Analysis

RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR THE

Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro 2021-2027

3 January 2020 – 31 March 2020

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Introduction

Following up on the Border Orientation Paper on the 2021-2027 Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro (**2021-27 Programme**) developed by the European Commission, as well as on the work of the 2021-27 Task Force, established on 29 November 2019, a public consultation was launched by the Managing Authority of the current programme, assisted by the Joint Secretariat, with the objective to provide all interested stakeholders with a possibility to contribute to the shaping of the 2021-27 Programme, in terms of the most important priorities and objectives for the Programme Area.

The public consultation was an anonymous survey, running from 3 January until 31 March 2020 on the website of the programme www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu:

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The survey was relaunched with further news on the website, i.e. 13 January and 21 February, accompanied by Facebook posts, as well as with news on the websites of the National Authorities and mail invitation to participate by the Managing Authority.

1. Structure of the survey

The survey was made of nine questions, with multiple-choice answers, in order to facilitate the participation and to enable an objective analysis of the answers, i.e. avoiding the need of a qualitative assessment.

The first question related to the key priorities for the 2021-2027 period in the border area between Italy-Albania and Montenegro and the possible answers were the specific objectives of the future programmes, as provided by art. 2 of the proposal of the European Commission for the ERDF Regulation, COM(2018) 372, as well as by art. 14 of the proposal for the ETC Regulation, COM(2018) 374, with the possibility to select maximum three options.

The second question was related to the participants, who specified if their opinions was as interested citizens or reflected on official positions of their organisations, being national, regional, local authorities, socio-economic partners, NGOs or private bodies.

The other seven questions aimed at further specifying the seven specific objectives with topics raised by the Border Orientation Paper and discussed at the first meeting of the Task Force 2021-27.

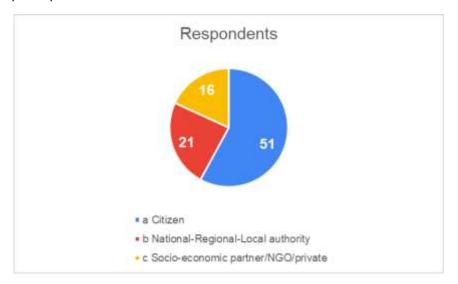The full text of the survey is in Annex 1 to this analysis.

2. Outcomes of the survey

Below the analysis of the outcomes of the different questions.

a) Analysis of the participants

88 persons participated in the survey, which is a low number compared to the stakeholders' structure and population of the border area. This may be mainly due to the difficulty to reach the general public, as the wording of the Regulation and of the topics is rather technical and difficult to understand for a general public. It may be also due to the fact that the most interested and participative target groups of the programme communication are the programme partners, who prefer being involved in partnership meetings or personal interviews.

The responses are wide **too limited to draw final conclusions** on the priorities, and there is a clear need to follow up and organize further public consultations as well as to focus on partnership meetings.

Nonetheless, the opinion of 88 participants, who invested their time to fill in the survey, provides a relevant general orientation, which needs to be considered by the 2021-27 Task Force.

The 51% majority of participants in the survey were citizens, i.e. either they preferred expressing their personal opinion or they could not reflect on official positions of the organization they work for.

21% were staff of national, regional or local authorities, who could reflect an existing official positions / strategies / plans for the future, while only 16% were socio-economic, non-profit or private partners' staff. The shares public / private roughly match with the share of partners participating as beneficiaries of the current programme, which may suggest that many respondents were already partners, thus having an interest to continuing their cooperation.
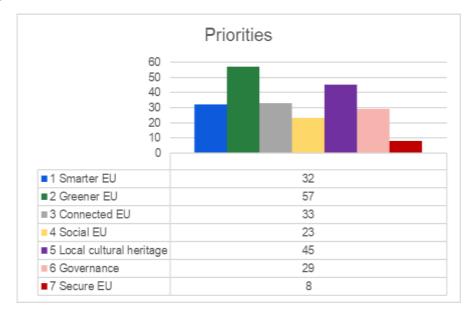
b) 2021-2027 priorities

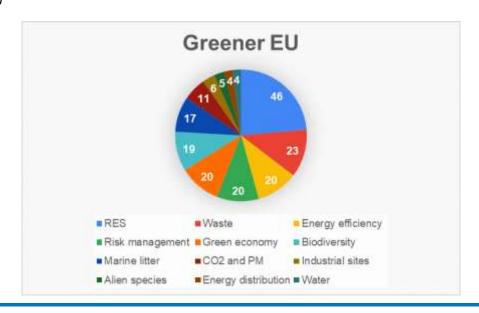Participants could select maximum three priorities.

