skills in the field of tourism businesses (vocational and entrepreneurial skills), expanding the tourist season all-year round and developing a network of sustainable tourism businesses and clusters.

Three mono-pillar project ideas developed are Green Mapping, DES\_AIR and CulTourAir. **Green Mapping** for Adriatic-Ionian Region is the project supporting the development of responsible and sustainable tourist destinations and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in the region. **DES\_AIR** addresses the need for harmonized training and educational programmes for responsible integrated tourism management, establishing a Master program on tourism management, hospitality and services, sharing the same methodologies and approaches within EUSAIR countries as well as establishing new programmes for training and new projects in the field of education; the aim is provide in-service trainings for education professionals, flexible and continuous education of SME employees and to raise the knowledge and competence of unemployed; the target to be achieved is the increased number of highly educated employees and entrepreneurs in the field of tourism. **CulTourAir** addresses the need for structured and harmonized data on cultural tourism demand in the Adriatic-Ionian Region and the need for the establishment of a unified and harmonized methodological framework to monitor cultural tourism demand characteristics. The challenge is to enable joint regional and transnational entrepreneurial projects and research, that could adequately track the so called “cultural” tourists, their size and impact on the local communities and economy leading to new business opportunities, increased number of total tourist arrivals and overnights, increase of tourism income. It is hereby provided as an answer to the EUSAIR Thematic Priority of Research & Development for improvement of SME’s performance and growth-diversification.

Four cross-pillar project ideas developed are: ADRIONet, “Managing Tourism Flow in Protected Areas” in cooperation with Pillar 3; Quality of environment, STE-TAI, “Sustainable Tourism through Environmental Energy Technologies in Buildings of High Architectural Interest” in cooperation with Pillar 2; Connecting the region, a subgroup on Energy networks, Blue Culture, “Development of Macro Regional Cluster on BlueCulture Technologies and creation of International Competence Center” in cooperation with Pillar 1, Blue growth; and ADRIONCYCLETour “ADRIatic IONian CYCLE route for sustainable TOURism” with cooperation with Pillar 2, Connecting the region, subgroup on transport.

Moreover, implementation of Pillar 4 included Issue Paper „Manual for participatory tourism connecting community and culture through storytelling“. Objectives of the paper

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relevant EUSAIR macroregional mid-term tourism result indicators and targets. Available at: <https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Report-of-the-EUSAIR-national-tourism-strategies-for-identifying-common-priorities-and-actions-in-relation-to-the-EUSAIR-action-plan-pillar-IV-sustainable-tourism.pdf>

were providing sustainability of EUSAIR's intangible heritage, through implementation of the participatory tourism storytelling model using EUSAIR intangible heritage; providing strong interdisciplinary cooperation between the academic and private sectors, on networking with the local community, tourism, hospitality and cultural sectors; and providing methodology with a clear indication of the implementation of activities and examples of good practice in storytelling providing specific instructions and recommendations for users of the manual.

Also, implementation of the EUSAIR Pillar 4 included organization of round tables; three of them already organised, in Zagreb, Athens and Podgorica. The Zagreb round table dealt with the topic important for the EUSAIR Pillar 4: thematic routes, destination product development, SMEs, human resources and education for tourism and hospitality. The Athens round table dealt with analysis of tourism policies/strategies of the eight countries, connectivity, special interest tourism, territorial investment. The Podgorica round table focused on cultural heritage and tourism: storytelling, UNESCO sites and tourism, digitalization, social impact of cultural tourism and its monitoring.

Implementation of the EUSAIR also includes cooperation with other initiatives and programmes. Among others, the following cooperation of TSG4 have been achieved:

- The Adriatic-Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities Initiative (AI-NURECC): TSG4 Participated in events organized by AI NURECC (cruising tourism in Greece, three Fora conferences in Split, territorial cooperation Tirana, side event during the 4th EUSAIR Forum in Budva);
- Routes4U: TSG4 was in charge of the selection of two cultural routes (either existing certified by the Council of Europe or new ones-to be developed and possibly certified). Cooperation also included organisation of a thematic workshop back-to back with TSG4 meeting (Mali Lošinj-Croatia, November 2018);
- PANORAMED project: EUSAIR is an associated partner on the project, the obligations included active participation in creating the first draft documents for the WP Coastal and Maritime Tourism, and continues with its presence and activities sharing at every TSG4 meeting;
- Regional Cooperation Council (RCC): the cooperation creates an opportunity for cooperation with the non-EU countries;
- BlueMed Initiative: nominated focal point for cooperation (Greece), currently preparing possible proposals for cooperation;
- UNWTO actively participated in TSG4's thematic events (regional workshop in Zagreb, April 2017 and joint event in Poreč and Izola, September 2019, organized by TSG3 and TSG4).

## **3.2 PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Projects implemented under ADRION**

The ADRION programme is a European transnational programme that invests in regional innovation systems, cultural and natural heritage, environmental resilience, sustainable transport and mobility as well as capacity building. The ADRION overall objective is to act as a policy driver and governance innovator fostering European integration among Partner States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and Northern Macedonia), taking advantage from the rich natural, cultural and human resources surrounding the Adriatic and Ionian seas and enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Programme area. The ADRION Programme includes a wide transnational area with more than 70 million inhabitants, and has distinct physical, environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics. Hence, it addresses all three dimensions of sustainability, including social, economic and environmental aspects but also institutional elements.

The overall Programme budget amounts to EUR 117.918.198, out of which EUR 99.156.616 of EU public resources (EUR 83.467.729 ERDF and EUR 15.688.887 IPA funds). Funds devoted to operations to be allocated through calls for proposals refer to the three priority axes: (i) Priority Axis No 1 – Innovative and Smart Region; (ii) Priority Axis No 2 – Sustainable Region; and (iii) Priority Axis No 3 – Connected Region. Sustainable tourism related projects are mostly part of the Axis No 2 – Sustainable Region.

Projects labeled by the TSG4 are listed and described below.

**Sustainable management and promotion of common cultural heritage (SMART Heritage)** aims at the promotion, valorisation and protection of cultural heritage in the Adriatic and Ionian region, in particular by raising tourism attractiveness and reducing tourism seasonality of the project area consisting in Zadar County (Croatia), Gerace (Italy), Forlì (Italy), Mostar (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Chalkis (Greece) and Albania. Milestone output is the creation of the CULTURAL ROUTE “SMART HERITAGE”: a networking structure based on a series of conditions for adhesion, opened not only to partner regions but enlarged to the entire ADRION area. Conditions set will be prerequisites to let the route become recognised by the European Council, for its high cultural heritage and tourism value. This route will be a new cultural tourism attraction which will be launched on international tourism markets by positioning the Adriatic and Ionian region as a unique cultural tourism destination and product. Therefore, transnational cooperation and packaging of innovative transnational tourism offers will represent crucial elements of this route and will enhance tourist attractiveness of the region and determine tourism seasonality prolongation.

Lead partner of the project is the Zadar County Development Agency ZADRA NOVA (HR), and project partners are Development Agency of Evia SA (EL), Albanian Development Fund (AL), Municipality of Forlì (IT), Faculty of Humanities and Social

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Sciences, University of Mostar (BA), National museum Zadar (HR) and Municipality of Gerace (IT). Total project budget is EUR 1.379.210,00, and EU contribution is EUR 1.172.328,50, out of which EUR 874.879,50 ERDF contribution and EUR 297.449,00 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 24 months, starting on 01.01.2019. and ending on 31.12.2020.

**Tourism Water Management for Sustainable ADRION Coastal Areas (TOUREST)** aims to support the development and proliferation of sustainable tourism policies and practices to increase water efficiency in ADRION coastal areas, seeking to minimise the negative impacts of tourism activities on natural heritage, and protect increasingly scarce water resources. These focal interventions points directly contribute to the implementation of the 4th EUSAIR pillar.

The Lead partner of the project is the Region of Sterea Ellada (EL), and project partners are the Region of Crete (EL), Croatian Cleaner Production Centre (HR), TECLA – Association For The Transregional, Local And European Cooperation (IT), Lombardy Foundation For The Environment (IT), Rizana Water Works (SI) and University of Ljubljana (SI). Total project budget is EUR 971.816,99, and the EU contribution is EUR 826.044,44, all of it ERDF contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**Building the ADRION Brand Name in Tourism: Indulging all Five Senses (ADRION 5 SENSES)** suggests a holistic approach to sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch to develop effective branding strategies and boost the performance of ADRION destination by creating conditions to enhance tourist experiences. This integrated approach (sensory marketing) is new and innovative for the ADRION area. The overall objective is to build and promote the ADRION brand name in tourism by indulging all five senses of tourists. The specific objective is to direct efforts of ADRION stakeholders to the sustainable planning of physical/virtual settings, as well as valorisation and preservation of natural/cultural heritage, in which positive and memorable experiences are more likely to emerge, leading to positive outcomes, such as tourist loyalty. The project aims to use technology for the co-creation of enhanced destination experiences. The ADRION destination has the opportunity to better address the multi-sensory nature of the tourist experience in order to design experiences by exploring the potential of ICT.

The Lead partner of the project is the Region of Epirus (EL), and project partners are Development Agency of Evia SA (EL), SIPRO Development Agency – Ferrara (IT), the Zadar County Development Agency ZADRA NOVA (HR), RDA of Northern Primorska Ltd. (SI), Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency (BA), Regional Agency for Economic Development of Šumadija and Pomoravlje (RS), Albanian Development Fund (AL) and National Tourism Organization of Montenegro (ME). Total project budget is EUR 1.437.076,09, and EU contribution is EUR 1.221.514,64, out of which EUR 803.833,14 ERDF contribution and EUR 417.681,50 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**From Ancient Maritime Routes to eco-touristic destinations (APPRODI)** aims to promote and valorize cultural heritage in the ADRION area by enhancing management and promotion of ancient harbor sites as touristic destinations and by improving the

involvement of local communities. 5 pilot sites will be valorized as new potential destinations by applying innovative techniques, such as geo-archeological investigations (Ortona, Durazzo, Dubrovnik) whose findings will be presented in museum exhibitions or zero impact and zero infrastructures solutions for an innovative coastal and lagoon archaeological park (Torcello, Venice).

