Evaluation of the Interreg Italy-Albania-Montenegro IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020

Report on the impact at the level of each SO

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1 Acronyms

CP – Cooperation Programme

CPR – Common Provision Regulation

EQ – Evaluation Question

ETC – European Territorial Cooperation

EU – European Union

IPA – Instrument of Pre-Accession

JMC – Joint Monitoring Committee

JS – Joint Technical Secretariat

LP – Lead Partner

MA – Managing Authority

NIP – National Info Point

PA – Priority Axis

PP – Project Partner

SO – Specific Objective

TA – Technical Assistance

2 Executive summary

The Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme 2014-2020 allocated 92.1 million euro[1] (almost the 99% of the Programme budget) broken down into 5 Priority Axes (including technical assistance, covering the 10% of the budget, as provided for all Interreg IPA CBC programmes by the Regulations.). The distribution of the budget among the Programme priority axes is well balanced. The 28% of the resources are concentrated on priority axis 2 (equivalent to almost 26 million euro), followed by a 25% allocated to priority axis 3 and 20% to priority axis 1. Lastly, almost 15.5 million euro are concentrated on priority axis 4 (equivalent to the 17% of the total resources).

The Programme launched its first call for proposal in the first semester of 2017; despite the two years delay in the launch of the Programme, by mid-2019 all calls were closed, and the budget was fully committed.

In total, the Programme funded 72 projects (excluding TA):

- **32 standard projects financed under the 1st call for proposal: 7 projects under axis 1, 14 projects under axis 2, 7 projects under axis 3 and 4 projects under axis 4.**
- **8 thematic projects**, focusing on the following topics: Telemedicine for SMEs; Internationalisation/governance for SMEs; Agro-food for SMEs; Tourism; Culture; Risk management and civil protection; Water management; Transport.
- **15 standard projects and 17 small scale projects financed through a targeted call.** This call targeted specific topics not sufficiently covered by the previous calls.

Absorption of the available budget

As regards the [**financial progress**], data provided by the JS as of November 2021, show a **certification level of expenditure equal to approximately 31% of the allocated resources**[2]. The level of progress varies at the level of each SO. It is however clear, that the data on certification to the EU Commission does not fully reflect the real financial progress, as it may take from 3 up to 12 months for an expenditure to go through the reporting and verification pipeline[3].

The best performing Specific Objective is SO 2.2 (39%) while the SOs with the lowest levels of financial absorption are SO 3.2 (20%) and SO 4.1 (18%).

The level of financial progress varies at the level of the calls for proposals: projects approved under the first call for proposal, already spent 57% of their budget, while financial absorption is less advanced for thematic projects (17% of their budget) and for projects funded under the targeted (10%). Clearly, projects of the first call for proposal have been approved in April 2018, that is more than a year before approval of thematic projects (September 2019) and almost 2 years before the projects of the targeted call (February 2020).

Type of beneficiaries

The 72 approved projects involved **a total number of 338 project beneficiaries** (247 beneficiaries in the standard projects, 51 beneficiaries on thematic projects and the remaining 40 beneficiaries in the small-scale

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[1] According to eMS data (12/10/2020)

[2] Calculated as the ratio between the total projects budget and the total amount certified and approved by CA

[3] A project partner submits the expenditure to controller, who verifies and certifies it to the partner, who reports to lead partner, who checks and reports to the joint secretariat, which checks and submits it to the managing authority, which checks and releases to the certifying authority, which verifies and certifies to the EU Commission, and in each step, errors may be detected and corrected by partners)

projects). **56% are public bodies**, in particular local (28%) and national (18%, e.g. ministries in Albania and Montenegro) and regional (10%), 17% are **NGOs and interest groups**, **10% are universities and research institutes**.

Output indicators

Regarding the **Programme physical performance**, data declared by projects in the eMS by mid November 2021, show that for many SOs the **outputs already achieved at the end of 2021 are strongly exceeding the targets set by the Programme for 2023**. In a broader perspective, if we consider the level of financial absorption, it emerges a clear deviation between the level of financial progress and physical progress of each PA. This might lead to several possible explanations:

- presence of some problems in the certification process which slowed down the financial flow without however preventing the beneficiaries from realizing what was foreseen. This is particularly due to the fact that the system for reporting and management verifications of all Interreg programmes is generally very long lasting and burdensome;
- an underestimation, in the planning phase, of the potential of the projects in terms of expected outputs. In other words, some projects are more efficient than expected (in terms of available resources / produced output);
- problems in the quantification of indicators by the beneficiaries. In other words, beneficiaries quantify the indicators also by including outputs that do not fully comply with the definition envisaged by the Programme.

The information gathered through the case studies indicate that, in some cases, beneficiaries encountered problems in understanding and quantifying the indicators. For some SO the beneficiaries complain of a certain vagueness in the definition of the indicators and in some cases, they confused indicators and target groups. It is worth mentioning that for 2021-2027 programme, it is recommended to issue clear definitions and clear guidance for beneficiaries, to be already included in the programming (e.g. in the annex for the methodology to set up the performance framework).

Result indicators

As regards result indicators, these are generally performing in line with the financial performance of the Programme. In this regard, the approach adopted for setting the targets and monitoring the achievement of result indicators seem more solid and reliable than for output indicators. Nonetheless, information from the case studies shows that beneficiaries are facing difficulties in understanding how to monitor these indicators. This was also confirmed by the desk analysis of the project application forms which showed several cases of projects which confuse the definitions of outputs and results.

Direct results/impacts

Considering the state of implementation of the projects (of which only some projects of the first call have been completed) and the slowdown imposed by Covid-19, the analysis of the direct results generated by the projects at the Programme level is preliminary and will be further detailed in the next evaluation reports.

The following figures provides an overview of the direct results/impacts generated by the Programme at the level of each OS.

Specific Objective 1.1 "Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SME's cross-border market"

| 11 projects | 18,5 MEuro | Public sector: 65 % of beneficiaries |

Actions:

| Clusters and networks | Capacity building schemes | Innovative approaches |

DIRECT RESULTS:

Increased skills and competences

Increased awareness

More efficient/effective delivery of public services
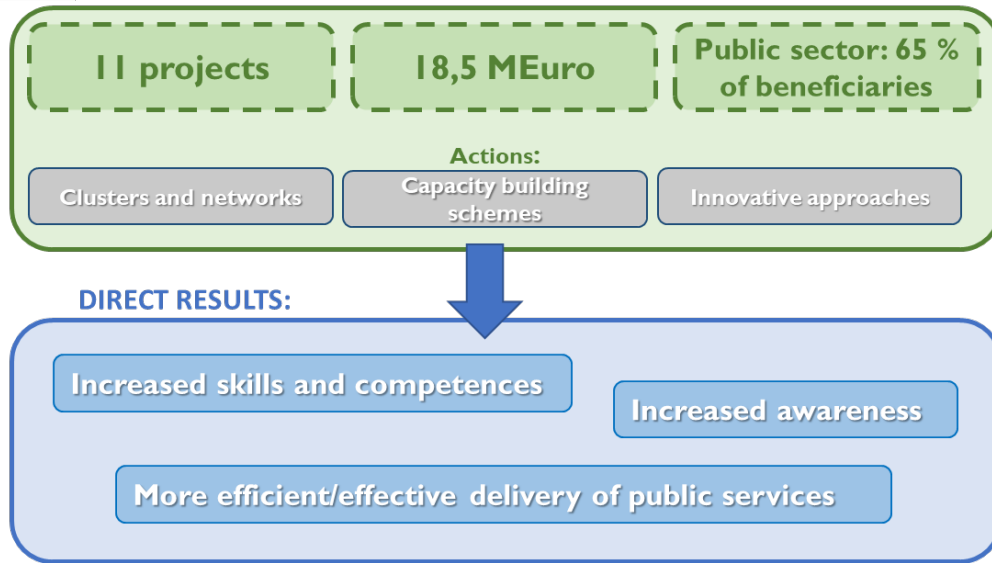
Specific Objective 2.1 "Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development"

| 18 projects | 15,7 M Euro | Public sector: 33 % of beneficiaries |

Actions:

| Common models and plans | Products, services | Actions protecting environment |

DIRECT RESULTS:

Increased skills and competences

Increased awareness

Increased attractiveness of the cooperation area

More efficient/effective delivery of public services
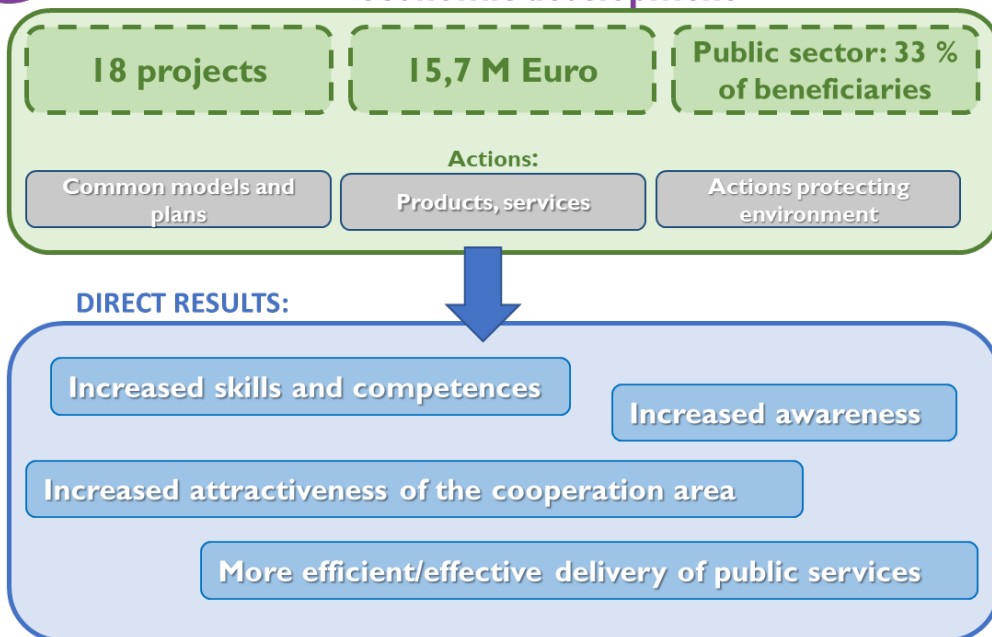
Specific Objective 2.2 "Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products"

| 10 projects | 10 M Euro | Public sector: 48 % of beneficiaries |

Actions:

Platforms and network   Creative productions

DIRECT RESULTS:

Increased skills and competences

Increased awareness

Increased attractiveness of the cooperation area

More efficient/effective delivery of public services
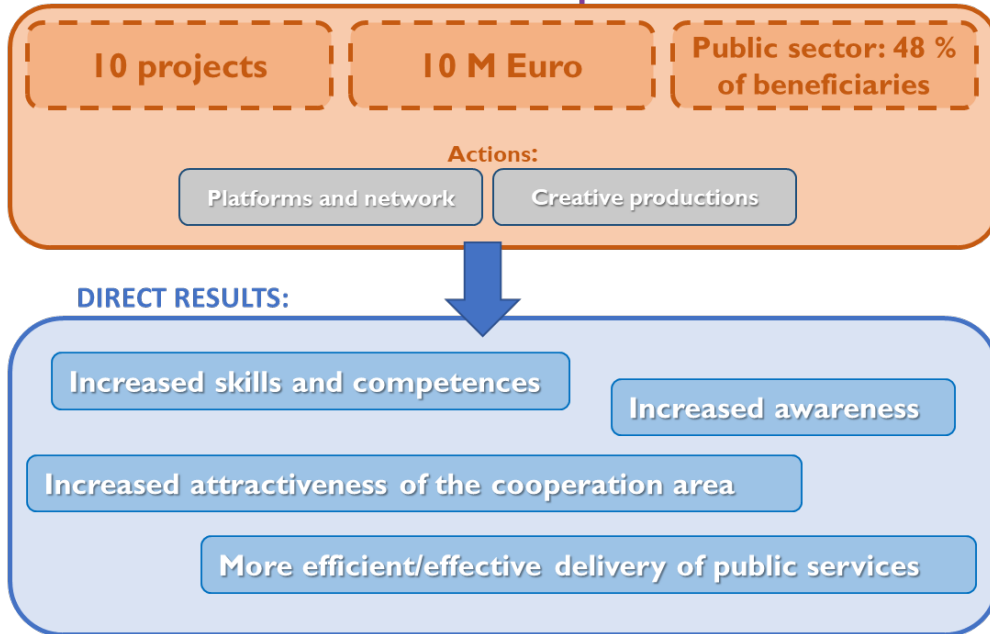
Specific Objective 3.1 "Increase cross border cooperation strategies on water landscapes"

| 8 projects | 17 M Euro | Public sector: 58 % of beneficiaries |

Actions:

Networks   Joint management plan

Platforms and solutions   Interventions

DIRECT RESULTS:

Increased skills and competences

Increased awareness

Better governance

More efficient/effective delivery of public services
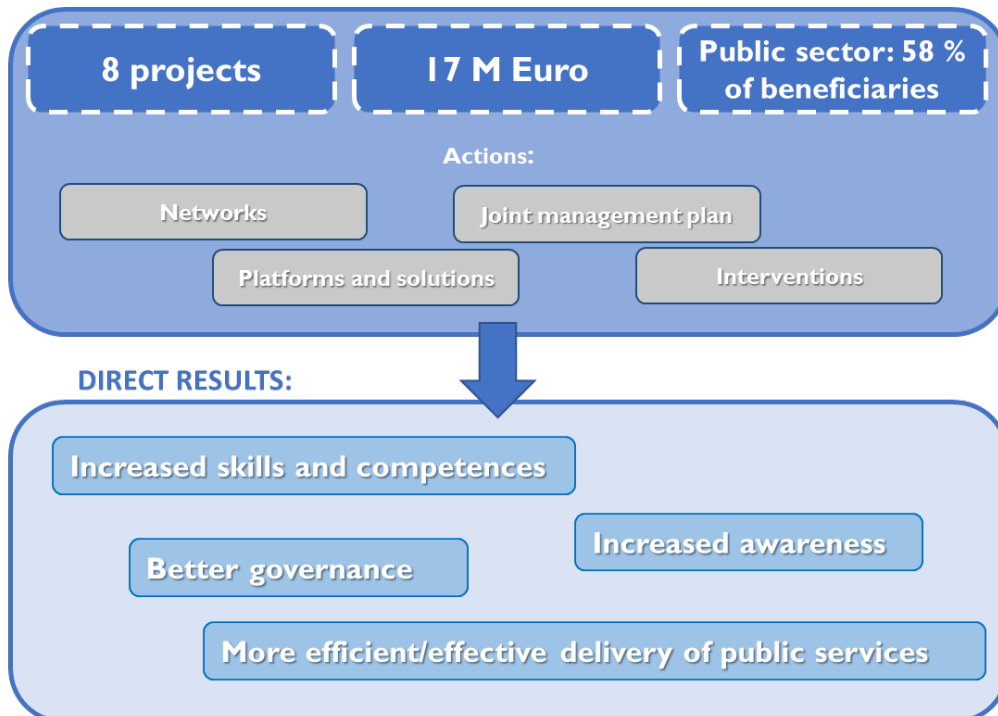
Specific Objective 3.2 "Promoting innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency in public sector"

| 12 projects | 6 M Euro | Public sector: 51 % of beneficiaries |

Actions:

| Common models | Feasibility studies | Action plan |

DIRECT RESULTS:

Increased skills and competences

Better governance

Increased awareness
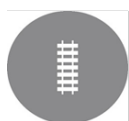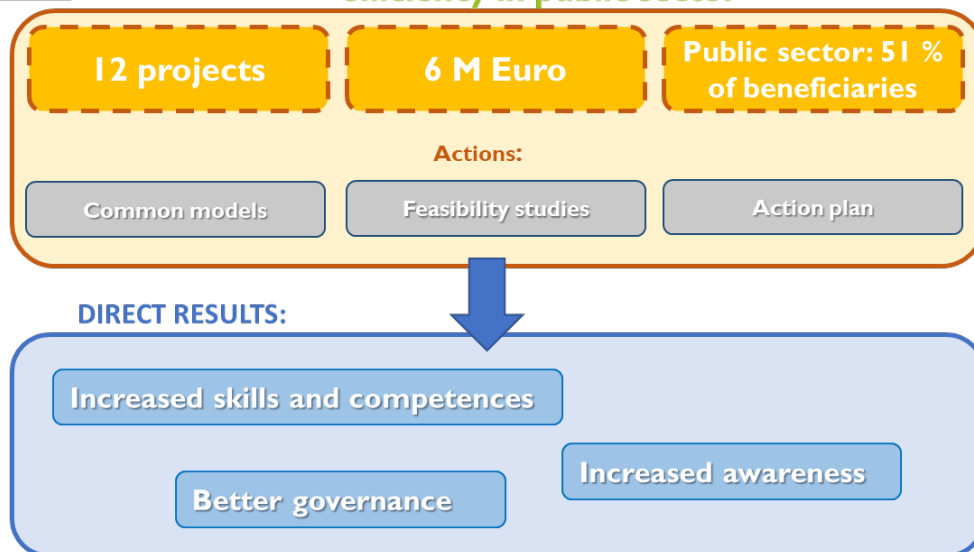
Specific Objective 4.1 "Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross-border connections in the cooperation area"

| 12 projects | 6 M Euro | Public sector: 51 % of beneficiaries |

Actions:

| Platforms | Networks | Connections |

DIRECT RESULTS:

Increased skills and competences

Better governance

Increased awareness
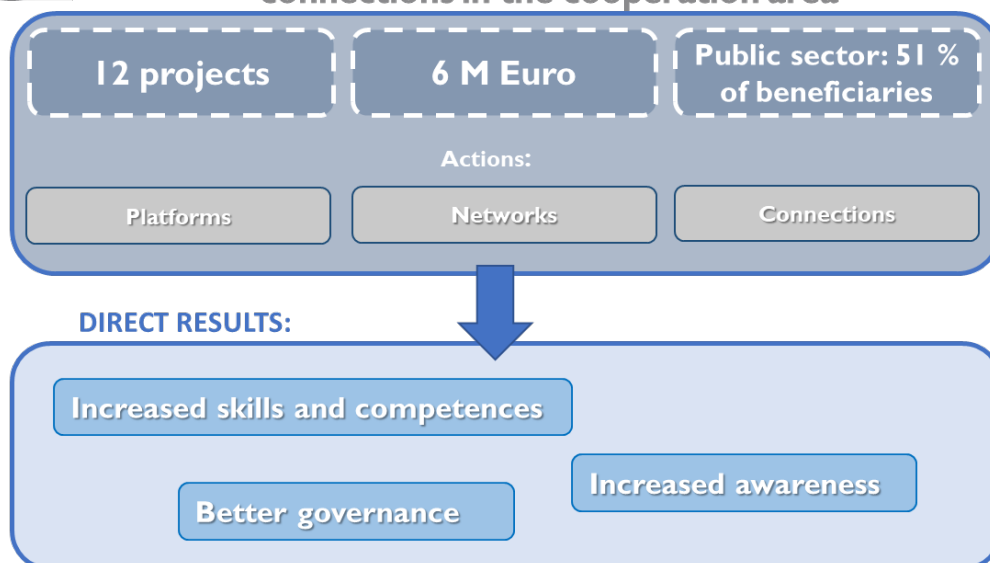
3 Introduction

The Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme involves two Italian regions (Puglia and Molise) and all the territories of two countries affected by the pre-accession process (Albania and Montenegro). Programme budget for 2014-2020 is 92.7 million euros.

Figure 1 IPA II Program - CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro - Cooperation area

In January 2021, t33 was commissioned by ARTI, *Agenzia Regionale per la Tecnologia e l'Innovazione* of Puglia Region, to perform the ongoing evaluation of the Programme. In coherence with what proposed in the Technical Offer, the evaluators submitted by May 2021 6 evaluation reports:

- First report on the Programme efficiency and effectiveness
- Thematic report on the results of the projects financed under the first call
- First report on the Programme communication strategy
- Report on the inputs for the 2021-2027 Programme
- Report on the environmental evaluation
- Contribution to the Annual Implementation Report

The present report provides a preliminary analysis of the **impacts of the Programme at the level of each SO** and is one of the three deliverables submitted by November 2021 according to the evaluation working plan. The other reports are:

- Thematic report on Thematic projects
- Report on the Programme's contribution to EUSAIR

This report is organised as follows:

- The first part presents a summary of the main findings of the evaluation and recommendations.
- The second illustrates the methodological approach.
- The third chapter offers a general picture of the Programme (programme articulation per SO and priority axes, approved projects, type of beneficiaries, preliminary analysis of the outputs and results achievements).

- Chapters from 6 to 12 illustrate the preliminary impacts at the level of each specific objective. For each SO, the evaluators analysed the programme strategy which led to the selection and the approved projects under each SO. A preliminary analysis of the progress in the implementation of each SO (both financial and physical progress) is also provided. It is worth notice that this analysis is only preliminary, and the assessment will be updated during 2022.