The overwhelming majority of participants (64,77%) selected PO2 Greener EU as a priority, followed by PO5 Promotion of local cultural heritage (51,14%), PO3 More connected EU (37,50%), PO1 Smarter EU (36,36%). This selection is aligned with the four priority axes of the current Programme, with the four EUSAIR pillars, as well as with the opinion of the 2021-27 Task force, which was in favour of continuity, i.e. the 2021-27 Programme to build up on the achievements of the current programme.

Also, the governance priority of Interreg and PO4 More social EU had substantial percentages (32,95% and 26,14%), while More secure EU had a lower interest (9,09%).

c) Topics for the top four priorities

Participants could select maximum two topics per priority.

1- Greener EU

The topics, which were mostly selected under this priority were:

a) "RES: Energy production from renewable sources, through supporting measures" (46 hits)

b) "Waste: Sustainable waste management (recycling, circular economy etc.), through strategies, plans and pilot actions" (23 hits)

c) while following three topics had all 20 hits each:

"Risk management: Joint management of disasters and natural risks (landslides, flooding, fire, earth quakes etc.)"

"Green economy: Supporting green and blue economy through capacity building measures"

 "Energy efficiency: Energy efficiency measures for public and private sector, through strategies, plans and pilot actions"

And similarly, 19 hits for "Biodiversity: Protection of biodiversity, through strategies, plans and pilot actions, esp. in NATURA 2000 sites".

2- Local cultural heritage promotion

The topics, which were mostly selected under this priority were:

a) "Culture: Cultural initiatives for tourists and citizens in local, urban, rural, coastal communities" (50 hits)

b) "Green tourism: Increasing sustainable / green tourism (incl. culture, youngsters, family, sport, wine and food, experiences etc.), involving local communities" (35 hits)

c) "Cultural/natural assets: Valorisation of cultural /natural assets, involving local communities in urban/ rural/ coastal areas" (31 hits).
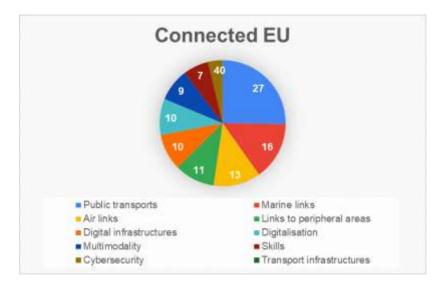
3- More connected EU

The topics, which were mostly selected under this priority were:

a) "Public transports: Improve public transport links, through small infrastructures and joint planning" (27 hits)

b) "Marine links: Improve maritime/lake transport links, as well as accessibility to the maritime hubs (incl. access to TEN-T nodes), through small infrastructures and joint planning" (16 hits)

c) "Air links: Improve air links, as well as accessibility to the air hubs, through small infrastructures and joint planning" (13 hits).

No participant selected "Transport infrastructures: Improve existing transport infrastructures, through small infrastructures and joint planning".

4- Smarter EU

The topics, which were mostly selected under this priority were:

a) "Agro-food: Support and services to the development of agro-food sector" (22 hits)

b) "Blue economy: Enhancing the blue economy (sustainable economic development in the marine environment)" (21 hits)

c) while following two topics had both 17 hits each:
"Start-Ups: Support to start-ups (Incubation, support to spin offs and spin outs)"
"Skills: Skills development for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship".

d) Topics for priorities selected by a lower number of participants

Participants could select maximum two topics per priority.

5- Governance

The topics, which were mostly selected under this priority were:
a) "Services: Improving public administration services jointly in the cross-border area" (42 hits)
b) "Skills: Increase of administrative capacity of staff of public bodies jointly in the cross-border area" (28 hits)
c) "Training: Joint cross-border training and education services" (27 hits)

6- More social EU

The topics, which were mostly selected under this priority were:
a) "Professional training: Improving professional vocational training, through joint cross-border trainings" (26 hits)

b) "Labour mobility: Measures to support cross-border labour mobility, such as administrative simplification, joint planning, efficiency of labour market organisations" (17 hits)

c) while following topics had 16, 15 and 14 hits each:

"E-health: Support to health sector with e-services, joint planning and pilot actions"

"Brain circulation: Increase brain circulation (university - business)"

"Ageing population: Tackling ageing population, increasing people skills (incl. measures to support elderly unemployed persons)".

7- Safer EU

The topics, which were mostly selected under this priority were:

a) "Border-crossing: Improving efficiency of border-crossing management" (54 hits)

b) "Crises management: Improving capacity of neighbouring countries to address crises at border-crossing" (24 hits)

c) "Ports security: Improving security of ports" (16 hits).

3 Reflection on the mid-term impacts of the COVID-19 emergency

The participating countries and cross-border regions have been badly hit by the unprecedented crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020: The 2021-27 Programme must inevitably address the severe impacts on the economy and on the society of the border area in the short- and mid-term perspectives. Several economic sectors are badly affected by the restrictions and lock-down, especially tourism, transport, cultural activities and trade.

