

## PRIORITIES – OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The following table illustrates an overview of the proposed priorities and their specific contents:

Horizontal themes, tools and principles: <b>Human resource development, Networking, Innovation</b>	
<b>Information and communication technology</b>	
<b>Sustainable development, Equal opportunities</b>	
<b>Priority 1:</b>	<b>Priority 2:</b>
<b>COMPETITIVENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION</b>	<b>SUSTAINABLE AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>SME development</b>	<b>Management of natural resources</b>
<b>Tourism</b>	<b>Environment and energy</b>
<b>Framework for knowledge-based economy</b>	<b>Urban and regional development</b>
<b>Thematic fields of strengths</b>	<b>Social and cultural development</b>
<b>Priority 3:</b>	
<b>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</b>	

Both content priorities include actions to promote the **development of human resources, networking and innovation** as horizontal themes, which form an essential part of the development of all the above presented areas of support.

### Description of horizontal themes

#### Human resources development

In this programme, human resources development is regarded as a key element for the entire strategy and is of high relevance for the selected priorities. The successful implementation of most of the measures directly depends on the involvement of well-educated people at several levels – in project development, in management, in production, in research, in marketing and in a wide range of services.

The horizontal principle of innovation is strongly linked to human resources and the current upgrade of their qualification.

In order to meet the objective of achieving progress in the development of a knowledge-based economy and increasing the competitiveness, many efforts have to be directed to the development of human resources. In general, there are rather favourable preconditions in the cooperation area: a high level of educational & training facilities already exists and can be used for specific tasks, in many cases also jointly across the border.

Human resources development is therefore not regarded as a strategic field of action as such, but rather as a strategic tool, which should strengthen and give support to the other fields of actions described in the programme priorities. The ambitious targets regarding competitiveness and sustainability will particularly require a lot of accompanying education and training activities in the preparation and implementation phase. Many actors will be involved in these actions. Actions addressing the human resource potential of a project should be tailor-made for the specific requests of the respective projects, which may emerge.

The concrete targets of the human resource oriented actions will be defined and carried out within the individual projects.

As a result, the upgrading of human resources at project level will have a useful impact on the labour market, too, and in particular on the tendency to reduce unemployment in the participating regions.

Women and disadvantaged groups will be given a specific focus in these considerations.

## **Networking**

While human resources development is aiming at the project orientated upgrade of qualification and skills of the project actors, networking is addressing the establishment of efficient and sustainable cooperation structures of different project actors.

A regular exchange of information, mutual exchange of experiences, involvement into cross-border events, co-ordination of joint strategies and actions should be targeted in these cooperation structures. In order to create a sufficient number of sustainable networks, a pro-active approach in project development will be implemented, and therefore sufficient project- and network development capacities have to be provided.

In context of this, programme networking is not regarded as a strategic field of action as such, but rather as an operative tool, which should be tailor-made for the specific requests of the respective projects, which may emerge. The concrete targets of the networking actions will thus be defined and carried out within the individual projects.

This will contribute to the improvement of the quality of cooperation, while the sustainability of the cooperation should exceed the life-time of the co-financed projects. Thus, networking activities shall increase the efficiency and intensity of the partnership. Networking actions as part of a project expressively need a clear link to the concrete project content, and should also contribute to the aims of the project.

The establishment of thematic, sector and cross sector networks and partnerships shall be supported to improve cross-border project development and implementation in various fields, such as urban and municipality cooperation, labour market, education and training, health protection, promotion of healthy life style, and others.

## **Innovation**

In this programme, innovation in a wider sense will be regarded as a horizontal principle. Being faced with and aware of the European and global challenges, there is a clear need to find a lot of new ways, new instruments and tools, new products, processes and even new partners. It is intended to gain innovative aspects in all proposed fields of actions and particularly at the project level.

Innovation must be understood as a permanent task, a change of standard solutions should be encouraged by this programme. In many cases its implementation will be linked to research and development activities. Therefore, the involvement of research institutions in different, suitable roles (as project owner, project partner or external expert) is needed. Moreover, other ways of renovation, upgrading of existing solutions and making use of best practices should also be addressed, in particular in the fields of marketing, development and cooperation processes, as well as the increase in quality. Thus, the common understanding of innovation within this programme is that of an innovative approach, applicable to all measures and actions in their respective suitable manner.

As already mentioned above, innovation will often go hand in hand with human resource oriented project actions. Networking with involvement of research and innovation oriented partners could also favour innovative results.

## **Information and communication technology**

Is to be understood as a horizontal tool to support achievement of priority objectives, too.

The respect of **equal opportunities and sustainable development** (social, economic and environmental) represents the overall programme principles. They shall be respected accordingly throughout the programme, especially in the process of project development (part of the application sheet), in the project selection process (part of the assessment and selection criteria), in the implementation process, as well as through monitoring the implementation of the approved projects.