4 Methodological approach

The main objective of this evaluation is to provide a preliminary analysis of the impacts at the level of each SO of the Interreg Italy-Albania-Montenegro 2014-2020 Programme.

Impact is defined as the contribution to the change (i.e. socio-economic or policy change) that can be credibly attributed to outputs of activities under supported cross-border interventions. Impact is not directly measured by any programme monitoring tools (e.g. indicators). This might be explained by the fact that the 2014-2020 logical framework of the EC for ERDF and CF programmes defined milestone in terms of output at project level and milestone in terms of results at programme level, while the direct results of the projects (i.e. the "impact" in the figure below) is not monitored by the indicators system.

Figure 2 Logical framework for the 2014-2020 period
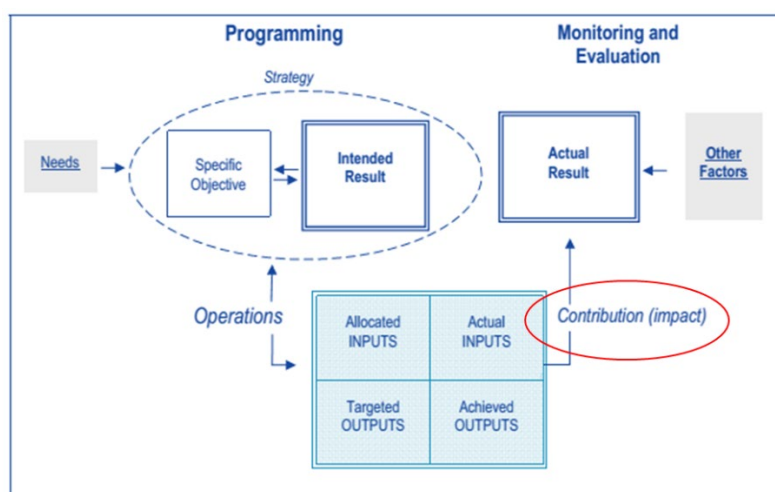
To describe the impacts achieved and reconstruct the intervention logic of each SO, the evaluators rely on data and information provided by the monitoring system and by the programme documents. In the case of the Interreg Italy-Albania-Montenegro programme, limited updated data on the monitoring systems were available and thus the analysis provided in the next paragraphs is still preliminary and will be further detailed in the next steps of the evaluation.

The main elements evaluated in the report are illustrated in the table below.

Table 1 Elements evaluated

Elements evaluated	Sub-elements
Programme structure	Available resources and type of projects
	Financial progress
	Types of beneficiaries
	Output and result indicators
Specific Objective assessment	Strategy, approved projects and beneficiaries
	Expected 'Direct results'

The data sources used by the evaluators are:

Table 2 Data sources

Desk analysis	• Programme documents • Programme web site and projects portals • Application forms and progress reports • Available literature on policy and programme
	Available databases (e.g. *cohesiondata*)
	Data retrieved from the monitoring and reporting system
Interviews	• Programme bodies involved: MA/CA, JS, JMC • Case study reports (9 case study reports on first call projects and 8 case study reports on thematic projects)
Web surveys	• Web survey addressed to the Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme beneficiaries • JS survey addressed to Programme beneficiaries

5 Programme overview

The following table shows the programme articulation per SO and priority axis and indicates the number of approved projects and financial resources. Priority 5 on technical assistance is not considered.

Table 3 Priority axes, SOs, programme budget allocation

| Priority axis	Specific objective	Approved projects	Total M euro
1	SO 1.1 Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SMEs cross border market	11	18.5
2	SO 2.1 Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development	18	15.7
	SO 2.2 Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products	10	10
3	SO 3.1 Increase cross border cooperation strategies on water landscapes	8	16.9
	SO 3.2 Promote innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency	12	6
4	SO 4.1 Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the cooperation area	13	15.5

Source: JS data

5.1 AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND TYPES OF PROJECTS

The Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme 2014-2020 has already allocated about EUR 92.2 million[4] (almost 99% of the Programme budget), broken down into 5 Priority Axes (including technical assistance). As the graph below shows, the distribution of the budget among the Programme priority axes is well balanced. 28% of the resources are concentrated on priority axis 2 (equivalent to almost 26 million euro), followed by a 25% allocated to priority axis 3 and 20% to priority axis 1. Lastly, almost 15.5 million euro are concentrated on priority axis 4 (equivalent to 17% of the total resources). 10% of the programme budget is allocated to technical assistance.

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[4] According to eMS data (12/10/2020)

Figure 3 Breakdown of Programme resources among PAs

Total budget

- Priority Axis 1
- Priority Axis 2
- Priority Axis 3
- Priority Axis 4
- Technical Assistance
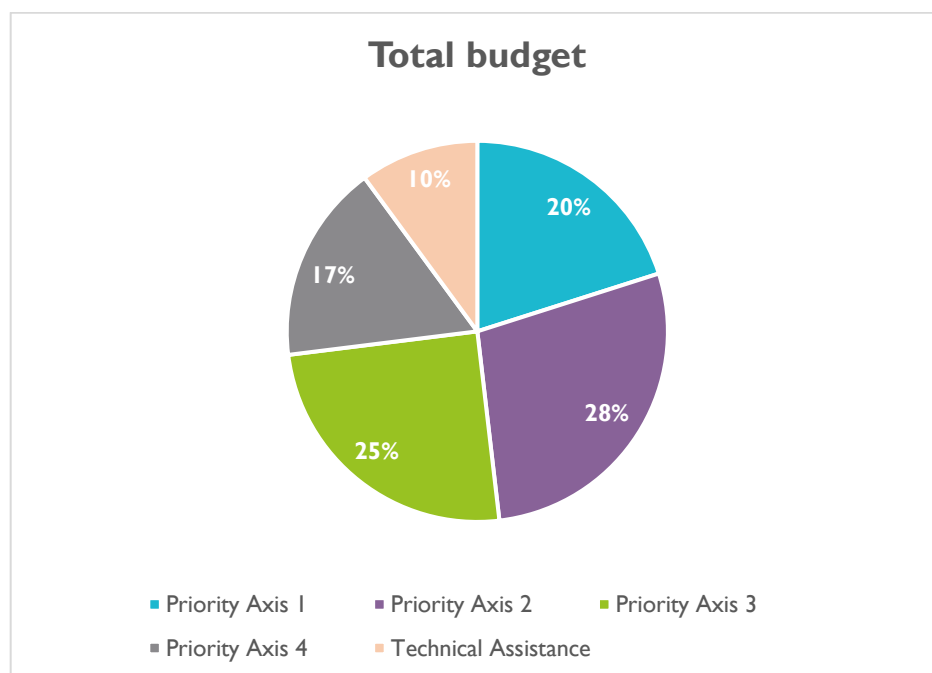
Source: JS data (List of operations)

The figure below provides more details on the breakdown of the programme resources among SOs.

Figure 3 Breakdown of Programme resources among SOs

Budget per SO

- 1.1
- 2.1
- 2.2
- 3.1
- 3.2
- 4.1
- TA
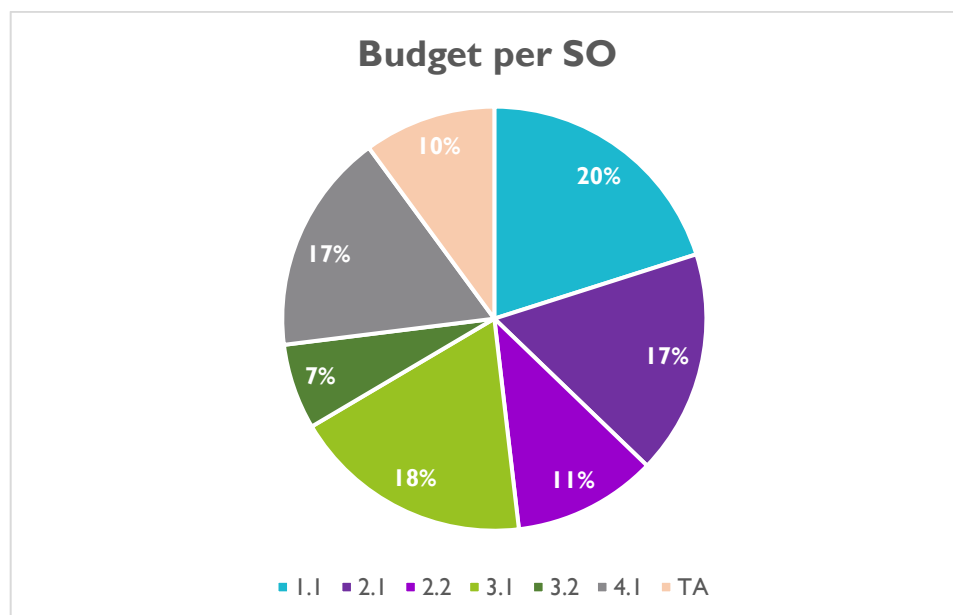
Source: JS data (List of operations)

Despite the two-year delay from the approval of the Programme to the contracting of the JS staff, the Programme launched its first call for proposal in the first semester of 2017 and until mid-2019, all calls were closed and the budget was fully committed. In total, the Programme funded 72 projects (excluding TA).

The breakdown of approved projects per call is provided in the table below.

Table 4 Approved projects per call

Calls	Approved projects
1st call for standard projects	32
2nd targeted call for standard projects	15
2nd targeted call for small scale projects	17
Notice for thematic projects	8
Total	**72**

Source: JS data (List of operations)

In total, the programme funded 32 standard projects under the 1st call for proposals. The distribution of the number of projects reflects the distribution of resources: axis 2 has the greatest number of projects with 14 standard projects (9 in OS 2.1 only) followed by axes 1 and 3 (both with 7 1st call projects each). The axis with the lowest number of projects is axis 4 with 4 projects.

Table 5 First call projects distribution among SOs

OS	N. projects
1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SMEs cross border market	7
2.1 - Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development	9
2.2 - Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products	5
3.1 - Increase cross border cooperation strategies on water landscapes	6
3.2 - Promote innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency	1
4.1 - Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the cooperation area	4
Tot	**32**

In addition to the 1st call projects, the programme selected 8 thematic projects. Under priority axis 1 the Programme funded 3 thematic projects. Both priority axes 2 and 3 have 2 projects each while priority axis 4 has 1 thematic project approved.