The Lead partner of the project is University of Teramo (IT), and project partners are City of Ortona (IT), Ca' Foscari University of Venice (IT), City of Durrës (AL), Ministry of Culture – Regional Directorate of National Culture Durrës (AL), the Ionian University Research Committee (EL), City of Corfu (EL), the City of Dubrovnik Development Agency DURA (HR) and University of Zadar (HR). Total project budget is EUR 969.243,10, and the EU contribution is EUR 823.856,63, out of which EUR 680.387,68 ERDF contribution and EUR 143.468,95 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**Quality Network on Sustainable Tourism (QNeST)** aims to valorise the common and quality features of the cultural, traditional and environmental heritage of the Adriatic-Ionian area. Through the realization of a transnational model of participative interaction between private and public stakeholders such as local and traditional operators, tourism service providers, craftsmen, sectorial experts, local communities, institutions and cultural, social and environmental associations, the project will contribute to the improvement and spread of a common awareness on quality and sustainable tourism among different types of actors in Adriatic Ionian area; managing the local seasonality demand of tourism through the design and implementation of joint de-seasonal solutions; valorisation of the less well-known destinations through the fruition of new and updated routes between coastal areas and hinterland; facilitating the start-up and enhancement of tourist services through the promotion of joint marketing activities and the exchange of good practices at local and transnational levels.

The Lead partner of the project is University of Salento (IT), and project partners are Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Xanthi (EL), Technological Educational Institute of Epirus (EL), Regional Union of the Chamber of Commerce of Veneto-Eurospertello (IT), Ministry of Economy – Directorate for Development of SMEs (ME), Istrian Development Agency Ltd. (HR), University of Primorska (SI) and Labirinto Social Cooperative (IT). Total project budget is EUR 1.465.813,50, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.245.813,50, out of which EUR 1.126.813,50 ERDF contribution and EUR 119.000,00 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**Sustainable management and tourist promotion of natural and archaeological heritage in the Adriatic Caves (Adriaticaves)** aims to establish and promote natural and archaeological heritage in caves of the ADRION as an alternative all year long tourism product. The project focuses on the sustainable development of accessible caves including ecotourism, establishment of a network of touristic caves in the ADRION and also conservation of karst areas and the other caves not open to the public with habitat 8310 (92/43/EEC dir), threatened by climate change and illegal dumping. The aspects of training, creating new professions to improve socio-economic conditions of mountain areas, transferring of best practice among PPs will play a key role and will contribute to

the achievement of the general objective of the strategic theme: to develop a joint cross-border sustainable tourism platform within the ADRIION area aiming at implementation of new models for sustainable tourism management as a development engine in the area and reducing the seasonality of tourism through the marketing of the unique natural and cultural potential that can be visited throughout the year.

The Lead partner of the project is Majella National Park (IT), and project partners are Regional Council of Shkodra (AL), Cantonal Public Institution for Protected Natural Areas (BA), City of Cacak (BA), Velebit Nature Park Public Institution (HR), TC Lipa Cave Ltd (ME) and Authority for the Management of Parks and Biodiversity – Romagna (IT). Total project budget is EUR 1.325.236,05, and the EU contribution is EUR 702.847,26, all of it ERDF contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**Strengthen entrepreneurial skills of Cultural and Creative Industries for the valorisation of cultural heritage and the development of sustainable tourism models in the Adriatic-Ionian regions (CCI4TOURISM)** supports cultural and creative industries through the enhancement of entrepreneurial competencies/skills of CCIs and creation of Creative Hubs network for cultural tourism.

The Lead partner of the project is TecnoPolis Science and Technology Park (IT), and project partners are City Development Agency Banja Luka (BA), Development Agency SORA (SI), European Affairs Fund of AP Vojvodina (RS), Friuli Innovazione Research and Technology Transfer Centre (IT), IRI CENTAR Ltd. (HR), RDA Green Karst Ltd. (SI) and the Zadar County Rural Development Agency (HR). Total project budget is EUR 1.797.623,23, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.527.979,72, out of which EUR 1.344.834,17 ERDF contribution and EUR 183.145,55 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 30 months.

**Emotional technologies for the cultural heritage valorisation within cross-border undergrounds (EMOUNDERGROUNDS)** creates a Transnational network of creative-cultural tourism actors and promotes new common cultural-creative tourist products in order to boost the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourist destinations

The Lead partner of the project is Municipality of Nardò (IT), and project partners are Municipality Ivančna Gorica (SI), Municipality of Andravida-Killini (EL), Municipality of Carpi (IT), Municipality of Kukës (AL), Public Cultural Institution Fortress of Culture Šibenik (HR), Public Institution "Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises of City of Trebinje" (BA), Regional development centre Koper (SI), Rijeka Development Agency Porin Ltd. (HR) and Tourism organisation of municipality of Bar (ME). Total project budget is EUR 2.695.497,06, and the EU contribution is EUR 2.214.672,46, out of which EUR 1.831.310,16 ERDF contribution and EUR 383.362,30 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 30 months.

**Promoting Creative Tourism through new Experiential and Sustainable Routes (CREATURES)** enhances the key role played by creative and cultural Industries for tourism sustainability and competitiveness, finding a right balance between innovation and conservation of rich cultural heritage of the AI Region.



The Lead partner of the project is Metropolitan City of Bologna (IT), and project partners are Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, Department for culture and sports (IT), Patras Science Park S.A. (EL), Regional Development Agency Dubrovnik-Neretva County DUNEA (HR), School of Economics and Business in Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo (BA), The Regional Directorate of National Culture, Vlorë (AL), Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (SI) and Athens University of Economics and Business Research Center (EL). Total project budget is EUR 1.838.160,00, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.562.436,00, all of it ERDF contribution. Project duration is 30 months.

**Adriatic Landscape Interpretation Network (ADRILINK)** aims at promotion of Landscape Tourism in Adriatic Region through the creation of a network of Landscape Interpretation Centres, conceived as nodal points of selected paths and routes, digitally connected through an ICT platform.

The Lead partner of the project is Municipality of Jesi (IT), and project partners are Albanian Development Fund (AL), City of Gradiška (BA), CORILA - Consortium for Managing Research Activities in the Venice Lagoon (IT), Development Centre Murska Sobota (SI), Early Childhood Education, Social Policy and Sports Agency of Serres Municipality (EL), Municipality Moscenicka Draga (HR), Municipality of Tepelene (AL), Public Institution National Park “Sutjeska” (BA), Tourist Organization of Sremska Mitrovica (RS) and Vrsar Tourist Board (HR). Total project budget is EUR 2.409.732,79, and the EU contribution is EUR 2.048.029,69, out of which EUR 1.221.732,79 ERDF contribution and EUR 826.296,90 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 30 months.

**Adriatic-Ionian Network of Authentic Villages (ADRIONET)** aims at the creation of a transnational network of “Authentic Villages” as a driver for local development in order to overcome the current marginalization and under-valorisation of minor but still rich in tradition and history destinations of the AI region. The adopted innovative “hospitable community” approach strongly committees the citizenship.

The Lead partner of the project is Emilia-Romagna Region (IT), and project partners are Regional Agency for Socio-Economic Development – Banat Ltd. (RS), Public Institution for the Development of Međimurje County REDEA (HR), Association of Local Autonomy of Albania (AL), Region of Central Macedonia (EL), Zasavje Regional Development Agency (SI), Authentic Villages of Italy Association (IT) and Department for Development and International Projects of Zenica-Doboj Canton. Total project budget is EUR 1.287.950,00, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.094.757,50. Project duration is 30 months.

**Transnational parks and Gardens Resources in Adriatic and Ionian tourist Marketplace (TANGRAM)** supports a sustainable tourism model though the valorisation and promotion of parks and gardens, networked with major cultural and natural resources of the AI region, on the basis of a new governance system based on participative approach.

The Lead partner of the project is Municipality of Monza (IT), and project partners are Association for Nature and Environment Conservation and Sustainable Development

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Argonauta (HR), Banja Luka Tourist Board (BA), Civil society organization Proactive (RS), DELTA 2000 Consortium Company with limited liability (IT), Development Agency of Evia SA (EL), RDA of Northern Primorska Ltd. Nova Gorica (SI), Regional Agency for Socio-Economic Development – Banat Ltd (RS), Tourism Bohinj (SI) and University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali" (AL). Total project budget is EUR 1.645.945,00, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.399.053,25, out of which EUR 932.219,65 ERDF contribution and EUR 466.833,60 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 30 months.

**Promotion of natural and cultural heritage to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas (PRONACUL)** works for the implementation of a common management methodology of natural and cultural heritage in the Adrion area, based on a participatory approach of stakeholders. Participatory approach shall be tested in pilot clustered areas and making use of virtual chamber, an online platform acting as consulting body for tourism developers and public bodies to exchange experiences and good practices in managing natural and cultural heritage.

The Lead partner of the project is the Regional Development Agency Zasavje (SI), and project partners are Cultural center Zagorje ob Savi (SI), Lag Eastern Venice (IT), Rijeka Tourist Board (HR), Ilija Chamber (EL), Region of Ionian Islands (EL), Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK (BA), University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences (RS), Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises of City of Trebinje (BA), Zagreb County Tourist Board (HR), Municipality of Raška (RS), Metropolitan City of Bologna (IT) and Centre for the promotion of entrepreneurship Piran Ltd (SI). Project duration is 30 months.

**Thematic Tourism founded on Innovation Capacities (THEMATIC)** offers a joint framework for capacity building in the fields of planning and management of sustainable tourism, supporting cooperation among research and business actors, policy makers for a comprehensive innovation strategy.

The Lead partner of the project is University of Basilicata (IT), and project partners are BSC, Business support centre Ltd., Kranj (SI), City Municipality Mediana – City of Nis (RS), Enterprise Greece S.A. (EL), Municipality of Preko (HR), Region of Epirus – Regional Unit of Thesprotia (EL), Regional agency for territorial promotion of Basilicata (IT), Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania (AL) and Zlatibor Regional Development Agency (RS). Total project budget is EUR 1.488.999,17, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.231.649,26, all of it ERDF contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**Integrated management models for archaeological parks (TRANFER)** develops an integrated Common Governance Model for archaeological parks to enhance the preservation and valorisation of archaeological heritage within the Adrion area. The project foresees a bottom-up strategy applied to the protection and management of archaeological heritage and the integration of protection activities with territorial planning and economic progress.

The Lead partner of the project is University of Macerata (IT), and project partners are Playmarche srl (IT), Institute of Archaeology (AL), Horizont (AL), City of Ptuj (SI),

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Postgraduate School ZRC SAZU (SI), Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory (RS), European Youth Center (RS), Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina (EL) and Municipality of Omišalj (HR). Project duration is 30 months.

**Child Friendly Destinations (WONDER)** supports new touristic offer addressed to families through the creation of a Transnational Network of Child-Friendly Destinations, aimed at improving the liveability and sustainability of cities, through the adoption of a new and innovative participatory methods.