The lockdown leads certainly to closures of several companies and it results certainly in enhanced social issues, especially for more vulnerable groups, such as for persons, who become unemployed and are missing needed professional qualification. The lock-down also made new needs widely rise: Smart working and social distancing made the need for digitalization, online services and the broad band stronger and at the same a strong need raised for an increased capacity in dealing with future pandemic risks, especially in the health sector.

Even though the survey does not cover the crisis, as 85 of 88 participants answered before the end of February 2020, the outcomes of the survey already match with the new challenges and needs emerging after the crisis, such as in topics like risk management, digitalization, support to tourism, cultural industries and transports. However, the survey does not completely reflect on the needs for PO4, More social Europe, especially in the health sector. This must be in any case considered by the 2021-27 task force.

4 Key conclusions and summary

- With 88 participants, mostly interested citizens, the outcomes of the survey are too limited to allow for final conclusions, but they provide a relevant general orientation, even though it requires further initiatives to involve key programme partners and experts.

- The most important priorities for the 2021-27 Programme are aligned with the orientation of the 2021-Task force, thus widely building up on the 2014-20 priorities: Top priority is the Environment/Energy, followed by the support to Tourism/Culture in the local context, the Connectivity, and the Competitiveness of SMEs. However, the social issues originated from the COVID-19 crisis must be more carefully analysed.

- In the most important priorities the topics, where a general agreement may be found, are energy efficiency measures, waste and risk management, support to cultural/creative industries, public maritime and air transports, the support to agro-food and blue economy sectors.

2021-2027 Programme: Have your say!

This anonymous survey may be filled in by any person, who is interested in contributing to the shaping of the 2021-2027 Italy-Albania-Montenegro cooperation.

Thank you for your cooperation!

The Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat decline any responsibility for any mis-functioning or mis-use of this module.
The data collected in anonymous way shall be only disclosed as aggregated statistical data, to highlight the trends of stakeholders' opinions and in compliance with the GDPR regulation (EU) 2016/679.
*Campo obbligatorio

1. 1) What are the key priorities for the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period? *

    Please choose up to three priorities, out of the objectives proposed by the European Commission for the period 2021-2027 in its Communication you can find at
    https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/regional-development-and-cohesion_en

    Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

    ☐ 1) a smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation

    ☐ 2) a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management

    ☐ 3) a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility and regional ICT connectivity

    ☐ 4) a more social Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights

    ☐ 5) a Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives

    ☐ 6) enhancing efficiency and institutional capacity of public authorities

    ☐ 7) a safer and more secure Europe

2. **2) This opinion is ***

We would like to know if the opinion you expressed is only your own, or if it represents an official position of the organisation you work for, and if it is the case, what kind of organisation this is. In all cases, through this anonymous survey, we are not collecting official opinions of the authorities concerned.

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

- [ ] a) my personal opinion (as a citizen)
- [ ] b) in line with the official position of the National Public Authority I work for
- [ ] c) in line with the official position of the Regional Public Authority I work for
- [ ] d) in line with the official position of the local Public body I work for
- [ ] e) in line with the position of the organisation, defined as a socio-economic partner, I work for
- [ ] f) in line with the position of the private non-profit organisation I work for
- [ ] g) in line with the position of the private organisation I work for

Passa alla domanda 3.

Main needs of the border area

Please answer only questions related to the priority objectives you selected.

The Programme shall address needs shared by the entire border area incl. Puglia, Molise, Albania and Montenegro

3. **1) "A smarter Europe": What are the main needs of the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period?**

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

- [ ] MSME: Services to Micro - Small Medium Enterprises
- [ ] Start-Ups: Support to start-ups (Incubation, support to spin offs and spin outs)
- [ ] Clusters: Support to innovation clusters, incl. SMEs - Research - Administration
- [ ] Blue economy: Enhancing the blue economy (sustainable economic development in the marine environment)
- [ ] 3S: Smart specialisation strategies in the Cross-Border area
- [ ] Agro-food: Support and services to the development of agro-food sector
- [ ] R&D: Supporting micro- and SM-enterprises with R&D activities, incl. link to R&D organisations
- [ ] Skills: Skills development for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship
- [ ] Simplification: Simplification measures (administrative, access to credit, etc.) for micro and SM-Enterprises
- [ ] Digitalisation: Support to digitalisation of SMEs, digitalisation of public administration
- [ ] Internationalisation: Support measures for internationalisation of SMEs
- [ ] SMEs credit: Support for the access to credit for SMEs (incl. loans, guarantees etc.)

4. 2) "A greener Europe": What are the main needs of the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

☐ CO2 and PM: Reduce CO2 and PM emissions, through strategies, plans and pilot actions

☐ RES: Energy production from renewable sources, through supporting measures

☐ Energy efficiency: Energy efficiency measures for public and private sector, through strategies, plans and pilot actions

☐ Risk management: Joint management of disasters and natural risks (land slides, flooding, fire, earth quakes etc.)