Table 6 Thematic projects distribution among SOs

OS	N. projects
1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SMEs cross border market	3
2.1 - Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development	1
2.2 - Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products	1
3.1 - Increase cross border cooperation strategies on water landscapes	2

OS	N. projects
4.1 - Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the cooperation area	1
Total	**8**

Apart from the 1st call for standard projects and the thematic projects, the Programme launched a targeted call for proposals. The targeted call for proposals focused on specific topics which should have been addressed in the adopted Cooperation Programme, but that have not been tackled, or not sufficiently tackled, by the first call for standard projects and by the thematic projects. In this sense, **the call represents a strategic and key call for the purpose of achieving the programme objectives.**

The targeted call for proposals focused on specific topics and additional scores have been given to those project proposals which plan concrete and precise capitalisation actions and to those having objectives and activities which are explicitly foreseen in the EUSAIR action plan. Additionally, applicants of the second call for proposal could decide to apply for a targeted 'standard project' or for 'small-scale project'.

Table 7 Targeted call standard projects distribution among SOs

OS	N. projects
2.1 - Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development	2
2.2 - Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products	2
3.2 - Promote innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency	7
4.1 - Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the cooperation area	4
Tot	**15**

As shown in the table above, the targeted call for standard projects covers all SOs except SO 1.1 (due to the running out of the available resources) and SO 3.1(by decision of the JMC since in the 1st call only one project on SO 3.2 was approved and in the notice for thematic project no has been project presented).

Small-scale projects foresee the use of simplified cost options (SCOs). The dedicated small-scale projects grants took the form of reimbursement of eligible costs declared by beneficiaries based on a lump sum (several lump sums could be combined to cover different activities, and to contribute to the total amount of the project). The maximum total budget per project is of EUR 100 000 and there are three typologies of actions that could be granted: a) Preparation costs; b) Workshops, seminars and conferences; c) Incoming missions & B2B meetings.

As the table below shows, small-scale projects have been approved under all SOs, except SO 3.1. Additionally, as regards the localisation of the LPs of small-scale projects, it is worth noting that all LPs are from Albania or Italy.

Table 8 Targeted call small scale projects distribution among SOs

OS	N. projects
1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SMEs cross border market	1
2.1 - Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development	6

OS	N. projects
2.2 - Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products	2
3.2 - Promote innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency	4
4.1 - Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the cooperation area	4
Tot	**17**

The table below illustrates the performance of the first two calls for proposals (bearing in mind that the selection of the call for Thematic projects has not been considered since it has been implemented with a different approach) in terms of number of applications received, eligibility and approval rate and time needed to complete the assessment[5].

Table 9 - Application data per Call (eligibility and approval rate)

Call	Indicator	Total
1st call for standard project	Number of applications received	190
	Eligible	137
	Eligibility rate	72%
	Approved projects	32
	Approval rate (approved/received)	**17%**
	Time needed to complete the assessment	196 days
2nd call for targeted projects + small scale projects	Number of applications received	113
	Eligible	93
	Eligibility rate	82%
	Approved projects	32
	Approval rate (approved/received)	**28%**
	Time needed to complete the assessment	182 days

Source: t33 elaboration based on JS data (2021)

5.2 FINANCIAL PROGRESS

A preliminary overview of the Programme financial progress is provided in the next paragraphs. However, it is worth noting that the figures refer to all approved projects (except the 4 TA projects) as of 25 November 2021.

Data provided by the JS as of November 2021 show a certification level of expenditure equal to approximately 31% of the allocated resources[6]. The level of progress varies at the level of each SO.

The figure below reported the performance of the approved projects under each SOs, as ratio between the resources approved by the CA and those allocated.

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[5] From the deadline for the submission of project proposals to the date of the approval of the final list of projects.
[6] Calculated as the ratio between the total projects budget and the total amount certified and approved by CA

Figure 4 Financial performance of first call project per SO
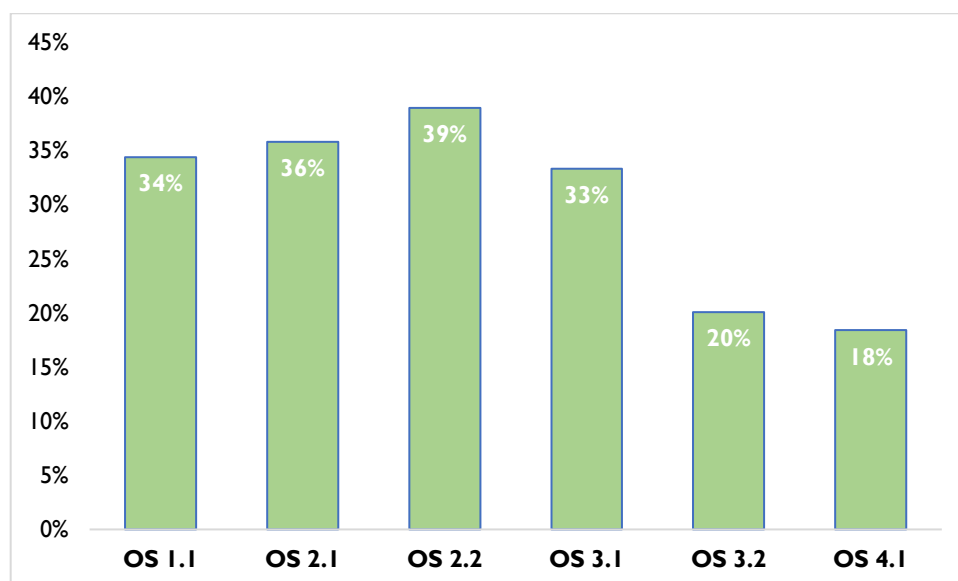
Source: JS data (File Global Project Living Tables 25/11/2021)

As shown in the figure above, all Programme SOs certified less than the 50% of their available budget. The best performing Specific Objective is SO 2.2 with the 39% of its budget already approved by CA. The SOs with worst performances are SO 3.2 (20%) and SO 4.1 (18%).

The level of financial progress varies also at the level of the calls for proposals. Indeed, projects approved under the first call for proposal, also in the light of their advanced implementation, reported the 57% of their budget approved by the Certifying Authority. As regards the financial performance of the thematic projects, data shows that only 17% of the available budget has been certified and approved by the CA.

Projects funded under the targeted call for proposals, notwithstanding their status of standard or small-scale projects, are those performing worst, with only 10% of their budget approved by the CA. To this purpose, it is worth noting that these projects have started their activities during summer 2020, almost 2 years after the standard projects of the first call.

Figure 5 Financial performance per call
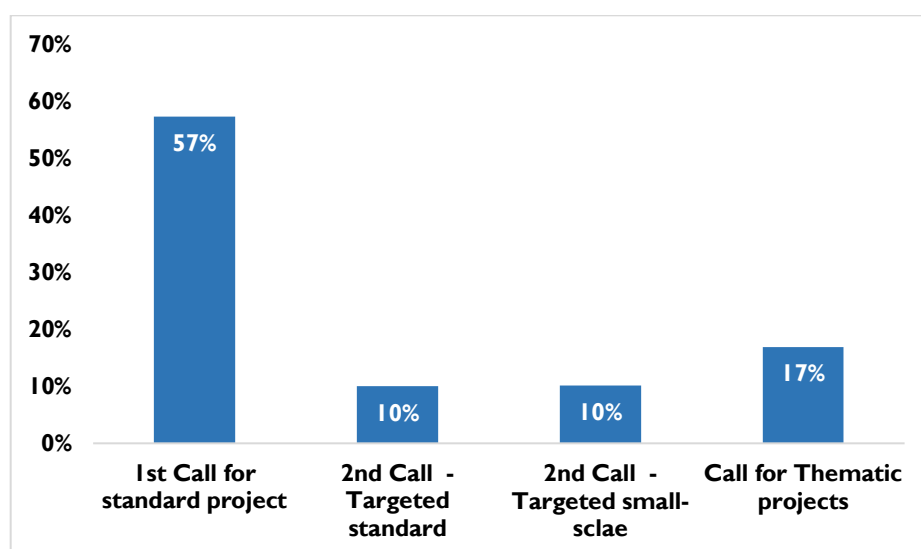
Source: JS data (File Global Project Living Tables 25/11/2021)

5.3 TYPE OF BENEFICIARIES

As anticipated above, the Italy Albania Montenegro 2014-2020 Programme funded 72 projects (excluding TA projects), of which 47 standard projects (broken down between the 1st call for proposal and the targeted call), 8 thematic projects and 17 small-scale projects, involving a total number of 338 project beneficiaries (247 beneficiaries in the standard projects, 51 beneficiaries on thematic projects and the remaining 40 beneficiaries in the small-scale projects). Looking at single beneficiaries, the programme activated a total number of 210 single beneficiaries.

From the point of view of the type of partners, the 56% are public bodies, in particular local (28%) and national (18%, e.g. ministries in Albania and Montenegro) and regional (10%). The number of NGOs and interest groups involved is about the 17% of the total, while a 10% of beneficiaries are universities and research institutes. The table below indicates the type of partner and the relative percentage of the total funded projects.

Table 10 Type of beneficiary

Type of beneficiary	% of the total
Business support organisation	4%
Education/training centre and school	1%
Higher education/research centre/university	10%
Infrastructure and (public) service provider	2%
Interest groups including NGOs/no profit organization	17%
International organisation, EEIG under national law	1%
Local public authority	28%
National public authority	18%
Other	7%
Regional public authority	10%
Sectoral agency	2%

Source: JS data

In terms of distribution of the number of partners between the three countries, the table below illustrates a prevalence of Italian partners (44%), followed by Albanian (32%) and Montenegrin partners (24%). The incidence of Italian partners is particularly significant in the case of the leaders (58%) while the distribution of project partners is slightly more balanced among the three countries, despite the number of Italian project partners is higher (see table below).

Table 11 Distributions of partners among countries (excluding TA)

Country	LP	PP	Total	%
ALBANIA	21	87	108	32%
ITALY	42	106	148	44%
MONTENEGRO	9	73	82	24%

Source: JS data

As regards the localisation of the beneficiaries, the figure below shows their geographical distribution among the countries/regions involved.

Despite the majority of beneficiaries are localised in the capital cities/regional capitals, the distribution of project partners is quite homogenous in Italy and Montenegro; whereas beneficiaries in Albania are mainly concentrated in Tirana and in the coastal area.

Figure 6 Localisation of the beneficiaries

5.4 OUTPUTS AND RESULTS ACHIEVEMENTS

The Italy Albania Montenegro Programme has defined expected achievements and quantitative objectives for each SO. The table below presents the outputs envisaged by the programme and, based on the information provided by the programme authorities, shows the level of progress compared to the targets set for 2023.

The table below shows data provide by the Programme in the AIR 2020. The last column refers to the financial progress of the PA, calculated as percentage of the projects approved expenditure by CA out of the total budget dedicated to the PA. Financial figures refer to data provided by the JS in November 2021.