The Lead partner of the project is Municipality of Fano (IT), and project partners are City of Dubrovnik Development Agency (HR), City of Novigrad – Cittanova (HR), Development Centre Novo Mesto, Counseling and Development, Ltd. (SI), Municipality of Cervia (IT), Municipality of Preveza (EL), Municipality of Velenje (SI), Municipality of West Achaia (EL), Observatory for Children and Youth Rights (AL) and Tourism Organisation of Herceg Novi (ME). Total project budget is EUR 1.697.000,00, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.442.449,99, out of which EUR 1.248.992,54 ERDF contribution and EUR 193.457,45 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**Adriatic Cultural Heritage Collections Network (ADRINETBOOK)** focuses on the development of virtual collections as an important contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage in a sustainable and modern way. The project will create a new integrated and unique Adriatic Collection with strong ties with the Europeana Collections.

The Lead partner of the project is Municipality of Macerata (IT), and project partners are Central Institute for the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries (IT), Municipality of Gjirokastra (AL), Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb (HR), Zadar County Rural Development Agency (HR), National Library of Serbia (RS), Municipality of Thassos (EL) and Research and Educational Centre Mansion Rakičan (SI). Total project budget is EUE 1.521.760,02. Project duration is 30 months.

**Wool as Outstanding Opportunity for Leverage (WOOL)** conserves and promotes WOOL as an important natural resource, thus protecting cultural heritage of traditional hand-made wool products by enhancing regional cooperation, knowledge transfer and identification of an ADRION regional brand.

The Lead partner of the project is Technology Park of Pordenone (IT), and project partners are Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia, Institute of Agriculture and Forestry Nova Gorica (SI), Chamber of Commerce of Larissa (EL), Chamber of commerce, industry, craft trade and agriculture of Basilicata (IT), Municipality of Majur (HR), Municipality of Plevlja (ME), Municipality of Žabljak (ME), Nativa, Institute for Sustainable Growth (SI), The Brcko District Government (BA) and The University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business (HR). Total project budget is EUR 1.342.775,00, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.141.358,75, out of which EUR 852.699,43 ERDF contribution and EUR 288.659,32 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

**Sustainable Tourism & Mobility Hand by Hand development (SUSTURISMO)** aims at the generation of innovative eco-friendly and low carbon tourism models, through the

increase of modal share of active transportation (walking, cycling), public transport and lower-carbon mobility concepts (car sharing – car pooling, electromobility).

The Lead partner of the project is Centre for Research and Technology Hellas - CERTH (EL), and project partners are Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat (IT), City of Zadar (HR), Institute for Transport and Logistics Foundation (IT), Institute of Traffic and Transport Ljubljana I.I.c. (SI), Municipality of Tivat (ME), Regional Council of Berat (AL), Regional development agency of Ljubljana urban region (SI), Regional Union of Municipalities of Epirus (EL) and University of Belgrade (RS). Total project budget is EUR 1.618.927,60, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.376.088,44, all of it ERDF contribution. Project duration is 24 months.

Sustainable tourism related projects implemented under ADRION, Axis No 1 – Innovative and Smart Region are listed below.

**Fostering tourism innovation system in Adriatic-Ionian Region (FOST INNO)** aims to contribute to the long term growth of tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian region through innovations capacity building. Common challenges of the programme area as prolonging tourism season, improving quality in tourism and fostering better tourism employment conditions, are going to be tackled in accordance with sustainability principles to reinforce region's competitive position. The overall objective of the project is to improve and ensure long-term competitiveness of the Adriatic-Ionian area by enhancing innovation capacity in sustainable tourism.

The Lead partner of the project is University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management (HR), and project partners are Department for Development and International Projects of Zenica-Doboj Canton (BA), Molise Region (IT), Municipality of Perugia (IT), Municipality of Tivat (ME), RDA of Northern Primorska Ltd. Nova Gorica (SI), School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica (SI) and Shkodra University "Luigj Gurakuqi" Economic Faculty (AL). Total project budget is EUR 1.266.482,16, and the EU contribution is EUR 1.076.509,78, out of which EUR 712.470,14 ERDF contribution and EUR 364.039,64 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 30 months.

**Development of an innovative network for the promotion of extroversions of agro-food companies in Adriatic-Ionian Area (INNOVAGRO)** focuses on the development of links and synergies between farmers, agro-food enterprises, Research Institutes and Public Authorities, for a) the promotion of agro-food products' extroversions, b) the development of agro-food companies' internalization, and c) the promotion of environmentally-friendly farming practices. Project's main outputs are: 1) a Transnational Cooperation Network in agro-food & tourism sector & 2) a Virtual Transnational Business Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center (VIBIEC), offering support through e-incubators, e-business network platform, and other self-assessment tools.

The Lead partner of the project is Chania Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EL), and project partners are Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia (RS), E-institute, institute for comprehensive development solutions (SI), Italian Confederation of Agriculture (IT), Network of the Insular Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the European Union (EL), Province of Potenza (IT), Region of Crete (EL), Technical

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University of Crete (EL), Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania (AL) and University of Basilicata (IT). Total project budget is EUR 1.060.000,00, and the EU contribution is EUR 901.000,00, out of which EUR 756.500,00 ERDF contribution and EUR 144.500,00 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 30 months.

**Innovation in Tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion (InnoXenia)** aims at improving the innovation capability of the ADRION tourism sector, relying heavily on innovative products, processes and services that can supplement natural and cultural offerings. The project will network the transnational ADRION quadruple helix tourism community into an Adriatic Ionian Tourism Technology Platform with active involvement throughout the project. A Tourism Innovation Observatory will provide a platform for modeling ADRION innovative tourism, equipped with a Tourism Innovation Decision Support System providing the ability to evaluate the impact of potential interventions on the competitiveness and sustainability of tourism destinations, structures and services.

The Lead partner of the project is Region of Western Greece (EL), and project partners are Albanian Development Fund (AL), Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna (IT), Athena – Research and Innovation Center in Information, Communications and Knowledge Technologies (EL), City of Mostar (BA), Consortium European Point Teramo (IT), Institution for development of competence, innovation and specialization of Zadar County (HR), Province of Rimini (IT) and RDA Green Karst, Ltd (SI). Total project budget is EUR 896.911,50, and the EU contribution is EUR 901.000,00, out of which EUR 743.911,50 ERDF contribution and EUR 153.000,00 IPA II contribution. Project duration is 27 months.

### **Projects implemented under Cross-border Cooperation Programmes**

European Cross-Border cooperation, known as Interreg A, supports cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two different Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them. It aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purposes of the overall harmonious development of the Union. Another EU Programme that encourages cross-border cooperation is the IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme, that supports cross-border co-operation between candidate countries, potential candidate countries and EU Member States.

#### *Interreg Greece – Italy*

Interreg V-A Greece – Italy Programme is a European Territorial Cooperation Programme that aims to help public institutions and local stakeholders to develop cross-border projects and pilot actions and to create new policies, products and services, with the final goal to improve the citizens’ quality of life. Strategically, the programme enhances innovation in a number of fields such as blue growth, tourism and culture, agro food and cultural and creative industries. Interreg V-A Greece-Italy Programme aims to get maximum return from EUR 123 million financed per 85% by the European Regional

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Development Fund (ERDF) and per 15% by the 2 member states Greece and Italy through a national co-financing.

Sustainable tourism related projects are funded under Interreg Greece-Italy priority axis Integrated Environmental Management, and there is also one project under priority axis Innovation & competitiveness. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under Interreg Greece-Italy are listed in the table below.

**Table 2. Projects implemented under Interreg Greece – Italy**

Project	Priority Axis	Lead Beneficiary	Budget
<b>Silver Wellbeing</b>	Interrgrated Enviromental Management	Poyclinic of Bari (IT)	EUR 891.999,12
<b>E-Parks</b>	Interrgrated Enviromental Management	University of Foggia (IT)	EUR 898.098,56
<b>Nett</b>	Interrgrated Enviromental Management	The Apulian Public Theatre – Regional Consortium for Arts and Culture (IT)	EUR 900.500,00
<b>P.A.T.H.</b>	Interrgrated Enviromental Management	The Regional Union of Municipalities of Western Greece (EL)	EUR 863.947,63
<b>POLYSEMI</b>	Interrgrated Enviromental Management	University of Bari Aldo Moro, Department of Literature, languages, arts. Italianistics and comparative cultures (IT)	EUR 899.650,20
<b>Sparc</b>	Interrgrated Enviromental Management	Municipality of Patra (EL)	EUR 2.416.335,00
<b>CIAK</b>	Interrgrated Enviromental Management	Apulia Film Commission (IT)	EUR 888.796,70
<b>In Med Tour</b>	Innovation & competitiveness	National Organization for Health Care Services Provision- EOPYY (EL)	EUR 897.703,80

Source: Interreg Greece - Italy, <https://greece-italy.eu/>

### *Interreg Italy – Croatia*

The Italy – Croatia CBC Programme is the financial instrument supporting the cooperation among the two European Members States territories overlooking the Adriatic sea. With EUR 236,8 milion of total budget, the Programme enables regional and local stakeholders to exchange knowledge and experiences, to develop and implement pilot action products and services, to support investments by creation of new business models, to test the feasibility of new policies, having as the final aim the improvement of the life quality and conditions of more than 12,4 milion citizens living in the Area.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under Interreg Italy – Croatia priority axis Environmental and Cultural Heritage, Specific Objective 3.1: Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial

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development. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under Interreg Italy – Croatia are listed in the table below.

**Table 3. Projects implemented under Interreg Italy – Croatia**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget	ERDF contribution
<b>ARCA</b>			
<b>ADRIATICA</b>	Primorje-Gorski Kotar county (IT)	EUR 3.168,790	EUR 2.693 mln
<b>VALUE</b>	Municipality of Comacchio (IT)	EUR 3.251.055,00	EUR 2,487,633.96
<b>USEFALL</b>	Municipality of Ravenna (IT)	EUR 1.14 MLN	EUR 969.471
<b>TOURISM4ALL</b>	Molise Region (IT)	EUR 2.596.808,50	EUR 2.21 mln
<b>S.LI.DES.</b>	Ca' Foscari University of Venice (IT)	EUR 2.500.000	EUR 2.12 mln
<b>RECOLOR</b>	Emilia-Romagna Region - General Directorate Economics of Knowledge, Labor and Enterprise (IT)	EUR 2.093.392,00	
<b>MADE IN-LAND</b>	Marche Region - Budget and National and Community Planning Department (IT)	EUR 2.218.069,31	EUR 1.885 mln
<b>KEYQ+</b>	AZRRI – Agency for rural development of Istria ltd (HR)	EUR 872.000	EUR 794.000
<b>INNOCULTOUR</b>	DELTA 2000 - Consortium Company with Limited Liability (IT)	EUR 916.000	EUR 778.700
<b>ATLAS</b>	Friuli Innovazione research and technology transfer centre (IT)	EUR 965.000	EUR 820.000
<b>HISTORIC</b>	Sistemi Territoriali Spa (IT)	EUR 2.432.995,75	EUR 2.068 mln
<b>HERCULTOUR</b>	Zadar County (HR)	EUR 1.176.467,40	EUR 1 mln
<b>EXCOVER</b>	Public Institution Regional Development Agency of Lika Senj County – LIRA (HR)	EUR 2.474.876,05	

Source: Interreg Italy – Croatia, <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/>

### *Interreg Italy – Slovenia*

With a financial allocation of more than € 90 million, Interreg V-A Italy – Slovenia Programme supports a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as planned by the Europe 2020 Strategy, spending significant resources on growth, innovation, quality of life and environmental sustainability, also through the improvement of the efficiency of public administration. The Programme covers the seven-year period of the European Programme 2014-2020, which is developed to provide continuity with the previous 2007-2013 Programme, which has funded 87 projects aimed at enhancing competitiveness, research and innovation, protection and promotion of cultural and natural resources, and cross-border activities.

