

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

*Overview on the main 2021 evaluation
activities*



Regione Puglia

a.r.t.i.
Agenzia regionale
per la tecnologia
e l'innovazione



13 April 2022

July 2020



The MA mandates ARTI to support the evaluation of Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme



January 2021



The tender for the external support was concluded and started the service of T33 and Naxta



December 2021



....after 1 year, what we did?

December 2023



End of the service



January
2021

Working plan 2021

April
2021

Report on the monitoring of the indicators (Contribution to AIR 2020)

May
2021

Report on the thematic evaluation of the projects financed under Call I
Report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme
Report on the communication strategy
Report with inputs for the 2021-2027 Programme
Report on the environmental evaluation

November
2021

Report on thematic projects
Report on the Programme contribution to EUSAIR
Report on the impact at the level of each SO



Interviews with JTS and other Programme Authorities



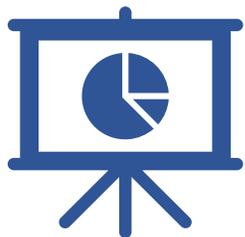
Web survey addressed to beneficiaries of all funded projects
March – May 2021 / September – November 2021



Desk analysis of Programme documents and monitoring data



Case studies (17 case study projects, 33 interviews with project lead partners and project partners)



MAIN OUTCOME FROM THE EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME PROCEDURES



Key findings

- **Human resources are adequate to ensure efficient/effective implementation of the programme**
- **The presence of staff coming from the participating countries is limited (6 JS officers from Italy, 1 JS officer from Albania and no officers from Montenegro).**



Recommendation 2021-2027

Hire one staff having expertise and knowledge of Montenegro language / administration, to include in the JS/MA staff and strengthen National Info Points.

Key findings

- **Time needed to carry out controls and to reimburse expenditures is generally higher than what expected according to the rules defined in the programme manual**
- **2 phases are particularly time-consuming:**
 - **The time needed by the PP to submit the PPR to the FLC via eMS**
 - **Time needed to carry out controls**

Recommendation 2021-2027

- **Ensure the presence of qualified FLCs and an efficient organization of the controls system**
- **Strengthen trainings of FLC and beneficiaries**
- **Elaborate a methodology for defining programme specific SCO for covering staff costs and travel costs (off-the-shelf SCO)**

Key findings

- *The support provided to beneficiaries is considered of **high quality***
- *Despite the delays, **the information provided by the Programme** with reference to the rules on eligibility of expenditures **is considered helpful***
- *Most of the support requested by applicants concerns the **coordination with project partners***

Recommendation 2021-2027

Reinforce trainings on financial reporting and certification procedures



Key findings

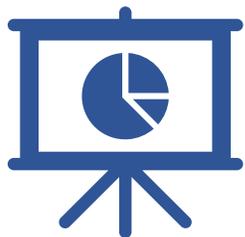
- The analysis of the financial performance shows that the **Programme is far from the target** set for 2023.
- The combination of **financial underperformance and of physical overperformance** reveals that:
 - **the initial targets** set by the programme for measuring the physical performance **were underestimated**
 - Possible **inconsistencies in the data** declared by the beneficiaries
- Sometimes beneficiaries are facing difficulties in understanding how to monitor indicators.



Recommendation 2021-2027

Ensure a **robust methodology** for the choice and calculation of **output indicator targets**

Direct result indicators → **greater involvement and in-depth training of all programme bodies**, including NCP and JMC members



MAIN OUTCOME FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS IMPACTS

Key findings

- **Projects** financed under the first call **have produced outputs and results in line with the intervention logic of the Programme**
- **Most projects**, across the different SOs, **mainly produce “intangibles”** (cross border networks, awareness raising activities, implementation of policy instruments)
- **Impacts** mainly refer to the : 1) **skills and competences** of key actors, 2) **awareness** and engagement of local actors, 3) **improvement of the governance** of the area.

Recommendation 2021-2027

- Future Programme shall consider that the **capacity of projects to harmonise**, coordinate and integrate the **cross-border policies is higher in the fields of environmental protection risks prevention/management and transport** than in sectors such as tourism, culture and innovation policies



Key findings

- Thematic projects contribute to increasing and enhancing the exchange of knowledge and skills among project partners but, despite what was expected, they seem to contribute only to a limited extent to improving the governance of the territories, especially if compared to some of the 1st call standard projects that have been able, with a lower budget, to achieve results beyond those included in the application forms.
- Despite the difficulties and slowdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic, what seems to be lacking in these projects is a strong will of the partners to carry out the project activities.
- Additionally, the analysis showed that some project partners are unfamiliar with Interreg rules, and unaware of the bureaucratic and administrative procedures related to project implementation.



Recommendation 2021-2027

Programming phase

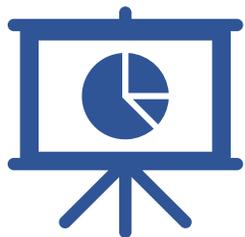
Allocate a lower portion of the total Programme budget to thematic projects.

Implementation phase

Encourage a stronger commitment of National Authorities in stimulating and supporting the projects partners.

Selection phase

- **Verify the ability and the willingness of selected project partners (especially in the case of LPs) to perform the project activities.**
- **Support the selected project partners in the project development phase**
- **When selecting the strategic topics, to consider how to capitalise the results of the previous thematic projects.**



CURRENT AND NEXT STEPS

2022

Analysis of the quality of the partnership and involvement of target groups
(February 2022)

Report on Small Scale Projects (April 2022)

Contribution to AIR 2021 (April 2022)

Final report on thematic projects (November 2022)



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THANK YOU!

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