Table 12 Output indicators achievement (2020 and 2021), target and financial progress (%)

PA	Type	ID	Name	Target 2023	AIR 2020 Achieved	JS data 11/2021	% €
1	Output	1.1.2	Number of business and research institutions involved/offering non-financial support	11	10	**47**	**34%**
	Output	CO04	Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	11	68	**225**	
2	Output	2.1.1	Number of new products, services and pilot or demonstration projects realized	4	6	**74**	**37%**
	Output	2.1.2	Number of valorised sites	4	6	**52**	

	Output	2.2.2	Number of cross-border creative platforms created	4	5	**5**	
	Output	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	4	0	1	
3	Output	3.1	Number of new products and services, pilot and demonstration projects realized	15	21	**134**	**30%**
	Output	3.1.2	Number of users involved (in pilot or demonstration projects).	15	73	**235**	
4	Output	4.1.1	Number of new products, services, pilot and demonstration projects realized	4	2	**7**	**18%**
	Output	4.1.2	Number of new multimodal connections for the benefit of passengers and freight	4	0	0	

Source: AIR 2020 + JS data (File Programme Table Output Indicators 25/11/2021 + File Global Project Living Tables 25/11/2021)

The column in green refers to output indicators data declared by projects in the eMS as of November 2021. These data should be considered carefully and will be further verify and check by JS before filling in the 2021 AIR.

However, although considering the need of further verification, the table shows that for many SOs the outputs already achieved at the end of 2021 are strongly exceeding the targets set by the Programme.

Additionally, it is interesting to analyse also the financial data, as reported for each Priority Axis. From the evaluator's point of view, the deviation between the level of financial progress (intended as the ratio between the allocated budget per PA and the amount certified and approved by CA) and physical progress has several possible explanations:

- presence of some problems in the certification process which slowed down the financial flow without however preventing the beneficiaries from realizing what was foreseen;
- an underestimation, in the planning phase, of the potential of the projects in terms of expected outputs. In other words, some projects are more efficient than expected (in terms of available resources / produced output);
- problems in the quantification of indicators by the beneficiaries. In other words, beneficiaries quantify the indicators also by including outputs that do not fully comply with the definition envisaged by the Programme.

The information gathered through the case studies seems to indicate that in some cases **beneficiaries encountered problems in understanding and quantifying the indicators**. For some SOs, the **beneficiaries complain of a certain vagueness in the definition of the indicators** and in some cases, they confused indicators and target groups.

As regards the results, the table below illustrates the result indicators selected by the Programme and the level of achievement compared to the targets for 2023.

Table 13 – Result indicators of the Interreg Italy-Albania-Montenegro 2014-2020 Programme

PA/OS	Type	Name	PF Baseline	Target 2023	2020 Achieved	Achieved/target
1/1.1	Result	Common interventions aimed to improve the cross-border framework	8	15	2	13%
2/2.1	Result	Common action Plans for the smart management of tourist destinations to be adopted by the public authorities of the Programme area	0	4	3	75%
2/2.2	Result	Cross-border networks in the cultural and creative fields	2	5	2	40%
2/2.2	Result	Cross-border agreements in the cultural and creative fields	1	3	1	33%
3/3.1	Result	Common plans enhancing and safeguarding water landscapes (including marine ones)	3	7	2	29%
3/3.2	Result	Common plans for energy efficiency and sustainable energy production	1	4	0	0%
4/4.1	Result	Agreements for cross-border passengers and freight sustainable transport systems and multimodal mobility solutions	5	7	1	14%

Source: AIR 2020

Result indicators are generally performing in line with the financial performance of the Programme (with the only exceptions are result indicator 3.2 which reported zero achievement for 2020).

In this regard, the approach adopted for setting the targets and monitoring **the achievement of result indicators seem more solid and reliable than for output indicators.** Nonetheless, information from the case studies shows that beneficiaries are facing difficulties in understanding how to monitor these indicators. This was also confirmed by the desk analysis of the project application forms which showed several cases of projects which confuse the definitions of outputs and results.

6 Preliminary analysis of the 'direct results'

Considering the state of implementation of the projects (of which only some projects of the first call have been completed) and the slowdown imposed by Covid-19, the analysis of the direct results generated by the projects at the Programme level is preliminary and will be further detailed in the next evaluation reports.

Notwithstanding this clarification, the evaluation activity (desk analysis, case studies, web-survey and JS survey data) allows to capture the main types of expected impacts. More precisely, the following paragraphs illustrate which types of direct results/impacts are expected at the level of each SO.

6.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.1

6.1.1 Strategy, approved projects and beneficiaries

SO 1.1 "*Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SME's cross-border market*" aims at improving framework conditions for delivering innovation and addresses the following **development challenges**: (i) insufficient cooperation among SME's, business support organization and research centres, (ii) weak competitiveness of SME's.

The S.O. supports three types of actions:

- 'setting up actions for improving access to research results and technology transfer for SMEs',

- 'promoting innovative start-up, clusters and networks',

- 'developing and testing capacity building schemes' and 'promoting the development of innovative approaches'.

The main expected results are:

- **Enhanced SME's cooperation and competitiveness** through the better interaction among the business and research actors;

- **Strengthened culture of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial mind sets, skills and attitudes.**

By the end of 2020, **11 projects had been approved** - 15% of the 72 approved projects. These have **some EUR 18.5 million of eligible costs**, 20% of the total budget. 7 projects have been approved under the 1st call for standard projects, while 3 are the thematic projects selected under the S.O. To these, one additional small-scale project has been approved under the targeted call for proposal.

The table below shows the breakdown of SO 1.1 approved projects among the different calls for proposal.

Table 14 SO 1.1 - Approved projects

Call	Approved projects SO 1.1	Allocated budget Euro
1st Call for Ordinary Projects	7	7 043 987
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted	-	-
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted Small Scale	1	91 000
Call for Thematic Projects	3	11 373 934
Total	**11**	**18 508 921**

Source: JS data + eMS

These projects refer to a network of 68 beneficiaries. Partnerships are mainly composed of public institutions (65%), in particular national ones, eg. Ministries (26%). At the local level (24% of the beneficiaries), there is a strong presence of the Chamber of Commerce and municipalities.

The second component of these partnerships is that of NGOs and interest groups (13%), where we find in particular the Regional Development Agencies.

Also note the presence of business support organisations (9%) and universities and research centres (6%).

The table below provides information on the resources allocated per type of beneficiary.

Table 15 SO 1.1 – Type of beneficiaries and allocated budget

Type of beneficiary	Number	Allocated budget Euro
Business support organisation	6	1 270 962
Higher education/research center/university	4	646 420
Interest groups including NGOs/no profit organization	9	1 148 490
Local public authority	16	5 592 901
National public authority	18	4 772 166
Other	5	1 110 023
Regional public authority	10	3 967 959
Total	**68**	**18 508 921**

Source: JS data + eMS

6.1.2 Expected results

As previously highlighted, the result indicator selected by the programme intends to capture the potential impacts of projects funded by SO 1.1. The main expected result from the projects is improve the cross-border framework for innovation by enhancing SME's cooperation and strengthening the entrepreneurial mind sets.

Compared to the target value set for 2023 (15), we observe a weak advance (13%).

Table 16 Result indicator SO 1.1

PA/OS	Type	Name	Target 2023	2020 Achieved	Achieved/target
1/1.1	Result	Common interventions aimed to improve the cross-border framework	15	2	13%

However, the information collected through the web-survey, the JS survey and desk analysis confirms that OS 1.1 projects are mainly increasing SMEs cooperation and innovation framework; it also emerges that the projects are producing impacts on other dimensions. The following paragraphs summarize the main impacts of SO 1.1 projects.

Increased skills and competences of key actors

Approved projects under SO 1.1 contributes to increase the competencies of the economic actors themselves. For instance:

- **HISTEK** contributed to increase skills and competences of workers, in particular in Albania and Montenegro, by training them on Key Enabling Technologies.

- *FILA* improved the innovation capacities of the SMEs of the agri-food sector.
- *PHASE* increases capacity and extend experiences and skills on eHealth of involved operators (healthcare professionals, physicians, nurses). In particular, the project aims at increasing the skills of traditional MSMEs in entering and exploiting the new opportunities of the eHealth market, especially for Albanian and Montenegrin SMEs.
- *INNOTOURCLUST*, through specific building digital labs, targeted the improvement of the skills of the economic actors of the tourism sector.
- *SMART ADRIA Blue Growth* empowered national and regional stakeholders, economic actors and research institutions' knowledges on Blue Growth and Smart Specialisation Strategy.
- *FOOD4HEALTH* paved the way to apply innovative production techniques and transfer EU quality standards for the processing and enhancement of typical and traditional products of the agri-food sector and fisheries.

In some cases, projects impacted on the improvement of competencies of public actors and of others involved in the definition and implementation of public policies. For example:

- *3C4SME*, improved the competencies, in particular of stakeholders from Albania and Montenegro, in the definition and implementation of financial instruments for supporting SMEs.
- *BRE* empowered partners' knowledge on the business registers through several activities centred on training and mentoring.

Increased awareness and more engagement of local actors

Approved projects under SO 1.1 contribute to increase the awareness and in the engagement of local actors, stakeholders and citizens. Some examples:

- *PHASE* increases stakeholders attitude knowledge and awareness, but also empowers citizens about eHealth.
- *SMART ADRIA Blue Growth*, thanks to the elaboration of maps and case studies, provides local actors with updated and detailed information on the state of art of the Blue Growth strategy in the area.
- Thanks to the implementation of the Food4Health Community Labs, *FOOD4HEALTH* transfers knowledges and favours a change in the entrepreneurial mind sets of the micro and SMEs agro-food and fisheries enterprises of the area.

More efficient/effective delivery of public services

Some of the projects analysed under SO 1.1 contribute to the delivery of more efficient and effective public services. For instance, *PHASE*, improves both the quality and efficiency of the healthcare services provided, thanks to eHealth and telemedicine, through better and quicker diagnostics tools, real-time systematic patients monitoring.

6.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1

6.2.1 Strategy, approved projects and beneficiaries

SO 2.1 "*Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development*" aims at valorising existing natural and cultural assets in an **area compromised** by the lack of planning instruments for the smart and sustainable cultural and natural heritage, as well as lack of know-how, experience and skills in destination management and marketing and of innovative tourism products and services.

The S.O. supports three types of actions:

- 'developing common models and plans for the smart and sustainable tourism management',
- 'developing diversified tourist products and providing services to specific target groups (i.e., disabled people, young and elder tourists) and sectors (eno-gastronomic, sport, religious tourism)',
- 'promoting actions protecting the environment and valorisation of less known destinations, protected areas and cultural assets'.

The main expected results are:

- Better **cross-border smart and sustainable tourism management;**

- **Improved products and services** for cross-border natural and cultural assets;

- **Protected environmental** natural habitats.