The overall Programme budget is € 91.682.299,00, with an ERDF contribution of € 77.929.954,00 (85%) and a national co-financing of € 13.752.345,00 (public and private). The ERDF allocation has been distributed as indicated:

- Priority Axis 1: Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area - 24% of the ERDF contribution, amounting to € 18.703.189,00.
- Priority Axis 2: Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans - 15% of the ERDF contribution, amounting to € 11.689.493,00.
- Priority Axis 3: Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources - 35% of the ERDF contribution, amounting to € 27.275.484,00.
- Priority Axis 4: Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance - 20% of the ERDF contribution, amounting to €15.585.991,00.
- Priority Axis 5: Technical Assistance - 6% of the ERDF contribution, equal to € 4.675.797,00.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under Interreg Italy – Slovenia priority axis 3: Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources, Specific Objective SO 3.1.: Conserving, protecting, restoring, and developing natural and cultural heritage. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under Interreg Italy – Slovenia are listed in the table below.

**Table 4. Projects implemented under Interreg Italy – Slovenia**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget	ERDF contribution
<b>AGROTUR II</b>	The Agricultural Institute of Slovenia (SI)	EUR 1.076.829,00	EUR 915.304,65
<b>ISONZO-SOČA</b>	EGTC GO European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (IT)	EUR 5.000.000,00	EUR 4.250.000,00
<b>MerlinCV</b>	Science and Research Centre Koper (SI)	EUR 2.583.296,29	EUR 2.195.801,84
<b>tARTini</b>	Piran Municipality (SI)	EUR 1.286.926,00	EUR 1.093.887,10
<b>WALKofPEACE</b>	Soča Valley Development Centre (SI)	EUR 2.893.176,00	EUR 2.459.199,60

Source: Interreg Italy – Slovenia, <https://www.ita-slo.eu/en>

### *Interreg Slovenia – Croatia*

Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A Slovenia – Croatia is the main document setting out the framework for the cross-border cooperation of the Slovenia and Croatia in the financial perspective 2014-2020. The Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A Slovenia-Croatia aims at promoting sustainable, safe and vibrant border area by fostering smart approaches to preservation, mobilization and management of natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the people living and working in or visiting the area.



The overall programme budget comprises 55,7 M€ (with ERDF contribution of 46,1 M€). The programme may co-finance projects up to a maximum rate of 85% of eligible costs. The allocation of budget per priority axes is as follows:

- Priority Axis 1: Integrated flood risk management in transboundary river basins – Union support (ERDF): EUR 10.026.557;
- Priority Axis 2: Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources infrastructure – Union support (ERDF): EUR 28.074.358;
- Priority Axis 3: Healthy, safe and accessible border areas – Union support (ERDF): EUR 5.013.278;
- Priority Axis 4: Technical Assistance – Union support (ERDF): EUR 3.000.000.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under Interreg Slovenia – Croatia Priority axis 2: Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources infrastructure. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under Interreg Slovenia – Croatia are listed in the table below.

**Table 5. Projects implemented under Interreg Slovenia-Croatia**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget	ERDF contribution
<b>Mala barka 2</b>	Primorje-Gorski Kotar county (HR)	EUR 2.164.455,00	EUR 1.839.786,75
<b>DETOX</b>	Lenart Municipality (SI)	EUR 908.448,50	EUR 772.181,21
<b>Riviera4Seasons2</b>	Piran Municipality (S)	EUR 840.187,80	EUR 714.159,63
<b>CLAUSTRA+</b>	Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (SI)	EUR 1.779.988,15	EUR 1.512.989,90
<b>KRASn'KRŠ</b>	Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SI)	EUR 1.524.792,25	EUR 1.296.073,40
<b>ECoolTour</b>	Mosaic, Society for Social Inclusion (SI)	EUR 829.360,00	EUR 704.956,00
<b>Uživam tradicijo</b>	Biotechnical Educational Centre Ljubljana (SI)	EUR 1.593.700,00	EUR 1.354.645,00
<b>Prebujanje/Buđenje</b>	Goričan Municipality (SI)	EUR 988.743,19	EUR 840.431,69
<b>ZELENO ŽELIMO</b>	Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia - Agricultural and Forestry Institute Murska Sobota (SI)	EUR 836.515,00	EUR 711.037,75
<b>ŽIVA COPRNIJA</b>	Development Information Center Slovenska Bistrica (SI)	EUR 926.678,47	EUR 787.676,69
<b>MISTERION</b>	Semič Municipality (SI)	EUR 1.237.589,01	EUR 1.051.950,65
<b>RIDE&amp;BIKE II</b>	Zagorje Development Agency (HR)	EUR 875.472,55	EUR 744.151,66
<b>INSPIRACIJA</b>	Trbovlje Municipality (SI)	EUR 1.503.000,00	EUR 1.277.550,00

<b>MITSKI PARK</b>	Hrpelje-Kozina Municipality (SI)	EUR 745.050,00	EUR 633.292,00
<b>KULTURA</b>	City of Jastrebarsko (HR)	EUR 1.316.243,02	EUR 1.118.806,54
<b>PREHISTORY ADVENTURE</b>	Donja Voća Municipality (SI)	EUR 720.289,93	EUR 612.246,44
<b>NATURE&amp;WILDLIFE</b>	RDA Green Karst Ltd. (SI)	EUR 982.694,29	EUR 835.290,12
<b>MINE TOUR</b>	City of Labin (HR)	EUR 1.144.622,45	EUR 972.929,08
<b>IN CULTURA VERITAS</b>	Zagreb County (HR)	EUR 1.003.317,00	EUR 852.819,44
<b>LIVING CASTLES</b>	Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec (HR)	EUR 1.454.671,54	EUR 1.236.470,80
<b>KAŠTELIR</b>	Komen Municipality (SI)	EUR 1.416.321,03	EUR 1.203.872,84

Source: Interreg Slovenia – Croatia, <http://www.si-hr.eu/en2/>

#### *IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Serbia*

The overall objective of the Interreg IPA Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020 is to strengthen the social, economic and territorial development of the cross-border area through the implementation of joint projects and activities to be supported within four thematic priorities:

- Health and social care services;
- Environment, biodiversity, risk prevention, sustainable energy and energy efficiency;
- Tourism and cultural and natural heritage;
- Competitiveness and business environment development.

The selected thematic priorities have been translated into four priority axes which will enable the programme to become the tool for implementing smart solutions that answer to the programme area needs and challenges. Priority axes of the Programme are:

- Improving the quality of public social and health services in the programme area;
- Protecting the environment and biodiversity, improving risk prevention and promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency;
- Contributing to the development of tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage;
- Enhancing competitiveness and developing business environment in the programme area.

Total OP budget is EUR 40.344.930,00 and total EU contribution EUR 34.293.188,00.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Serbia Priority axis 3: Contributing to the development of tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Serbia are listed in the table below.

**Table 6. Projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Serbia**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget
Central Danube Tour	Public Institution Development agency of Osijek-Baranja County (HR)	EUR 575.856,20
EXPLORE CRO-SRB	Development Agency of Slavonski Brod Ltd. (HR)	EUR 368.110,98
HORIS	Municipality of Nijemci (HR)	EUR 1.417.632,24
S.O.S.	Tourist Board of the City of Osijek (HR)	EUR 1.066.007,64
ViCTour	Vukovar-Srijem County (HR)	EUR 924.327,00
VISITUS	City of Sombor (RS)	EUR 353.048,15
FILMHARMONIA	Zagreb Philharmonic (HR)	EUR 1.356.191,90
Pannonia Gourmet	Educons University (RS)	EUR 1.410.837,72
Panona net	Association for Creative Development SLAP (HR)	EUR 636.364,50
Wild Danube Tour	Green Osijek (HR)	EUR 1.139.670,85

Source: IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Serbia, <https://www.interreg-croatia-serbia2014-2020.eu/>

### *IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro*

The Interreg IPA Cooperation Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro 2014-2020 is designed to strengthen the social, economic and territorial development of the cross-border area between Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Through the implementation of joint projects and activities, the programme will become a key enabler for generating smart solutions to the needs and the challenges of the people living in those regions.

The Programme focuses on five main priorities:

- Improving the quality of the services in the public health and social care sector;
- Protecting the environment and nature, improving risk prevention and promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency;
- Contributing to the development of tourism and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage;
- Enhancing regional competitiveness and the development of business environment;

- Providing technical assistance to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and the implementation of the Programme.

Total OP budget is EUR 67.241.552,00 and total EU contribution EUR 57.155.316,00.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro Priority axis 2: Contributing to the development of tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro are listed in the table below.

**Table 7. Projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget
<b>ADRIATIC CANYONING</b>	City of Široki Brijeg (BA)	EUR 1.879.251,32
<b>Becharac &amp; Ganga</b>	City of Pleternica (HR)	EUR 2.307.174,13
<b>Fortress Reinvented</b>	Šibenik City Museum (HR)	EUR 1.310.232,40
<b>Heritage route</b>	City of Lipik (HR)	EUR 706.517,08
<b>RiTour</b>	Public Institution RERA SD for Coordination and Development of Split Dalmatia County (HR)	EUR 840.700,03
<b>FORTITUDE</b>	Public Cultural Institution Fortress of Culture (HR)	EUR 1.618.438,72

Source: IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro, <https://www.interreg-hr-ba-me2014-2020.eu/>

#### *IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Albania*

The cross-border cooperation programme Greece – Albania 2014-2020 supports regional cooperation among Greek and Albanian regions in the upcoming programming period. The Programme's overall objective is to "increase the standard of living of the population by promoting sustainable local development in the cross-border area". It concentrates on priorities that are either characterized by significant cross-border effects or present a high potential for achieving added-value through cooperation.