In detail:

### **Sustainable development**

The safeguarding of quality of life, as well as quality of the natural, social and cultural resources is a crucial objective within the cooperation area. Thus, within a specific priority – P 2 sustainable and balanced development – many actions address these objectives, in particular measures regarding protection of natural resources (water, clean air, preservation of biodiversity), improvement of public transport across the border, co-ordination of environmental protection measures (emergency management, risk prevention measures, promotion of renewable energy sources), actions in the fields of healthcare and treatment of medicinal waste, revitalisation of villages and urban centres in the cross-border context.

Moreover, in priority 1 – with major reference to competitiveness and knowledge development in economic fields – issues and criteria of sustainability are crucial. Many opportunities to raise competitiveness are based on or linked with sustainable technologies, efficient use of resources and energy and avoiding industrial waste and risks (cleaner production principles). In practical implementation, issues of sustainability could play an important role in the field of joint research projects, new technologies, in particular the application of renewable energy, in industrial and SME projects, in agriculture and food processing and also in tourism projects.

At the level of project generation and project selection many specific environmentally oriented criteria as proposed within the Strategic Environmental Assessment will be adopted, thus projects with a higher coherence with principles of sustainability will be implemented.

### **Gender equality and equal opportunities**

The participation of women in social and economic life is still smaller than that of men. The implementation of the measures according to the specific needs of women and men will be based on the EU- and national regulations aiming at equal opportunities.

In the framework of the OP, an equal status of men and women will be observed and persons regarding to sex, race and origin<sup>1</sup> will not be discriminated against. The observance of the principle of equal opportunities for both sexes will be ensured during various stages of the programme implementation as well as the realization of the financial support from the funds. The principle will also be observed in the phase of defining the criteria for the selection of projects. The policy aimed at the promotion of equality of sex and prevention of discrimination will be screened throughout all stages of the programme and the realization of the project.

Programmes like Objective 3 Territorial Cooperation have limited impact on the situation of equal opportunities in general. Nevertheless, the possibilities it offers will be realised. Synergies with specific programmes have to be used.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 16 of the Council Regulation 1083/2006 (11/07/2006).

Equal gender opportunities are not a separate topic, in fact, this is one of the basic principles for each single activity. By including equal opportunities in all the concepts and activities, balance and fairness for men and women should be achieved. It should not be oriented only on specific activities for women, since equal opportunities are necessary for the entire society.

The analysis shows that there still exist significant imbalances referring to gender equality and equal opportunities, in particular at the level of labour market and relating to qualification structures.

Within the programme, contributions to these objectives can be expected from a series of action fields within both priorities:

Cooperation initiatives in various sectors can create new jobs, particularly suitable for women, such as in tourism in the rural areas, in food processing in the rural areas, in health projects and in the cultural sector. There are many job opportunities in joint research projects, based on existing fields of strengths, such as human technologies, new materials, life sciences, software development, especially so for qualified persons. The experience shows that the rate of women employed in enterprises and involved in research activities is usually higher than for instance in the production or transport activities.

Hand in hand with the human resources development measures tailor-made for each single project requirements, especially women should be motivated to upgrade their qualification and increase their participation in the regional labour markets.

In addition, the improvement of the public transport offer will facilitate the access to mobility, in particular of female and young population or even handicapped persons.

## **Priority 1: Competitiveness, knowledge and economic cooperation**

### **Objectives**

To raise the **competitiveness** of Europe and its regions is the crucial request from Lisbon and **innovation** is the core strategy to reach it.

The extension of the cooperation area and the increase of funds offer good opportunities to tackle relevant potential in mid-term strategies and project chains, as well as to involve relevant actors on both sides.

This means it is also necessary to involve strategically selected key institutions from the core areas, which should involve and motivate actors from the regional level, respectively.

The overall objective of the priority is to contribute to the increase of competitiveness and economic growth as the basis for employment in the participating regions, reducing development disparities and thus contributing to the economic and social integration of the cross-border area. Therefore, a strategic and operative link between the objective 3 programme AT-SI and other programmes (objective 2 respectively phasing out in Austria, objective 1 in Slovenia) and other activities will be necessary.

### **Specific objectives:**

- to support CB-development of the industrial and SME sector, improvement of its competitiveness and internationalisation of its activities
- to contribute to the increase of the level of CB-technology development, innovation and research focusing to fields of competencies
- to improve the level of skills and qualification of employees and the mobility, in particular with regard to cross-border cooperation
- to foster CB-tourism by improving international visibility and developing CB-packages and destinations in order to facilitate attraction of visitors from third markets

- to improve the competitiveness of business locations and the use of synergies in the trans-border context
- to strengthen the cross-border integrated approach in particular in rural areas and their potential in the field of manufacturing industry, tourism, agriculture, food processing and others

### **Description of priority**

#### **Strategy of the priority:**

The strategy intends to use and mobilise relevant sectors in the field of economy, science and research for CB-cooperation.