By the end of 2020, **18 projects had been approved** - 25% of the 72 approved projects. These have **some EUR 15.7 million of eligible costs**, 17% of the total budget. 9 projects have been approved under the 1st call for standard projects, while one thematic project have been selected under the S.O. Targeted call for proposal funded 8 projects, of which 2 standard projects and 6 small-scale projects.

The table below shows the breakdown of SO 2.1 approved projects among the different calls for proposal.

Table 17 SO 2.1 - Approved projects

Call	Approved projects SO 2.1	Allocated budget Euro
1st Call for Ordinary Projects	9	8 714 654
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted	2	1 407 300
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted Small Scale	6	428 000
Call for Thematic Projects	1	5 206 934
Total	**18**	**15 756 889**

Source: JS data + eMS

These projects refer to a network of 81 beneficiaries. Partnerships are mainly composed of local public authorities (33%), in particular municipalities and unions of municipalities. The second component are the NGOs and interest groups (27%), mainly represented by environmental agencies, cultural associations and cooperatives. At national level (16% of the beneficiaries) there is a strong presence of Ministries, especially in Albania and Montenegro.

Universities and research centres, international organisations and regional authorities count less than 15%.

The table below provides information on the resources allocated per type of beneficiary.

Table 18 SO 2.1 – Type of beneficiaries and allocated budget

Type of beneficiary	Number	Allocated budget Euro
Business support organisation	2	28 6751
Higher education/research center/university	4	88 6234
Interest groups including NGOs/no profit organization	22	2 214 894
International organisation, EEIG under national law	3	363 446
Local public authority	27	6 176 428
National public authority	13	4 619 061
Other	6	715 930
Regional public authority	3	366 247
Sectoral agency	1	127 898
Total	**81**	**15 756 889**

Source: JS data + eMS

6.2.2 Expected results

The main expected result from the projects funded under SO 2.1 is improve the cross-border smart and sustainable tourism management, also preserving natural habitats.

Compared to the target value set for 2023 (4), the performance of the indicator is good (75%).

Table 19 Result indicator SO 2.1

PA/OS	Type	Name	Target 2023	2020 Achieved	Achieved/target
2/2.1	Result	Common action Plans for the smart management of tourist destinations to be adopted by the public authorities of the Programme area	4	3[7]	75%

The information collected through the web survey, the JS survey and desk analysis confirms that approved projects under SO 2.1 are contributing to the sustainable development of tourist destination, but they also contribute to:

Increased skills and competences of key actors

Approved projects under SO 2.1 contributes to increase the competencies of tourism actors. For instance:

- *Co.Co.Tour* and *REGLPORTS* increased skills and competence of tourism actors in promoting sustainable and smart models.
- *DUE MARI* aims at raising key actors' competencies and skills to support cultural heritage preservation, as it will give support to Regional Network of Cultural Tourism, investment in Virtual Platform and small-scale investment in cultural routes signalization.

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[7] Relevant project: DUE MARI, PAST4FUTURE

- **CAVES** creates a cross-border network to exchange experiences, skills and good practices, mainly related to the use of natural cavities. Workshops in the speleological tourism sector will be carried out, so as to increased skills and competences of key operators.
- **NEST** aims to sustain socio-economic growth in the Programme area, by empowering the small and medium tourism enterprises with innovative approaches, tools and strategies, that leverage digital technologies and networking.

Increased awareness and more engagement of local actors

Approved projects under SO 2.1 contribute to increase the awareness of local actors, stakeholders and citizens on sustainable tourism management and natural and cultural assets preservation. Some examples:

- **ROOTs** aims at creating cross-border thematic experiences in Albania and Puglia. The project involves schools, local communities and economic operators in enhancing the experiential paths and informing the interested parties (authorities, environmental associations and tourism companies) about the new tool for promotion of culture and tourism.
- **CASTER** aims at increasing the awareness on the potential of sport tourism destinations. The project organises technical workshops aimed at building a winning strategy and drafting innovative cross-border cycling and sailing tourism itineraries, as well as institutional seminars and B2B meetings targeted to public and private tourism stakeholders.
- **3D-IMP-ACT** enhances cross border smart and sustainable tourism management, and promote the protection of natural and cultural assets of world heritage sites by enhancing cooperation between universities and public bodies in dealing with the preservation, management and promotion of cultural assets.
- **CROSS BORDER OL** increase local and interregional awareness on the cultural heritage linked to traditional olive growing, rural activities and culinary traditions.

Increased attractiveness of the cooperation area

This represents a direct result common to the majority of projects analysed under SO 2.1. For example:

- **3D-IMP-ACT** and **Co.Co.Tour** promoted the touristic attractiveness of the area by developing specific ICT solutions.
- **NEST** worked on the development of new strategies and approaches to better valorise the natural and cultural assets of the area.
- **ROOTs** enhances a new experiential tourism format, based on the rediscovery of common history, traditions, characteristics, to be lived as a resident, together with the locals.
- **wISHfUl** valorises of territorial health excellences and cultural accessible heritage of the cooperation area.
- **CROSS BORDER OL** promotes sustainable tourism activities, through valorization of rural cultural heritage and conservation of natural asset of areas with ancient olive groves. The project assists communities living in 6 pilot areas belonging to the 3 Programme countries to promote an appealing tourist offer. This will help to face the challenges of seasonal tourist demand, reinforce brand reputation and improve territorial promotion strategies.
- **DUE MARI** will increase the attractiveness and promote the beauty of landscapes and cultural assets in Montenegro, Albania, Molise and Puglia that are less or are not at all known to the tourists.

More efficient/effective delivery of public services

Even if in a minor degree, some projects under SO 2.1 contribute to the delivery of more efficient and effective public services. It is the case, for instance, of **DUE MARI** that will improve the quality of touristic products and services by providing innovative IT solutions for cultural assets marketing, management and valorisation.

6.3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2

6.3.1 Strategy, approved projects and beneficiaries

SO 2.2 *"Increase the cooperation of the relevant key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products"* aims at promoting exchanges of ideas, know-how and practices to enhance the creative potential of the cooperation area. It addresses the following challenges: variety of stakeholders involved (private and public sector) and of cultural resources.

The S.O. supports two types of actions:

- 'setting up cross-border cooperation platforms and networks in the cultural and creative industries';
- 'realizing creative productions to improve the cultural heritage of the area'.

The main expected result is:

- **Increased structured cooperation and networking** in the cultural and creative sectors.

By the end of 2020, **10 projects had been approved** - 14% of the 72 approved projects. These have **some EUR 10 million of eligible costs**, 11% of the total budget. 5 projects have been approved under the 1st call for standard projects, while one thematic project has been selected under the S.O. Targeted call for proposal funded 4 projects, of which 2 standard projects and 2 small-scale projects.

The table below shows the breakdown of SO 2.2 approved projects among the different calls for proposal.

Table 20 SO 2.2 - Approved projects

Call	Approved projects SO 2.2	Allocated budget Euro
1st Call for Ordinary Projects	5	4 298 299
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted	2	1 444 014
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted Small Scale	2	67 000
Call for Thematic Projects	1	4 281 675
Total	10	10 090 988

Source: JS data + eMS

These projects refer to a network of 42 beneficiaries. Partnerships are mainly composed of local public authorities (19%) and interest groups/NGOs (19%).

The second component are national public authorities (17%) followed by higher education and research centres and regional authorities (12%). Sectoral agencies about 5%.

The table below provides information on the resources allocated per type of beneficiary.

Table 21 SO 2.2 – Type of beneficiaries and allocated budget

Type of beneficiary	Number	Allocated budget Euro
Higher education/research center/university	5	665 134
Interest groups including NGOs/no profit organization	8	1 056 692
Local public authority	8	1 571 953

National public authority	7	2 957 083
Other	7	1 411 021
Regional public authority	5	2 094 005
Sectoral agency	2	335 100
Total	**42**	**10 090 988**

Source: JS data + eMS

6.3.2 Expected results

The main expected result from the projects funded under SO 2.2 is to encourage networking of creative industries actors for exchanging ideas, know-how and experience with the goal of sharing the creative potential across the whole region.

Two are the result indicators selected by the Programme.

As regards result indicator "Cross-border networks in the cultural and creative fields", by the end of 2020 the indicator achieved the 40% of the set target value (5).

As regards result indicator "Cross-border agreements in the cultural and creative fields", the performance of the indicator reached, at the end of 2020, the 33% of its target (3).

Table 22 Result indicator SO 2.2

PA/OS	Type	Name	Target 2023	2020 Achieved	Achieved/target
2/2.2	Result	Cross-border networks in the cultural and creative fields	5	2	40%
2/2.2	Result	Cross-border agreements in the cultural and creative fields	3	1	33%

The information collected through the web survey, the JS survey and desk analysis indicates that approved projects under SO 2.2 are contributing to:

<u>Increased skills and competences of key actors</u>

Approved projects under SO 2.2 contributes to increase the competencies of cultural actors. For instance:

- *CIRCE* paved the way to apply the Italian tax incentives policy for cultural and creative industries also in Albania and Montenegro, according to their legislation, to allow enterprises working in audiovisual sector to benefit from incentives and increase their job opportunities.
- *BioTourS* aims at creating a Citizen Science tourism model, for expanding science knowledge on dolphin conservation and tourism management.
- *COMPLICITIES* aims at increasing the competencies of Culture and Creative Industries (CCIs), local communities and public institutions on innovative solutions for urban regeneration, by creating a joint transferable model for the regeneration of suburbs.
- *EXTRA* strengths the exchanges of experiences and knowledges among tourism stakeholders on the principles of sustainable tourism, with a focus on parks, Natura 2000 sites, traditional agricultural practices, and typical products.
- *NetFolk* intends to strengthen the cultural relationship between Puglia and Albania through a cross-border network of folk music associations capable of organizing events and creating bonds between different peoples. The project will carry out two training and knowledge exchange workshops (one in

Puglia and one in Albania), involving local music associations and artists, for the benefit of the whole community.
- **3C** enhances synergies among culture and creative industry enterprises and related institutions, with the aim of sharing the creative potential of the Programme area.

Increased awareness and more engagement of local actors

Approved projects under SO 2.2 contribute to increase the awareness of local actors, stakeholders and citizens on cross-border touristic and cultural assets. Some examples:

- **AIDA** wants to highlight the common ground between citizens and communities in the programme area, and create an Adriatic Identity Model based on memory awareness, developed through a desk research and a field research.
- **BioTourS** main goal is to involve youngsters in cross-border touristic activities, so as to raise awareness on cetacean conservation.
- **EArPieCe** increases people awareness on popular music repertoires in Italy, Albania and Montenegro, from the Baroque period to date, in order to discover possible similarities, which will be the basis for future music production, putting the cultures of the involved territories into an integrated system.
- **3C** aims at increasing the awareness about the untapped potential of the region in the cultural field and about the possibility of areas of development and market demand, but also local communities about the importance of art education.