The Programme focuses on the following priorities:

- "Promotion of the environment, sustainable transport and public infrastructure" aiming to increase the capacity of cross border infrastructure in transport, water and waste management; increase the effectiveness of environmental protection and energy-efficiency; improve the effectiveness of risk prevention and disaster management with a focus on forest fires.
- "Boosting the local economy" aiming to preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area and to

improve cross-border capacity to support entrepreneurship, business survival and competitiveness.

Total OP budget is EUR 54.076.734,00 and total EU contribution EUR 45.965.222,00.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Albania priority Boosting the local economy. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Albania are listed in the table below.

**Table 8. Projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Albania**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget
CLLD-CulTour	Municipality of Zitsa (EL)	EUR 685.825,00
i-Thea	Development Agency of Epirus S.A. (EL)	EUR 517.413,18
Cult2Routes	Municipality of Nestorio (EL)	EUR 657.600,00
ALTTOUR	Albanian Ministry of Tourism and Environment (AL)	EUR 660.540,88
AuthentiKK	Municipality of Korca (AL)	EUR 801.163,00
VirtualLand	University of Ioannina - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 579.904,80
STONE.ART	Municipality of Konitsa (EL)	EUR 708.048,00
Milestones III	Municipality of Dodoni (EL)	EUR 938.170,00
SMARTIMONY	University of Ioannina - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 695.846,42
SMART TOUR	University of Ioannina - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 513.475,00
e-natura	University of Western Macedonia - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 510.470,00
CheeseCult	University of Ioannina - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 551.759,40
GET	Institute of Public and Private Policies (AL)	EUR 485.248,49
EX.TOUR	Region of Epirus (EL)	EUR 685.897,36
Culture Lands	Municipality of Florina (EL)	EUR 548.013,04
THEMA	Development Agency of Epirus S.A. (EL)	EUR 553.012,40
IT Culture	Municipality of Grevena (EL)	EUR 484.404,60
CULTURAL LANDS	Municipality of Zitsa (EL)	EUR 401.079,96
CULTURE PLUS	University of Thessaly - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 626.555,51
4ALL	Urban Research Institute (AL)	EUR 601.279,10
EXTRO-CULT	Chamber of Kefallonia and Ithaka (EL)	EUR 616.089,04
POLYPHONIA	Regional Union of Municipalities of Epirus (EL)	EUR 621.184,25
RyTHM	Ministry of Culture and Sports - Ephorate of Antiquities of Corfu (EL)	EUR 651.620,00
CBTB	Chamber of Grevena (EL)	EUR 632.096,50
EXPLORAL	University of Ioannina - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 551.579,06
PROSFORA	University of Ioannina - Research Committee (EL)	EUR 635.516,32
MileSTONES II	Municipality of Dodoni (EL)	EUR 696.082,45
TACTICAL TOURISM	Regional Council of Gjirokastra (AL)	EUR 3.870.311,03

Source: IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Albania, <https://greece-albania.eu/>

*IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia*

The cross-border cooperation programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia supports regional cooperation between Greece and North Macedonia. The Programme's overall objective is to enhance territorial cohesion by improving living standards and employment opportunities holding respect to the environment and by using the natural resources for upgrading of the tourism product.

The Programme focuses on the following priorities:

- "Development and Support of Local Economy" which promotes employment and mobility of human resources as well as aims to improve health and social investments and services. It supports the protection of natural and cultural heritage in order to improve the attractiveness and encourage tourism in the cross-border area.
- "Protection of Environment - Transportation" that focuses on the improvement of public infrastructure and reduction of isolation by improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services. It promotes sustainable management, treatment and recycling of waste as well as supports sustainable management of protected areas, ecosystems and biodiversity and addresses prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, risks and hazards.

Total OP budget is EUR 45.470.066,00 and total EU contribution EUR 38.649.552,00.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia priority Development and Support of Local Economy. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia are listed in the table below.

**Table 9. Projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget
CINECULTURE	Municipality of Edessa (EL)	EUR 569.264,00
CONNECT	Municipality of Volvi (EL)	EUR 780.682,03
HOLY WATER	Municipality of Prespes (EL)	EUR 734.821,20
I-TOUR	Center for Development of Pelagonia Region (MK)	EUR 738.929,46
TERRA VINO	Greek-Italian Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki (EL)	EUR 509.855,00
ToCulter	Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (EL)	EUR 848.833,68

Source: IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia, <http://www.ipa-cbc-programme.eu/home/>

*IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Italy – Albania – Montenegro*

The "Interreg IPA CBC Italy – Albania – Montenegro" programme is designed in the framework of the European strategy for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth (EU 2020). The programme therefore aims at assisting countries to meet their national 2020 targets in each of these areas through fostered cross-border cooperation across the Mediterranean.

The programme focuses on the following five priorities:

- Strengthening cross-border cooperation and the competitiveness of SMEs;
- Smart management of natural and cultural heritage for the exploitation of cross-border sustainable tourism and territorial attractiveness;
- Introducing sustainable transport services and improving public infrastructures;
- Environmental protection, risk management and the shift towards the low carbon strategy;
- Technical Assistance.

The selected thematic priorities have been translated into four priority axes which will enable the programme to become the tool for implementing smart solutions that answer to the programme area needs and challenges. Priority axes of the Programme are:

- Competitiveness of SMEs;
- Tourism and Culture;
- Environment and Energy;
- Sustainable Transport.

Total OP budget is EUR 92.707.558,00 and total EU contribution EUR 78.801.422,00.

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Italy – Albania – Montenegro priority Development and Support of Local Economy. Pillar 4 related projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Italy – Albania – Montenegro are listed in the table below.

**Table 10. Projects implemented under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Italy – Albania – Montenegro**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget
3C	Ministry of Culture of Montenegro (ME)	EUR 4,281,675.26
3D-IMP-ACT	Polytechnic of Bari (IT)	EUR 1.023.984,77
ADNICH	Montenegrin Royal Theater Zetski dom (ME)	EUR 1.041.069,90

*Monitoring and Evaluation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), EUSAIR Pillar 4 “Sustainable Tourism”; Task T 3.1: Building the Knowledge Base relevant to Pillar 4 „Sustainable Tourism”*

		EUR
Co.Co.Tour	Albanian Development Fund (AL)	1.079.523,71
COMPLICITIES	Public company "Cultural Center" Bar (ME)	EUR 637.544,67
CROSS BORDER OL	Agricultural University of Tirana (AL)	EUR 625.440,21
DUE MARI	Ministry of Environment (AL)	EUR 5.206.934,15
HAMLET	Ministry of Culture (AL)	EUR 975.800,00
MONET	Ministry of Culture of Montenegro (ME)	EUR 980.100,00
NEST	Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship (AL)	EUR 702.480,20
OPEN TOURISM	Union of Municipalities "Lands of the Sea and the Sun" - Eastern belt of the province of Taranto (IT)	EUR 937.149,25
P.A.S.T.4Future	Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship (AL)	EUR 1.113.056,25
REGLPORTS	National Coastline Agency (AL)	EUR 1.151.280,00
TOURNEE	Municipality of Fier (AL)	EUR 808.044,00
wISHfUI	City of Maglie (IT)	EUR 1.213.325,00

Source: IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Italy – Albania – Montenegro, <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/>

### **Projects implemented under the Interreg Mediterranean**

Partner States from 13 countries are working together in the transnational European Cooperation Programme for the Mediterranean area, The Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020. The transnational setup allows them to tackle challenges beyond national borders, such as the rise of low carbon economy, the protection of natural and cultural resources and the strengthening of innovation.

The main objective of the Interreg MED Programme is to promote sustainable growth in the Mediterranean area by fostering innovative concepts and practices and a reasonable use of resources and by supporting social integration through an integrated and territorially based cooperation approach.

The total budget for the 2014-2020 period amounts to 265 Mio €, composed of 224 Mio € ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), 9 Mio IPA (Instrument of Pre-Accession) and national co-funding. The co-financing rate for partners not concerned by state aid is 85%. The co-financing rate for economic operators and structures concerned by state aid is 85% or 50%.

Sustainable tourism projects implemented under Interreg Mediterranean Priority axis Sustainable Tourism are listed in the table below.



**Table 11. Projects implemented under Interreg Mediterranean**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget	EU Funding
MEDCYCLETOUR	Regional Government of Andalusia (ES)	EUR 2.403.920,85	EUR 2.043.332,73
CONSUME-LESS	Energy and Water Agency (MT)	EUR 2.635.000,00	EUR 2.141.050,00
MITOMED+	REGIONE TOSCANA Productive Activities Department (IT)	EUR 2.650.000,00	EUR 2.252.500,00
COASTING	Andalusian Federation of Towns and Provinces (ES)	EUR 975.522,50	EUR 829.194,13
DESTIMED PLUS	Lazio Region (IT)	EUR 2.500.000	
INCIRCLE	Area Science Park (IT)	EUR 3.378.770,00	EUR 2.871.954,53
LABELSCAPE	Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SI)	EUR 2.362.525,70	EUR 2.008.146,85
SUSTOWNS	Lazio Region Association of Cities and Municipalities (IT)	EUR 2.872.000,00	EUR 2.441.200,00
WINTER MED	Association of Tuscan Municipalities (IT)	EUR 2.617.300,00	EUR 2.224.705,00
BLUETOURED_C3	Latin Arc (ES)	EUR 1.655.910,35	EUR 1.407.523,80
INHERIT	Region of Peloponnese- Department of Management for Development Planning (EL)	EUR 5.612.660,00	EUR 4.770.761,00
HERIT-DATA	Toscana Region (IT)	EUR 4.195.515,20	EUR 3.566.187,92
MEDFEST	Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SI)	EUR 2.218.473,66	EUR 1.885.702,61
EMBLEMATIC	Syndicat Mixte CANIGÓ Grand Site (FR)	EUR 2.975.571,49	EUR 2.529.235,79
BLUE ISLANDS	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment - Department of Environment (CY)	EUR 2.564.402,77	EUR 2.179.742,36
ALTER ECO	Valencia Institute of Building (ES)	EUR 2.293.630,00	EUR 1.949.585,49
CO-EVOLVE	Region of East Macedonia and Thrace (REMTH) - Regional Development Fund (EL)	EUR 3.000.000,00	EUR 2.550.000,00
BLUEMED	Region of Thessaly - Regional Development Fund (EL)	EUR 2.797.549,00	EUR 2.377.916,65
TOURISMED	Municipality of Trabia (IT)	EUR 2.157.900,00	EUR 1.700.620,00
CASTWATER	Municipality of Rethymno (EL)	EUR 2.388.116,60	EUR 2.029.899,12
DESTIMED	REGION LAZIO - Regional Parks Agency of Lazio (IT)	EUR 2.500.000,00	EUR 2.125.000,00

Source: Interreg Mediterranean, <https://interreg-med.eu/>

### Projects implementend under the LIFE Programme

The LIFE programme is the EU’s funding instrument for the environment and climate action created in 1992. The current funding period 2014-2020 has a budget of EUR 3.4 billion. The LIFE programme is divided into two sub-programmes, one for environment (representing 75% of the overall financial envelope) and one for climate action (representing 25% of the envelope).