☐ Marine litter: Reduce marine litter and micro plastics, through strategies, plans and pilot actions

☐ Waste: Sustainable waste management (recycling, circular economy etc.), through strategies, plans and pilot actions

☐ Biodiversity: Protection of biodiversity, through strategies, plans and pilot actions, esp. in NATURA 2000 sites

☐ Green economy: Supporting green and blue economy through capacity building measures

☐ Energy distribution: Smart energy distribution services

☐ Water: Improve water management and water resource conservation, through joint planning and pilot actions

☐ Industrial sites: Rehabilitation of industrial sites, through joint planning and pilot actions

☐ Alien species: Fight against alien species / plant & animal deseases, which threaten to destroy the eco-system and landscape

5. 3) "A more connected Europe": What are the main needs of the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

☐ Public transports: Improve public transport links, through small infrastructures and joint planning

☐ Transport infrastructures: Improve existing transport infrastructures, through small infrastructures and joint planning

☐ Marine links: Improve maritime/lake transport links, as well as accessibility to the maritime hubs (incl. access to TEN-T nodes), through small infrastructures and joint planning

☐ Air links: Improve air links, as well as accessibility to the air hubs, through small infrastructures and joint planning

☐ Digital infrastructures: Improve digital infrastructure and links (broad band strategy, ICT infrastructures, etc.), through small infrastructures and joint planning

☐ Links to peripheral areas: Improve transport/digital links to peripheral areas, through small infrastructures and joint planning

☐ Cybersecurity: Improve cybersecurity, through joint plans and pilot actions

☐ Skills: Improve skills for transport sector through capacity building and expertise

☐ Multimodality: Improve multimodal and sustainable transport, through small infrastructures and joint planning

☐ Digitalisation: Digitalisation of urban transport, through joint cross-border planning and digital services

6. 4) "A more social Europe": What are the main needs of the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

☐ E-health: Support to health sector with e-services, joint planning and pilot actions

☐ Ageing population:Tackling ageing population, increasing people skills (incl. measures to support elderly unemployed persons)

☐ Start-ups: Improving youth entrepreunership skills and start-ups, through training measures

☐ Brain circulation: Increase brain circulation (university - business)

☐ Vulnerable social groups: Inclusion of vulnerable social groups (migrants, elderly, young unemployed, Roma, etc.), through training, employment support

☐ Labour mobility: Measures to support cross-border labour mobility, such as administrative simplification, joint planning, efficinecy of labour market organisations

☐ Child-care: Improving child-care services, through joint cross-border planning and pilot actions

☐ Professional training: Improving professional vocational training, through joint cross-border trainings

☐ Digital skills: Improving digital skills of specific vulnerable social groups (migrants, elderly, young unemployed, women, etc.)

☐ Social integration: Promoting social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion

7. 5) "A Europe closer to citizens": What are the main needs of the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

☐ Cultural/natural assets: Valorisation of cultural /natural assets, involving local communities in urban/ rural/ coastal areas

☐ Seasonality: Reducing seasonal tourism, involving local communities

☐ Green tourism: Increasing sustainable / green tourism (incl. culture, youngsters, family, sport, wine and food, experiences etc.), involving local communities

☐ Family-agro-tourism: Supporting family or agro-tourism businesses in the local communities

☐ Skills: Increasing people skills in tourstic sector, involving local communities

☐ Culture: Cultural initiatives for tourists and citizens in local, urban, rural, coastal communties

☐ Creative industries: Supporting cultural - creative industries, involving local communities

☐ Common cultural roots: Promoting cultural initiatives, to exploit joint cultural roots and assets, involving local communities

8. 6) "Efficient public administration": What are the main needs of the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

- [ ] Policies: Joint Cross-border policies (strategies and plans) to tackle administrative and linguistic barriers
- [ ] Training: Joint cross-border training and education services
- [ ] E-solutions: Joint cross-border e-solutions (health, education, welfare and other public sectors)
- [ ] Services: Improving public administration services jointly in the cross-border area
- [ ] Skills: Increase of administrative capacity of staff of public bodies jointly in the cross-border area
- [ ] Simplification: Administrative simplification measures in the cross-border area

9. 7) "Safer and more secure Europe": What are the main needs of the border area between Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the 2021-2027 period?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

- [ ] Border-crossing: Improving efficiency of border-crossing management
- [ ] Cyber-security: Cyber-security in e-commerce
- [ ] Trade marks: Protection of trade marks, patents, fighting counterfaiting
- [ ] Ports security: Improving security of ports
- [ ] Dangerous transports: Improving security of dangerous transports
- [ ] Crises management: Improving capacity of neighbouring countries to address crises at border-crossing