Increased attractiveness of the cooperation area

Projects funded under SO 2.2 contributes to increase the attractiveness of the cooperation area. For example:

- **3C** aims at enhancing the attractiveness of the project area by preserving and promoting its cultural and natural heritage and by increasing the range of cultural events offered.
- **TOURNEE** will involve cross border experts in theatre productions, territorial marketing, cultural heritage management and tourism strategic policies, in creating innovative cultural products to increase the attractiveness and strengthen exploitation of tourist destinations.
- **NetFolk** develops an innovative, creative and cultural product, contributing to the attractiveness of the Programme area in terms of tourism offer.
- **Complicities** aims to regenerate suburbs in order to foster the attractiveness of the Programme area, building a new tourist offer based on the uncommon cultural heritage represented by suburbs.
- **MONET** promotes the natural and cultural heritage of the area, through the valorisation of museums, in terms of management and services. This cross-border dimension will improve the quality and quantity of tourism offers and then boost attractiveness of the area.

More efficient/effective delivery of public services

Some projects under SO 2.2 contribute to the delivery of more efficient and effective public services. It is the case, for instance, of:

- **3C** enhances the quality and quantity of cultural products and services.
- **MONET** aims at creating of a network model among museums in Albania, Montenegro, Apulia and Molise, by following a common methodology and providing new services and tools.

6.4 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.1

6.4.1 Strategy, approved projects and beneficiaries

SO 3.1 *"Increase cross-border cooperation strategies on water landscapes"* aims to promote a renewal integrated local water culture, by promoting coordination and integration of all stakeholders and sectors involved in water management, addressing the following **challenges**: (i) lack of integrated plans, (ii) wastages and high consumption levels, (iii) lack of common models for the safeguarding and exploiting of local biodiversity, maritime and inland water landscapes.

The S.O. supports five types of actions:

- 'strengthening technical and scientific capacities, by establishing cross-border platforms and solutions for research, observation, monitoring and by adopting common knowledge bases and tools',
- 'developing a Web-GIS Observatory Network to gather and process geographical and statistical data related to water management and risks related to it',
- 'developing joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystems',
- 'planning interventions completing NATURA 2000 network for birds and habitats',
- 'realising interventions for raising awareness'.

The main expected results are:

- **Multi-level and multi-sector plans adopted** and **integrated initiatives** in the field of water cycle management, coastal and inland environmental risks prevention and biodiversity safeguard.

By the end of 2020, **8 projects had been approved** - 11% of the 72 approved projects. These have **some EUR 17 million of eligible costs**, 18% of the total budget. The 1st call for standard projects approved 6 projects while two thematic projects have been selected under the S.O. No project has been funded under the targeted call.

The table below shows the breakdown of SO 3.1 approved projects among the different calls for proposal.

Table 23 SO 3.1 - Approved projects

Call	Approved projects SO 3.1	Allocated budget Euro
1st Call for Ordinary Projects	6	5 449 435
Call for Thematic Projects	2	11 464 425
Total	**8**	**16 913 859**

Source: JS data + eMS

The 8 approved projects refer to a network of 45 beneficiaries. Partnerships are mainly composed of local public authorities (24%). The second component are the national public authorities (18%) e.g. Ministries.

Regional public authorities, interest groups/NGOs and higher education centres, universities represent the 16% of the beneficiaries each.

Infrastructure and public services providers count about 2%.

The table below provides information on the resources allocated per type of beneficiary.

Table 24 SO 3.1 – Type of beneficiaries and allocated budget

Type of beneficiary	Number	Allocated budget Euro
Higher education/research center/university	7	1 246 021
Infrastructure and (public) service provider	1	867 365
Interest groups including NGOs/no profit organization	7	989 583
Local public authority	11	2 876 909
National public authority	8	4 822 479
Other	2	190 575
Regional public authority	7	5 768 338
Sectoral agency	2	152 590
Total	**45**	**16 913 859**

Source: JS data + eMS

6.4.2 Expected results

The main expected result from the projects funded under SO 3.1 is to increase cross-border cooperation strategies on water landscapes by encouraging integrated initiatives in the field of water cycle management, coastal and inland environmental risks prevention and biodiversity safeguard.

The Programme selected the result indicator "Common plans enhancing and safeguarding water landscapes (including marine ones)". The indicator, by the end of 2020, achieved the 29% of the set target value for 2023 (7).

Table 25 Result indicator SO 3.1

PA/OS	Type	Name	Target 2023	2020 Achieved	Achieved/target
3/3.1	Result	Common plans enhancing and safeguarding water landscapes (including marine ones)	7	2[8]	29%

The information collected through the web-survey, the JS survey and the desk analysis indicates that approved projects under SO 3.1 are contributing to:

Increased skills and competences of key actors

Approved projects under SO 3.1 contributes to increase the competencies of key environmental actors. For instance:

- ***ADRINET*** wants to improve a joint coastal management system and create governance plans to preserve biodiversity and coastal ecosystems inside the Programme area. The project provides services, scientific support and skills for fisheries professionals and consumers, in order to make fish consumption safer and compliant with EU rules and guidelines.

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[8] Relevant projects: ADRINET, WELCOME

- *FLAT* intends to improve cross border structures for responding in case of floods and landslides, strengthen the capacity of Rescue Services. As a result of the project activities, a Regional Resource Training Centre will be set up.
- *LASPEH* creates a network of organizations cooperating for nature conservation and improvement of Natura 2000 sites, by exchanging best practices and developing a common transnational strategy to preserve common species and habitats.
- *WELCOME*'s goal is to support the long-term marine litter management, through the development of guidelines and the testing of a soft method for coastal dune consolidation.
- *CrossWater* aims at increasing skills and competence of key actors for a better water cycle management.
- *TO BE READY* intends to improve coordination and level of preparation of strategic key actors involved in the phase of prevention and management of the emergency in case of fires and floods hazards.

Increased awareness and more engagement of local actors

Approved projects under SO 3.1 contribute to increase the awareness of local actors on sustainable management of natural ecosystems. Some examples:

- *LASPEH* creates a network of organizations cooperating for nature conservation and improvement of Natura 2000 sites to increase awareness and preserve common species and habitats.
- *WELCOME* carried out several awareness-raising activities in schools addressing young people and children. The project organised recycling lessons at schools, especially in those located in coastal municipalities. The activities involved all school levels, from childhood to high school, with a particular focus on primary and middle schools.
- *3 WATCH OUT* increases awareness on rules for cross border cooperation in case of emergency in one of the involved countries, identifying the necessary measures to take, in order to develop a joint risk management system. Additionally, the project organizes a series of workshops involving representatives of volunteer groups, physicians and paramedics, schoolteachers and students to raise awareness about hazards (seismic, fire, flooding) and measure to ensure the reduction of risks.
- *BLUE LAND* develops a participatory and ecosystem-based model for the protection and safeguard of marine and coastal resources, habitats, biodiversity and ecosystem services. The project represents a new approach to the governance of marine and coastal resources, as it fosters mechanisms for the involvement of local communities in biodiversity protection.
- *CrossWater* aims at improving citizens awareness of water leakage, wastages and high consumption levels, awareness on water use and re use.

Better governance

A significant part of the projects analysed through the web-survey and the desk analysis carried out activities which supposed to contribute to the **improvement of the governance of the area** such as the elaboration and/or implementation of joint strategies/actions plans/protocols or the monitoring activities. Below some examples:

- *BLUE LAND* wants to provide better cooperative conditions between Authorities and bodies committed in implementing water strategies.
- *WELCOME* develops guidelines for long-term marine litter management (ML) to help local authorities in establishing a sustainable ML management system, exportable to other coastal areas. In the context of the project, the University of Montenegro carried out specific monitoring activities that contributed

to harmonise the monitoring approaches of Montenegro to the EU standards provided for by the EU Marine Framework Directory.

- *ADRINET* creates governance plans to preserve biodiversity and coastal ecosystems inside the Programme area, whose territories share the same issues in terms of pollution, over-exploitation of fish stocks, illegal fishery, fish sophistication and 'ghost fishing'.
- In the field of natural protection **LASPEH** contributes to develop a transnational strategy to preserve common species and habitats, in particular for species protected by EU Directives 92/43/EEC and 79/409/EEC and/or threatened by environmental variations caused by climate changes and wrong management.
- *TO BE READY* aims at promoting of a shared model of prevention and intervention in case of fires and floods hazards to be activated in the partner countries.
- *CrossWater* approved a common Policy Paper on Water management systems, providing the policies, measures and timing for the establishment of the cross border plan throughout the region, as to join efforts and have a shared purpose to face the challenges in the water management field.

More efficient/effective delivery of public services

Several of the projects analysed under SO 3.1 are increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of public services. For instance:

- *3 WATCH OUT*, *ADRINET*, *BLUE LAND*, *FLAT*, *LASPEH* are contributing to increase the intervention capacity of the public actors in carrying out interventions for protecting environment and biodiversity.
- *Crosswater* by improving the management of waters, reduces wastages and losses and increases monitoring over water quality, resulting in enhanced water distribution networks and therefore more efficient services to citizens.

6.5   SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.2

6.5.1   Strategy, approved projects and beneficiaries

SO 3.2 *"Promoting innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency in public sector"* aims at promoting the production of energy from renewable sources, by fulfilling the untapped potential of the Programme area and by addressing issues which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions such as: (i) high energy consumption, (ii) low degree of energy efficiency of buildings and infrastructures.

The S.O. supports four types of actions:

- 'cross border exchanging of regional and national good practices in order to develop common model for energy planning', 'identifying and adopting EU standards',
- 'developing local sustainable energy action plans',
- 'realizing feasibility studies, to identify financial opportunities and implementation of pilot initiatives for meeting the energy efficiency goals'.

The main expected results are:

- **Improved CBC, national, regional and local capacity** for sustainable energy planning, according to EU standards;

- **Energy efficiency schemes** for public administrations adopted and energy sustainability goals met.

By the end of 2020, **12 projects had been approved** - 17% of the 72 approved projects. These have **some EUR 6 million of eligible costs**, 7% of the total budget. The 1st call for standard projects approved only one project (REEHUB) while no thematic project has been selected under the S.O. Targeted call selected 7 standard projects and 4 small scale projects.

The table below shows the breakdown of SO 3.2 approved projects among the different calls for proposal.