Sustainable tourism related projects are implemented under sub-programme Environment and listed in table below.

**Table 12. Projects implemented under LIFE Programme**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget	EU Funding
LIFE GRECABAT	University of Crete (EL)	EUR 1.270.000,00	EUR 762.000,00
LIFE IGIC	Hellenic Agricultural Organisation (ELGO) Demeter Directorate of Agricultural Research (NAGREF) (EL)	EUR 1.246.704,00	EUR 734.807,00
LIFE Andros Park	Agricultural University of Athens (EL)	EUR 2.345.329,00	EUR 1.754.918,00

Source: LIFE Programme, <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm>

### Projects implemented under the HORIZON Programme

Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Seen as a means to drive economic growth and create jobs, Horizon 2020 has the political backing of Europe’s leaders and the Members of the European Parliament. They agreed that research is an investment in our future and so put it at the heart of the EU’s blueprint for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs.

By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 is helping to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation is complemented by further measures to complete and further develop the European Research Area. These measures aim at breaking down barriers to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation.

Sustainable tourism and cultural heritage related projects are implemented under priority axis 3: Societal challenges and presented in the table below.

**Table 13. Projects implemented under Horizon 2020**

Project	Lead Partner	Total Budget	EU Funding
SoPHIA	Roma Tre University (IT)	EUR 1.511.070,00	EUR 1.511.070,00
iMARECULTURE	European University of Technology (CY)	EUR 2.644.025,00	EUR 2.370.275,00
EMOTIVE	EXUS SOFTWARE LTD (GB)	EUR 2.646.447,50	EUR 2.643.447,50
SILKNOW	University of Valencia (SP)	EUR 2.390.060,50	EUR 2.390.060,50
DETECT	Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna (IT)	EUR2.518.443,75	EUR 2.518.443,75
PLUGGY	Institute of Communication and Computer Systems (EL)	EUR 2.374.437,50	EUR 2.374.437,50
ViMM	European University of Technology (CY)	EUR 1.351.800,00	EUR 1.170.550,00

Source: Horizon 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-sections-projects>

Apart from these projects, there are also possibly other projects in the Adriatic-Ionian region financed from different sources, such as Structural funds and Operational Programmes, which, however, are not treated in this analysis due to the extensive research it requires.

### 3.3 INDICATORS

In the framework of EUSAIR Pillar IV ‘Sustainable tourism’, the 2 main topics (Diversified tourism offer (products and services) and Sustainable and responsible tourism management (innovation and quality) are identified.

Priority actions are identified from the analysis/report and represent the starting point for setting up the baseline data and defining the specific targets:

- Brand-building of the Adriatic-Ionian tourist products/ services;
- Initiative to improve quality for sustainable tourism offer;
- Diversification of the cruise and nautical sectors and enhancement of the yachting sector; Sustainable tourism R&D platform on new products and services;
- Sustainable and thematic tourist routes;
- Fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage;
- Improving accessibility for Adriatic -Ionian tourism products and services;
- Upgrade of the Adriatic Ionian tourism products<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission „EU Strategy for the Adriatic and ionian Region – Pillar IV, report / analysis of the EUSAIR national tourism strategies for identifying common priorities and

The desk analysis of EUSAIR Pillar 4 shows that Croatia and Albania are the only two countries that have a formal revision and/or monitoring process as part of the implementation of their national tourism strategy. Likewise, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina (within the Republic of Srpska only) have declared partial monitoring. This indicates that there is a crucial point of policy efficiency and an opportunity to work on the system that would help monitor at a strategic level.

On a national level, tourism indicators that are most consistently monitored, in almost all countries, are:

- The capacity and the structure of commercial accommodation facilities (number of rooms/number of beds in hotels, campsites etc.);
- The number of arrivals and overnights at commercial accommodation facilities (both yearly and monthly data);
- The gross annual occupancy rate in commercial accommodation; and direct tourism employment as percentage of total employment.

Conversely, the tourism indicators that are NOT being monitored consistently are:

- The number of arrivals and overnights at non-commercial accommodation facilities (second homes, visiting friends and relatives), both monthly and yearly data;
- Percentage of tourists who are satisfied with overall experience;
- Percentage of repeated/return tourists;
- Percentage of residents who are satisfied with tourism;
- Percentage of tourism enterprises using voluntary certification/labelling for environmental corporate social responsibility (CSR); and
- Environmental indicators (daily energy and water consumption and waste production).

On the NUTS 2 level, the most important tourism indicator is the percentage of tourists who are satisfied with their overall experience while the least important tourism indicator is the percentage of tourism enterprises using voluntary certification/labelling for environmental CSR.

On the NUTS 3 level, the most important tourism indicators are the capacity and structure of commercial accommodation facilities (number of rooms/number of beds in hotels, camp sites etc.), the number of arrivals and overnights at commercial accommodation facilities (both monthly and yearly data), the number of arrivals and overnights at non-

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actions in relation to the EUSAIR action plan – Pillar IV: 'Sustainable tourism'. Defining relevant EUSAIR macro-regional mid-term tourism result indicators and targets", 2017.

commercial accommodation facilities (second homes, visiting friends and relatives), and the gross annual occupancy rate in commercial accommodation<sup>6</sup>.

It is clear that all indicators are significantly less frequently monitored, measured or used on NUTS2 and NUTS3 level in comparison to national level. This lack of local/destination level monitoring is one of the significant challenges in achieving tourism sustainability.

Beside indicators measured on the national and regional levels, every Operational Program also has output indicators that are used to measure the direct products (outputs) of supported projects, which in turn contribute to the result. Identified outputs are aimed at supporting the achievement of the desired change.

ADRION Interreg mainly supports the delivery of the following outputs:

- Networking structures;
- Joint management systems and cooperation agreements;
- Strategies and Action Plans;
- Methodologies and Tools;
- Pilot Actions (small scale investments and demonstration projects).

As mentioned above, sustainable tourism related projects are mostly implemented under the ADRION Interreg Priority Axis 2: Sustainable Region. For Specific Objective 2.1 Promote the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as growth assets in the ADRION area, output indicators are following:

- Number of supported transnational cooperation networks;
- Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of natural and cultural heritage and tourism;
- Number of small scale investments and demonstration projects;
- Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions.

Interreg CBC Greece – Italy Programme under the Specific objective: Facilitating the development of innovation clusters among regions in the sectors of Blue growth, Creative industry, Tourism and Culture, and Agribusiness and other sectors of interest to the Area has the following output indicators: O1: Number of organizations/entities/SMEs participating in innovation related collaboration activities; and O2: Number of studies, working documents for the development of innovation clusters.

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<sup>6</sup> Institute for Tourism, „EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group for Pillar 4 Sustainable Tourism: Desk research report on stakeholder analysis and inventory of tourism resources“, 2019. [https://mint.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/AAA\\_2020\\_ABC/c\\_dokumenti/MonitoringEvaluationTSG4\\_DeskResearch%202019\\_10\\_6.pdf](https://mint.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/AAA_2020_ABC/c_dokumenti/MonitoringEvaluationTSG4_DeskResearch%202019_10_6.pdf)

Output indicators measured under CBC Italy – Croatia, Specific Objective 3.1 Make natural and cultural heritage leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development are as follows:

- Number of cultural and natural heritage (tangible and intangible) promoted;
- Number of actors involved in actions aimed at promoting natural and cultural heritage (including typical products, joint branding and tourism);
- Number of natural and cultural heritage destinations with improved accessibilities (e.g.: to disabled tourists, virtual tourists etc.) in place;
- Number of beneficiaries with ecolabel/green certification.

Interreg CBC Italy – Slovenia programme under Specific objective: Conserving, protecting, restoring, and developing natural and cultural heritage has the following output indicator: O1: Number of investments implemented or services/products created supporting preservation/restoration of natural and cultural heritage.

Output indicators measured under CBC Slovenia – Croatia, Investment Priority 6c Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage are as follows:

- Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attractions (visits/year);
- Small scale investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural heritage (Number);
- New or improved cross-border sustainable tourism products and destinations developed (Number);
- Persons participating in capacity building activities (Number);
- Number of enterprises receiving support.

IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Serbia in the framework of Priority Axis 3: Contributing to the development of tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage, Specific Objective 3.1 To strengthen, diversify and integrate the cross-border tourism offer and better manage cultural and natural heritage assets, has the following output indicators:

- Number of joint tourism products developed and promoted;
- Number of tourism supporting facilities and/or tourism infrastructure developed or improved;
- Number of persons educated in quality assurance, standardisation on cultural and natural heritage and destination management;
- Increase in expected number of visitors to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage (Visits per year).

Output indicators measured under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro, Specific Objective: To strengthen and diversify

the tourism offer through cross border approaches and to enable better management and sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage are as follows:

- O1: Number of joint tourism offers/products developed and/or implemented and promoted;
- O2: Number of tourism providers with (international) certifications and standards;
- O3: Number of tourism supporting facilities and/or tourism infrastructure developed and/or improved;
- O4: Number of cultural and natural assets developed and/or improved;
- O5: Number of participants trained in quality assurance, standardisation on cultural and natural heritage and destination management;
- O6: Number of sustainable management plans for cultural and natural heritage sites developed and/or implemented.

The output indicator measured under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Albania, Specific objective: Preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area is Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions (visits).

IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia in the framework of Specific objective: Improve the attractiveness and promote tourism in the cross-border area to enhance employment in tourism, has one output indicator – Programme Monitoring Information System (Number of Enterprises).

Output indicators measured under IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme Italy – Albania – Montenegro, Specific objective: Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development are as follows:

- O1: Number of new products, services and pilot or demonstration projects realized;
- O2: Number of valorised sites.

In the framework of Specific Objective: Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products, output indicator is Number of cross-border creative platforms.

Interreg Mediterranean in the framework of Specific objective: To enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the MED area, has the following output indicators:

- O1: Number of instruments available to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism;
- O2: Number of tourist destinations covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool;
- O3: Number of strategies applying sustainable tourism management criteria;

- O4: Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing sustainable tourism plans.