To raise competitiveness of the regions involved the SME and industry in particular are to be addressed in order to enlarge their fields of actions, to increase their markets and to create new strong partnerships of mutual benefits. The business oriented infrastructure in the cooperation area should be mobilised for cross-border SME and innovation oriented actions.

Specific fields of strengths particularly in industry and technology should be further developed to strongly competitive regional competencies. Thus, new paths of economic growth could be created jointly and both sides can draw out long-term benefits. Rural areas with key potential in agricultural production and food processing shall improve their competitiveness by developing innovative solutions in branding, marketing and creation of new products of high quality.

Research and development should play a key role in the cross-border development of the cooperation area. There is a big potential for the involvement and cooperation (directly and indirectly) of universities and research centres, in particular in the newly emerging fields of technology. Generally, the research sector should be strongly involved in the tackling of regional themes, development of new processes and quality improvement both in the SME and agricultural sector.

The opportunities in the tourism sector shall be used by increasing international competitiveness and visibility of new attractive packages and destinations.

The scope of activity fields to be supported within the priority is divided into key themes/ areas of assistance presented below.

### **SME development**

In particular, the following actions are proposed to be tackled:

- Establishment of cross-border production chains and networks, including regional manufacturing industry, SMEs, services and their projects are to be supported.
- Building up of demanding business support services in order to prepare and facilitate cross-border cooperation of the SMEs, which may range from intercultural training to technology transfer services.
- Cooperation of business parks and centres across the border should be motivated and deepened primarily to offer information services, access to partners and markets for clients and tenants.
- The joint development and upgrading of business locations (in particular technology parks, start-up centres) with cross-border impact should be tackled at the level of planning, co-ordination of thematic focus, feasibility concepts and creation of cross-border implementation structures. If suitability is given, such projects should also be implemented in rural areas.

- Establishment of a cross-border company and cluster oriented innovation system (such as technology transfer, consulting services, B2B-activities, cleaner production centres...)

## **Tourism development**

In particular, the following actions are proposed to be tackled:

- The key strategic objective is to work jointly on the development of cross-border internationally visible tourism destinations or innovative packages.

Rich potential is given in the cooperation area for the development of new destinations, which could be offered successfully on the third, in particular international markets. In order to exploit this potential fully and to develop internationally visible tourism destinations and innovative packages, all partners of the tourism sector should be integrated, including tourism organisations, municipalities and companies.

Many specific target group oriented and thematic destination-packages could be produced, such as:

- city packages: in particular based on the cooperation of the 4 big cities of Ljubljana, Maribor, Graz, Klagenfurt / Villach, but also others
- cultural packages - music, theatre, events, history, ethnology, religion, etc.
- historic cities and architecture.

Packages putting more focus on the surrounding regions or rural areas and based on their specific supply and resources, in particular such as:

- thermal spa resorts
- wine and culinary tourism
- caves, rivers
- mountains, lakes, mountaineering, trekking, mountain biking, cycling
- nature parks and national parks, such as Triglav, Nockberge
- health, sports.

Naturally, a great number of attractive and target-group-oriented combined packages are feasible and helpful in order to gain competitiveness and visibility. In particular, sustainable tourism and leisure economy products should be developed.

The development of tourism packages should also pay special attention to the use of cross-border (public) transport means, including the development of innovative mobility solutions.

Airport infrastructure is given sufficient attention in the cooperation area, thus the international transport links also referring to long-distant markets are available. Furthermore, co-ordination activities regarding the airport infrastructure and services as foreseen within the transport section of priority 2 should also improve the quality offered for the tourism sector.

- In order to exploit the given potential, the focus should be placed on supporting product development, marketing activities, joint services, as well as investments in infrastructure and package offerings by tourism organisations and businesses aiming at cross-border destination development, including the potential of the entire area and thus contributing to accessing third markets (including additional necessary activities like matters of qualification, quality standards and so on).

## **Framework for knowledge-based economy**

In these types of activities, the common basis for knowledge-oriented regional economy and regional innovation should be improved.

Facing the rich potential, the research and innovation sector represents one of the key fields for future oriented potential. It can be expected that the research sector will bring up a series of relevant contributions to the competition oriented strategy.

It comprises cooperation of universities, cooperation of non-university institutions, involvement of companies in the cross-border research and innovation process, involvement of regional partners, themes and projects of other institutions. The support comprises both the process of building cooperation and the implementation of joint projects which are in common interest of the cooperation partners.

The activities should focus on the common work on themes of joint interest, in particular those with innovative character, to raise knowledge and to foster competitiveness.