Table 26 SO 3.2 - Approved projects

Call	Approved projects SO 3.2	Allocated budget Euro
1st Call for Ordinary Projects	1	744 800
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted	7	4 966 265
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted Small Scale	4	298 000
Total	**12**	**6 009 065**

Source: JS data + eMS

These projects refer to a network of 49 beneficiaries. Partnerships are mainly composed of local public authorities (43%). The second component are the interest groups/NGOs (18%). Higher education, research centres and universities represent the 16% of the beneficiaries. National public authorities count about 8%.

The table below provides information on the resources allocated per type of beneficiary.

Table 27 SO 3.2 – Type of beneficiaries and allocated budget

Type of beneficiary	Number	Allocated budget Euro
business support organisation	3	335 265
education/training centre and school	1	43 000
higher education/research center/university	8	1 128 168

infrastructure and (public) service provider	2	139 500
interest groups including NGOs/no profit organization	9	775 813
local public authority	21	2 984 928
national public authority	4	526 391
other	1	76 000
Total	**49**	**6 009 065**

Source: JS data + eMS

6.5.2 Expected results

The main expected result from the projects funded under SO 3.2 is to increase the capacity of local, regional and CB actors for sustainable energy planning.

The Programme selected the result indicator "Common plans for energy efficiency and sustainable energy production". The indicator, by the end of 2020, had no result achieved.

Table 28 Result indicator SO 3.2

PA/OS	Type	Name	Target 2023	2020 Achieved	Achieved/target
3/3.2	Result	Common plans for energy efficiency and sustainable energy production	4	0	0%

However, the information collected through the web-survey, the JS survey and the desk analysis indicates that approved projects under SO 3.2 are contributing to:

Increased skills and competences of key actors

Approved projects under SO 3.2 contributes to increase the competencies of key energy actors. For instance:

- The main goal of ***REEHUB*** is to increase energy efficiency of the public buildings inside the Programme area, through a network of hubs, enabling the training of building managers on energy-efficiency measures.
- ***ENEA*** project aims at stimulating demand driven research commercialization and technology transfer on Energy efficiency in Buildings (EeB).
- ***AWeS0Me*** wants to spread best practices about the use of agricultural waste for producing bio-based building components with high hygrothermal performances. To achieve this result, the project implements Pilot Labs on technical solutions with bio-based building materials reaching energy criteria in line with EU standards.
- ***CO-CLEAN*** organizes a cross-border training course for public employees to increase knowledge on energy efficiency technologies and policies.
- The project ***DE-RESS*** aims to reach private and public stakeholders in order to train them on new European measures and innovative solutions in the field of energy efficiency, and show how these policies can change the quality of life and the economy of small and big communities.

Increased awareness and more engagement of local actors

Approved projects under SO 3.2 contribute to increase the awareness of local actors on sustainable energy consumption and production. Some examples:

- **ADRIA_Alliance** aims to raise awareness in the programme area about the urgent need to modify current energy uses in order to promote greater environmental sustainability and safety in relation to climate change. The project increases awareness about sustainable use of energy and measurement of results, and benefits from adaptation plans aimed at ensuring the safety of urban environments.
- **AWeS0Me** aims at raising awareness on the existence of fully sustainable building materials, made of agricultural waste, and stimulate the development of new ones which, in addition to their thermal insulating function, have a low environmental impact.
- **CO-CLEAN** realizes an "Energy Festival" to raise awareness among citizens on the responsible use of energy sources.
- **DE-RESS** creates strong connections between economic operators, general public and public bodies in order to promote the creation of new "Community Cooperatives" for energy efficinecy, such as the one set up in Puglia (IT).
- Through specific pilot actions, **EFFECTS** involves students, teachers and families in participating actively in the efficiency planning and renovation process and to experience its impact on the indoor environment.
- **Re-sources** intends to increase knowledge about renewable energies and optimization systems in the industrial field through awareness-raising and knowledge-exchange activities.

Better governance

Some projects analysed through the web-survey and the desk analysis carried out activities which were supposed to contribute to the improvement of the governance of the area. For instance, **REEHUB PLUS** and **EFFECT** contribute to improve the governance in energy planning (tools, regulatory frameworks, standards), **LEC** aims to adopting a joint cross-border action plan for energy efficiency while **SESC** defines a regional strategy of education on smart energy, in order to encourage its use according to European standards.

6.6 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.1

6.6.1 Strategy, approved projects and beneficiaries

SO 4.1 "*Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross-border connections in the cooperation area*" aims at enhancing coordination to tackle common challenges to boost an integrate territorial development, by improving transport services, prioritizing safety measures and environmental protection. It addresses the following **connection challenges**: (i) high territorial fragmentation, (ii) scarcity of railways or road networks.

The S.O. supports six types of actions:

- 'establishing a cooperation platform to improve multimodal connections inside the programme area',
- 'enhancing network of relevant cross-border customs stakeholders to improve procedures both for passengers and goods traffic',
- 'fostering connections between the main cross-border transport infrastructures and the EU trans-European corridors',
- 'enhancing intraregional connectivity of the area as hub for freight and passengers',
- 'improving and exchanging skills in terms of sustainable transports',
- 'setting up consolidated platforms to optimize standard loads'.

The main expected results are:

- **Improved sustainable, efficient, multimodal and quality** cross-border transport connections inside the area.

- **Optimized existing connections**, with regular transit times and shared procedures,

- **Consolidated supply logistic chain** to bring a door-to-door integrated transport system.

By the end of 2020, **12 projects had been approved** - 18% of the 72 approved projects. These have **some EUR 15.5 million of eligible costs**, 17% of the total budget. The 1st call for standard projects approved 4 projects. 8 projects have been funded under the targeted call (4 standard projects and 4 small-scale projects). One is the thematic project selected under the SO.

The table below shows the breakdown of SO 4.1 approved projects among the different calls for proposal.

Table 29 SO 4.1 - Approved projects

Call	Approved projects SO 4.1	Allocated budget Euro
1st Call for Ordinary Projects	4	4 028 303
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted	4	4 227 162
2nd Call for Projects - Targeted Small Scale	4	306 000
Call for Thematic Projects	1	7 000 000
Total	**13**	**15 561 465**

Source: JS data + eMS

These projects refer to a network of 53 beneficiaries. Partnerships are mainly composed of local public authorities (26%), followed by national public authorities (1%) and higher education, research centres (15%). Regional public authorities count 9%, as the infrastructure and service providers (18%).

The table below provides information on the resources allocated per type of beneficiary.

Table 30 SO 4.1 – Type of beneficiaries and allocated budget

Type of beneficiary	Number	Allocated budget Euro
Business support organisation	4	333 963
Education/training centre and school	2	274 793
Higher education/research center/university	8	1 368 874
Infrastructure and (public) service provider	5	4 028 836
Interest groups including NGOs/no profit organization	4	384 720
Local public authority	14	2 648 902
National public authority	8	3 156 665
Other	2	271 025
Regional public authority	5	2 877 987
Sectoral agency	1	215 700
Total	**53**	**15 561 465**

Source: JS data + eMS

6.6.2 Expected results

The main expected result from the projects funded under SO 4.1 is to improve the sustainability, efficiency and the quality of the transport system in the cooperation area.

The Programme selected the result indicator "Agreements for cross-border passengers and freight sustainable transport systems and multimodal mobility solutions". The indicator, by the end of 2020, reached the 14% of its target value for 2023 (7).

Table 31 Result indicator SO 4.1

PA/OS	Type	Name	Target 2023	2020 Achieved	Achieved/target
4/4.1	Result	Agreements for cross-border passengers and freight sustainable transport systems and multimodal mobility solutions	7	1[9]	14%

The information collected through the web-survey, the JS survey and the desk analysis indicates that approved projects under SO 4.1 are contributing to:

__Increased skills and competences of key actors__

Approved projects under SO 4.1 contributes to increase competencies and skills for stakeholders in the field of transports. For instance:

- **CRISES** develops Decision Support modules, intended to assist cross-border management of hazardous materials, from risk prevention to cooperation in case of disaster.

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[9] Relevant project: SAGOV

- *ECSYT* aims to increase the exchange of skills and capacities among stakeholders in the field of tourism, logistics and transport to create a more efficient management of transport connections.
- The *SkEye* project aims to foster collaboration among R&D (universities and research centers), industries, SMEs and policy makers in order to exploit the existing technologies and maximise the innovation potential of future aerospace technologies for transport monitoring and spatial planning in the Programme area. Through workshops, conferences and seminars it will facilitate knowledge transfer and market uptake of smart aerospace technologies.
- *TRADAM* aims at creating a network of expertise between industrial and scientific actors in order to promote the cooperative management and integration of transport asset data. Specifically, the purpose is to create a new shared knowledge for a better services' quality, an optimized sustainability, and a context-oriented safety and security strategy for the improvement of transports systems.

Increased awareness and more engagement of local actors

Approved projects under SO 4.1 contribute to increase the awareness of local actors on sustainable and efficient mobility. Some examples:

- *#DynaMob 2.0* and *SUMO* want to increase citizens' awareness about smart and green mobility.
- *ALMONIT - MTC* aims at increasing awareness and visibility of multimodal maritime transport connections through events and digital activities.

Better governance

- Through the "Trilateral Agreement – Memorandum of Understanding", **SAGOV** paved the way for taking profit of possible opportunities in the South Adriatic Area that may arise from the Connectivity Agenda. Basically, during the conference that marked the end of the project activities (*Adriatic Connectivity Forum,* 18th of February 2021) representatives of both Italian and IPA public institutions discussed about a possible common/coordinated intervention in the broader framework of the so-called Corridor VIII.
- **SkeYe** favours the endorsement of EU regulations in the aerospace sector in two IPA countries.

More efficient/effective delivery of public services

Several of the projects analysed under SO 4.1 are increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of public services. For instance:

- *#DynaMob 2.0* wants to improve public infrastructures (points for electric supply vehicles) and eco-services (bike-sharing) for road transportation in the municipality areas, introduce eco-innovative technologies in traditional transport with low impact
- *ECSYT* project aims to create a more efficient management of transport connections in order to optimize actions of economic operators in southern Adriatic ports, from a logistical, operational, and administrative point of view.
- *PORTS* develops new sustainable solutions for maritime transport and sustainable mobility networks in order to improve internal links of tourist transport and pleasure cruises.
- *ON CLOUD NINE* improves the accessibility and mobility of passengers across the Programme area, by developing new air routes between the airports of the three countries, creating new facilities and services for travellers, and improving connections at urban and interregional level.
- *ALMONIT – MTC* improves cross border transport connections by optimizing the existing ones and developing multimodal inland water and maritime transport connections in the Programme area, both for the transport of passengers and freight.