Presented output indicators are also shown in the following table, with the Programmes using them.

**Table 14. List of EUSAIR Pillar 4 projects' indicators**

INDICATOR	PROGRAMME USING THE INDICATOR
Number of supported transnational cooperation networks	ADRION
Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of natural and cultural heritage and tourism	ADRION
Number of small scale investments and demonstration projects	ADRION
Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	ADRION Interreg Slovenia-Croatia IPA CBC Croatia-Serbia IPA CBC Greece-Albania
Number of organizations/entities/SMEs participating in innovation related collaboration activities	Interreg Greece-Italy
Number of studies, working documents for the development of innovation clusters	Interreg Greece-Italy
Number of cultural and natural heritage (tangible and intangible) promoted	Interreg Italy-Croatia
Number of actors involved in actions aimed at promoting natural and cultural heritage (including typical products, joint branding and tourism)	Interreg Italy-Croatia
Number of natural and cultural heritage destinations with improved accessibilities (e.g.: to disabled tourists, virtual tourists etc.) in place	Interreg Italy-Croatia
Number of beneficiaries with ecolabel/green certification	Interreg Italy-Croatia
Number of investments implemented or services/products created supporting preservation/restoration of natural and cultural heritage	Interreg Italy-Slovenia
Small scale investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural heritage (Number)	Interreg Slovenia-Croatia
New or improved crossborder sustainable tourism products and destinations developed (Number)	Interreg Slovenia-Croatia
Persons participating in capacity building activities (Number)	Interreg Slovenia-Croatia
Number of enterprises receiving support	Interreg Slovenia-Croatia
Number of joint tourism products developed and promoted	IPA CBC Croatia-Serbia IPA CBC Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro
Number of tourism supporting facilities and/or tourism infrastructure developed or improved	IPA CBC Croatia-Serbia
Number of persons educated in quality assurance, standardisation on cultural and natural heritage and destination management	IPA CBC Croatia-Serbia IPA CBC Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro
Number of tourism providers with (international) certifications and standards	IPA CBC Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro



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Number of tourism supporting facilities and/or tourism infrastructure developed and/or improved	IPA CBC Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro
Number of cultural and natural assets developed and/or improved	IPA CBC Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro
Number of participants trained in quality assurance, standardisation on cultural and natural heritage and destination management	IPA CBC Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro
Number of sustainable management plans for cultural and natural heritage sites developed and/or implemented	IPA CBC Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro
Programme Monitoring Information System (Number of Enterprises)	IPA CBC Greece-North Macedonia
Number of new products, services and pilot or demonstration projects realized	IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro
Number of valorized sites	IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro
Number of cross-border creative platform	IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro
Number of instruments available to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism	InterregMED
Number of tourist destinations covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool	InterregMED
Number of strategies applying sustainable tourism management criteria	InterregMED
Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing sustainable tourism plans	InterregMED

## **CHAPTER 4: COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING**

The EUSAIR architecture involves two main levels: the coordinating level represented by a Governing Board and the implementation level represented by Thematic Steering Groups (TSGs). Operational support to both levels is provided by the EUSAIR Facility Point strategic project.

The Governing Board coordinates the work of the Thematic Steering Groups in charge of implementation through strategic guidance with respect to management and implementation of the EUSAIR and its Action Plan.

Thematic Steering Groups (TSGs) are set per pillar, on rotation basis – every three years a tandem of countries chairs one Pillar. Coordinators of TSG4 are the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of the Republic of Albania.

TSGs' functions include:

- Developing specific criteria for selecting actions/projects within each pillar on the basis of the six broad criteria included in the Action Plan as further developed/complemented by the Governing Board, as appropriate;
- Identifying actions/projects to be included in the Action Plan, ensuring that they comply with the pillars' objectives, including with regard to cross-cutting and horizontal aspects;
- Identifying relevant funding sources for the actions/projects selected and facilitating and following up implementation of actions/projects, including monitoring and evaluation;
- Ensuring linkages with the other thematic Steering Groups;
- Liaising with Managing Authorities/NIPACs<sup>3</sup> of EU programmes in EU and non-EU countries;
- Liaising with: the relevant EU programmes managed directly by the Commission; the IFIs; the regional cooperation organisations, etc;
- Convening and preparing meetings of relevant line ministers;
- Submitting to the GB policy proposals and recommendations re. revisions of the Action Plan;
- Reporting to the GB<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, Towards a streamlined governance and management architecture for the EUSAIR – Working Paper devised by the EUSAIR National

As mentioned above, one of the TSGs' functions is convening and preparing meetings. So far, 12 TSG4 meetings have been held. The first TSG4 meeting held place in Tirana, Albania on 12/13 March, 2015 with 7 out of 8 countries participating<sup>8</sup>. It was the introduction and provided guidelines about what needed to be accomplished. Activities that needed to be accomplished were launching of RoP for GB and TSG 4, starting the process of selection of top priorities and selection criteria for TSG 4, mapping sources of financing, identifying baseline indicators/databases, further pursuing steady political and administrative commitment.

The second TSG4 meeting was held on 29/30 June, 2015 in Zagreb with 7 out of 8 countries participating. It took stock of the “International Stakeholders Conference on sustainable tourism as a pillar of the EUSAIR” held in Heraklion, Crete on 11/12 June 2015. Based on the conclusions of the Conference and the experience on the ground, the TSG agreed to announce three “common priorities” to kick-off its activities, mainly focused on the thematic touristic routes, cultural heritage, and strengthening of skills through training. In addition, the TSG also agreed to define three “specific actions” linked to COSME calls for proposals, e.g. on SMEs development, maritime tourism, etc. Furthermore, during the meeting, the TSG adopted its Rules of Procedure in order to start its timely functioning.

In November, 2015, the 3<sup>rd</sup> TSG4 meeting was held in Zagreb, Croatia, with all countries participating. The main outcomes of meeting were defining the top six priorities – development of sustainable thematic routes, fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage, and improvement of SMEs performance and growth-diversification for Topic 1, and R&D, training and skills in the field of tourism businesses (vocational and entrepreneurial skills), expanding the tourist season to all-year round, and developing a network of sustainable tourism businesses, for Topic 2. Other outcomes included accepting the specific criteria and the project concept template. Albania was given the task to coordinate IPA countries as they have different situation/rules for financing projects.

Fourth TSG4 meeting was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in April 2016, with 7 out of 8 countries participating. Main topics were IPA countries report, annual reporting to the GB, functioning of TSG, screening process and communication. It was agreed that non-EU countries will gather information on national level by meeting with their NIPAC's and that organising a meeting of all NIPAC's from EU and non-EU member countries (together with the representatives of TSGs for other Pillars) will be organized. Regarding annual reporting to the GB, it was agreed that each country member will send remarks/inputs in written. Participants discussed about changing the advisory role of DG GROW to a higher responsibility role and defining concrete directions for TSGs' functioning. Also it was

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Coordinators in partnership with the Commission. Available at: <https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Working-paper-on-EUSAIR-governance-and-management.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> On 2 April 2020, EUSAIR, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, embraced the Republic of North Macedonia as its ninth participating country.

agreed that the TSG members will send their thoughts on screening process in written and that they will propose on how to monitor projects, as well as share their experience regarding this issue. Regarding the communication, it was agreed that circular e-mails and cooperation with other Pillars are necessary in implementation process.

Fifth TSG4 meeting was held in Tirana, Albania on 17/18 November 2016, with 5 out of 8 countries participating. One of the operational conclusions of the meeting was that the Albanian coordinator will monitor the network of the IPA countries (European Delegations in each IPA country should be contacted by DG REGIO in order to facilitate and to support video/conferences among the TSG IV members from the IPA countries). Second conclusion was that the working paper on labelling was appreciated by the participants as there are different options for projects labelling and each TSG will explore all of them. Regarding the dialogue between EUSAIR key implementers and ESIF/IPA Programme Authorities, it was concluded that there was a need to involve stakeholders from the countries and spread awareness about the EUSAIR and that DG REGIO and NEAR would work together in planning similar meetings to take place in the four EUSAIR IPA countries. The participants also discussed the EU-China Tourism year 2018 and agreed that TSG members will participate with various activities and send their ideas and proposals and DG REGIO and the Council of Europe will work together in order to develop macro-regional cultural routes, while TSG members will reflect on potential cultural routes.

6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the TSG4 was held on 26 April, 2017 in Zagreb, Croatia, with 7 out of 8 countries participating. Main topics of the meeting were functioning of TSGs, report on/analysis of the 8 national tourism strategies, 2<sup>nd</sup> EUSAIR Forum and the communication and distribution. Regarding the functioning of TSGs, it was agreed that TSG members would think through the idea of creating “a green travel map” and the means of developing “a success story” and invite CPMR to the next meeting to identify ways of supporting the EUSAIR work of the regions on the sustainable tourism. The feedback on the Report/Analysis on the National Tourism Strategies of the EUSAIR 8 Countries was given and it was agreed that each country would identify 1 of the proposed common tourism priorities for 8 EUSAIR countries and in the timeframe of 1 year try to make progress/concrete steps towards its realisation. For 2<sup>nd</sup> EUSAIR Forum, each country should propose 1 evaluator/expert (for monitoring and evaluation) to participate in the morning session Monitoring and Evaluation of the Progress of EUSAIR in Ioannina before the Forum. Regarding communication and distribution, the need for strengthening the communication and cooperation with other Pillars was recognized. Moreover, it was agreed that TSG members will send possible input about events/actions planned in relation to EU-China Tourism year 2018.

Main operational conclusions of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the TSG4, held in Palermo, Italy on 21 November 2017, with 6 out of 8 countries participating, were that the communication and distribution of all documents and contributions have to be carried out via circular e-mailing, members will send their thoughts on the way the communication with other Pillars shall be continued, and countries will send their proposals of concrete activities/next steps in priorities (as presented in the Report made by the EU legal

expert), they have chosen to take lead in by 25 January. Also it was concluded that TSG members would send their contributions to the EU-China Tourism year and European Cultural Heritage year, countries would send feedback on Green mapping project by 21 December; in case of positive feedback the TSG would contact Ecotrans about the Call, and that members would read the UNWTO proposal and decide by 5 December, whether they are interested in Western Silk road project or not. It was also agreed that TSG members would send to the FP the list of media important for the field of tourism in each country – info by FP Lead Partner, and that countries would send their feedback on the proposed cross-Pillar (with Pillar 3) project “Managing Tourism Flows in Protected Areas” by 11 December; in case of consensus, the project will be sent to the TSG3.

8<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting was held in Zagreb, Croatia on 19/20 April, 2020, with 6 out of 8 countries participating. The main operational conclusions of this meeting were nomination of TSG member responsible for cooperation within the BLUE MED initiative, feedback (approval of the texts, possible additions, comments) on the texts for two cross-pillar projects and confirmation/choice on the themes of the EUSAIR cultural routes that will be developed in cooperation with the Council of Europe. Additionally, creating the list of all EUSAIR planned activities in 2018 including the AI-NURECC activities (proposed by DG REGIO) was discussed, the ideas for cross-pillar project proposals that should be agreed between at least two TSGs and then put in the application form and sent to TSG4 members on 10 days approval, possibility of the TSGs appointing one person responsible for each of cross-Pillar projects. Also it was agreed that no replies from countries after one rush note sent will be considered as an agreement and that Montenegro will get in touch with their national coordinator for the more detailed information about upcoming Montenegrin chairmanship.

9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Thematic Steering Group for Pillar 4 – Sustainable Tourism was held in Mali Lošinj, Croatia, on 13/14 November, 2018, with 7 out of 8 countries participating. Members are invited to discuss the labelling process on national level, and send their proposals in next two weeks, to be presented as joint decision. For the already screened projects it was agreed that the questionnaire would be prepared with Slovene partners to detect state of projects, and it would be sent to TSG members, to be answered in two weeks' time. Also, it was concluded that contribution to TSGs Annual Progress Reports for 2018 should be finalized by Feb 18th 2019, and countries contribution was expected by 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2019. Regarding the functioning of TSGs, it was concluded that countries needed to send their representatives to Pillar meetings and participate actively, deputies or representatives from the relevant Ministries needed to be nominated, and their contacts sent in two weeks' time, and that for funds not spent in 2017 and 2018, countries had been invited to propose activities (by the end of November). It was also discussed about cooperation with other initiatives and cross-cutting actions. Regarding the Catania Declaration, TSGs should identify the proposed macro-regional priorities for their respective pillar by 15 January 2019. PCs should communicate in writing the proposed priorities to NCs by February 2019. Related to Italian and Montenegrin Chairmanship, countries were invited to send proposals for the 10<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting in two week time.

The tenth TSG4 meeting was held in Podgorica, Montenegro on 4/5 April, 2019, with 7 out of 8 countries participating. It was agreed that by April 20<sup>th</sup> project concept proposal AdrionCycleTour to be sent to all TSG4 members for urgent approval, Catania Declarations priorities proposals were to be sent by TSG4 members latest by April 14<sup>th</sup>, Routes4U would send proposal to organize a side event at the EUSAIR Forum, and TSG4 members were invited to send their proposal for the CONTACT PERSON EUSAIR- EIB. The further action were also proposed, that North Macedonia would be invited as the guest to the next TSG4 meeting, next 11<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting would be held in Puglia, Bari, candidature for the 12<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting would be sent by Greece, and stakeholder platform was expected to be presented in each EUSAIR country.

11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Thematic Steering Group for Pillar 4 – Sustainable Tourism was held in Bari, Italy, on 20/21 November, 2019. Representatives of six out of eight countries participated at the event, namely Albania, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia joined online via GoToMeeting on Stakeholder Platform. The participants agreed that the 11<sup>th</sup> Pillar 4 meeting was a very productive. The interim report on the issue paper titled “Manual for participatory tourism connecting community and culture through storytelling”, was positively accepted by all participants and decision on developing this Manual was confirmed. On the occasion of the 11<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting, participants were also informed on cooperation activities with AI-NURECC, PANORAMED and Council of Europe’s Routes4U project - cultural routes development programs. The TSG4 members approved the final audit trail for three strategic project development ideas (Green Mapping, DES\_AIR and CulTourAir), meaning that the public procurement could start immediately. Greece presented another proposal for strategic project development and Italy announced their strategic project proposal to be sent soon.

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group for Sustainable Tourism was held, with the participation of representatives of all nine member States: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and North Macedonia. The meeting stressed the importance of harmonizing the activities of the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group 4 - Sustainable Tourism with those of other macro-regional strategies, especially THE EUSDR - the Danube macro-regional strategy involving five out of nine EUSAIR countries and coordinated cooperation and synergy actions are necessity. Joint activities with the Danube macro-strategy in the field of cycling tourism have been announced, and the same is planned to be jointly launched with EUSAIR thematic priority 2 linking transport-oriented regions and EUSAIR thematic priority 3 focusing on environmental quality. The COVID-19 pandemic also significantly affected the topics of the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, related to the activities planned. After exchanging information on measures by which member states help the severely affected tourism sector, it was agreed that the activities planned for implementation in 2020 will try to be implemented, with a flexible and open approach given their format and timing, related to the inability to predict further development of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the complexity of the EUSAIR Strategy and its context-specific nature lacking immediate results, the institutions working in the framework of the EUSAIR are facing

severe challenges in promoting the aims, added value and achievements of the Strategy. That is the case not only when trying to pass on the message to the media or wider public, but also internally, in the daily work of the actors directly involved in the management and implementation of the EUSAIR Strategy, primarily the Governing Board members, the National Coordinators, the Thematic Steering Group members, and the EUSAIR Facility Point partners, as well as Ministers and Ministries from the eight participating countries, relevant EU institutions and other governance actors. According to EUSAIR Facility Point’s research<sup>9</sup>, the EUSAIR communication is lagging behind in a number of aspects. The research results are based on a background research and official documentation but also on one survey, a set of interviews and two workshops with EUSAIR implementers carried out as part of exercise.

The results of the research show that there is a mix of positive and negative outcomes including issues like roles and responsibilities, resources, understanding of the Strategy etc. The good news about EUSAIR communication revolves around the following issues: the support from the Facility Point is very much appreciated; to some extent there is cooperation with other actors to boost communication but it is not mature and consolidated; the digital presence on social media and web is highly valued; the interactions, learning and networking during events was one of the most highlighted aspects; the fact that the EUSAIR has facilitated and encouraged stakeholder involvement, and raised some awareness about cooperation. On the negative side, the main weaknesses identified in the research results include: the understanding of the EUSAIR direction differs between actors; different understanding of the EUSAIR importance and its message; cooperation in communication should be improved; unclear roles and responsibilities on communication; communication skills are below average; lack of knowledge and use of storytelling and media relations; and lack of resources, both human and financial.

In order to solve communication problems that occurred, the EUSAIR Facility Point presented Communication Manual to support EUSAIR governance structures<sup>10</sup>. The Communication manual is dedicated to all stakeholders, to support them in developing and executing a wide range of communication activities. The manual is part of the effort to improve understanding of what communication is all about, what its potential in the context of the EUSAIR is and how to better define the role and responsibility of all stakeholders in the macro-regional communication process.

The manual builds on the experience gained since the Strategy’s inception and knowledge acquired through two capacity building events, accompanied by the expertise delivered at the aforementioned conference. The structure of the manual is as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> EUSAIR Facility Point (2020) Report on the outcomes of the Communication Workshops – towards the common vision and mission. Available at: [https://www.adriatic-ionician.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Item-8\\_Communication\\_report2020.pdf](https://www.adriatic-ionician.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Item-8_Communication_report2020.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.adriatic-ionician.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Communication-manual-brochure.pdf>

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- Section 1 introduces the topic of communication in the context of the EUSAIR;
- Section 2 focuses on the key elements of successful communication;
- Section 3 provides an overview of communication channels and tools, focusing on relationships with the media.

The main goal of the Manual is to serve as a source of reference for future capacity building activities on EUSAIR macro-regional communication.



## **CHAPTER 5: THE WAY FORWARD**

The Adriatic and Ionian Region is a functional area primarily defined by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas basin. Covering also an important terrestrial surface area, this Region homes more than 70 million inhabitants. The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region involves 9 countries, four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and five Accession Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia Serbia). As for the implementation, the Strategy is based on the key principles applied for the existing macro-regional strategies: no new EU funds, no additional EU formal structures and no EU legislation, while relying on a coordinated approach, synergy effects and a more effective use of the existing EU funds and other financial instruments. The aim is to produce a clear added value based on jointly identified objectives. In 2020, the EUSAIR is completing the current programming period and preparing for the next period priorities. The discussion on the EUSAIR priorities for the next period is in progress, under the guidance of the Governing Board.

Future activities and initiatives of the Pillar 4 include further cooperation and joint activities with other Pillars, e.g. fishing tourism with Pillar 1, cycling tourism with Pillar 2; organization of the Round Table on Sustainable Culture and Tourism, deciding on themes and speakers; organization of the EUSAIR Forum, thematic event on topic to be decided by TSG4; possible cooperation with The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) in developing cycling tourism; and choosing one or two additional strategic project proposals to be developed.

According to the OECD Report<sup>11</sup>, the EUSAIR represents an important and valuable opportunity for growth and development in a collaborative format. At the same time, it faces challenges that are linked to its own governance and structures, as well as limitations arising in each participating country. The preparation of the EU legislative framework and programming cycle for the post-2020 period represents an important opportunity to reassess and address the challenges identified. Simplifying and strengthening governance structures and coordination mechanisms will be critical. Ensuring greater alignment and establishing stronger links and incentives to cooperate between EU programming and framework arrangements and EUSAIR will also be valuable in the second stage.

According to the European Commission, the EUSAIR requires strong coordination at the EU level to overcome diverging national interests, in the light of the significant

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<sup>11</sup> OECD (2019) Synthesis report: Multi-level Governance and Cross-Sector Practices Supporting EUSAIR. Available at: [https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OECD-EUSAIR-Synthesis-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OECD-EUSAIR-Synthesis-Report_FINAL.pdf)

participation of non-EU countries with significant socio-economic disparities and notable imbalances in their institutional and administrative capacities<sup>12</sup>.

Even though the EUSAIR is facing many challenges, it is undoubtedly important for the Adriatic-Ionian Region, as a driver of sustainable growth, opportunities and environmental awareness. There are some recommendations to overcome obstacles the EUSAIR faced during 2014-2020 period:

- To ensure implementation with concrete deliverables and milestones;
- To increase trust on the EUSAIR implementation;
- To ensure the transparency, in terms of clearly defined mandates, structure of the management and involvement of key implementers;
- To increase the level of involvement of population;
- To ensure the collaborative interaction between 9 countries with a bottom up and inclusive approach;
- To set a clear long-term vision in order to ensure the development of the transnational cooperation among all key stakeholders and the concrete implementation of the EUSAIR;
- To improve communication, which can produce a high level of dissemination of the EUSAIR.

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<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2016) Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/macro\\_region\\_strategy/pdf/report\\_implementation\\_macro\\_region\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/report_implementation_macro_region_strategy_en.pdf)

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