In particular, the following actions should be supported:

- Innovative technology fields, such as nanotech, ICT, software, life sciences, human technologies, medicine, etc.
- Sustainable technologies and processes (such as clean and resource efficient technologies, renewable energy, new materials, and others).
- Quality insurance, testing of new products and processes.

The institutions of both sides shall use their comparative advantages regarding knowledge, facilities and even costs.

Finally, the knowledge base will increase. The companies (industrial, SMEs, services – involved directly or by technology transfer measures) will benefit from this and improve their competitiveness.

The key focus is to involve regional actors, regional themes and projects (in particular those of the rural areas). A more active dissemination regarding knowledge, innovative technologies and processes into these sectors and themes will also upgrade the knowledge base in rural regions, which will be decisive for their long-term competitiveness as well.

### **Development of joint thematic fields of strengths**

In particular, the following actions are proposed to be tackled:

- Cross-border cooperation of industrial clusters and thematic networks in order to increase competitiveness on third markets and, in particular, in order to offer cross-border access for local and regional SMEs (e.g. new markets, partners) in various sectors, such as automotive, wood processing, tool & tie making, plastics, material, ecology and others. Particularly the existing eco-technology networks should be extended across the border.
- Fostering specific regional strengths, such as agricultural production and marketing, creation of new regional brands, food processing technologies, wood processing or innovative wood construction, renewable energy technologies, etc.

### **Beneficiaries/Key actors**

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- private and public business support institutions (incubators, technology parks, science parks, competence centres, business support centres)
  - enterprises, clusters and networks
  - national, local and regional authorities
  - research institutions
  - universities and technology and business oriented high schools
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- tourism institutions, associations and agencies
  - local and regional development organisations
  - training and education organisations and institutions
  - institutions and organisations representing economic and social interests of employees, employers, cities and/or municipalities
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### **Specific targets and indicators**

#### **Indicators reflecting priority 1**

Quantification

#### **“Competitiveness, knowledge and economic cooperation”**

Improved competitiveness and internationalisation of industrial sector and SMEs **60**

#### **AF “SME development”**

Number of projects under SME development **22**

#### **AF “Tourism development”**

Number of investment projects in the tourism sector (e.g. information systems) **10**

Number of soft-aid measures in tourism development **21**

#### **AF “ Framework for knowledge-based economy”**

Number of RTD – projects **20**

#### **AF “Development of thematic fields of strengths”**

Number of projects **13**

## **Priority 2: Sustainable and balanced development**

The scope of activity fields to be supported within the priority is divided into key themes/areas of assistance presented below.

### **Objectives**

The aim of the priority is to contribute to the sustainable and balanced development of the programme area by securing and activating its regional resources in the field of environmental, social and cultural matters and by improving the quality of cross-border cooperation at local and regional levels.

### **Strategy of the priority:**

To contribute to the preservation of natural resources and preservation of the environment, the relevant actors existing in the region should be encouraged to find joint solutions and apply environment friendly approaches in all fields. Special attention is also to be put on increasing awareness of the wider population.

Specific fields of strengths are identified in the field of renewable energy sources use. Sharing best practices and joint technology development as well as promoting sustainable energy use should be further encouraged in order to achieve the overall aim of the programme. Know-how transfer and implementation of demo projects could be promoted, special attention is to be put on the potential of the rural areas.

Increasing levels of noise, fine dust and the need for sustainable solutions in the field of waste and waste water management are of common interest. Moreover, in this field the transfer of knowledge and technological solutions are important for the programme area, especially in urban and industrial centres and along the main transport routes.

Since there is much cooperation potential identified in several fields affecting the development of regions (e.g. municipality cooperation, health issues, labour market, education and training, culture, tourism, location development, social affairs and many more), one of the key approaches is to ensure the development of partnerships and networks in the enlarged programme area and to create synergies that would lead to high quality project development and implementation.

The strong potential in the field of culture should be activated to support cross-border relationships and to increase the identity of the programme area in a wider territory. In this way, the development of the tourism potential can be complemented and new fields of employment potential can be facilitated.

Another important factor in ensuring sustainable development and quality of life is the activation of social and human potential and the promotion of links between urban and rural areas by facilitating service development and infrastructural support.

### **Specific objectives:**

- to contribute to CB-preservation of natural resources and promotion of their sustainable use
- to promote energy efficiency and increase in the use of renewable energy sources
- to contribute to efficient CB-environmental management
- to support improvement of accessibility of the border regions and to promote sustainable and balanced spatial and regional development, including social aspects
- to strengthen cross-border cooperation at local and regional levels
- to strengthen cultural identity and exploit the cultural potential of border regions
- to contribute to improving the quality of life and links between urban and rural areas

## **Description of priority**

### **Management of natural resources**

In particular, the following actions are proposed to be tackled:

The objective is to contribute to the preservation of natural resources and the biodiversity of the programme area.

The programme area has a substantial share of nature protected areas, some of them organised as nature parks and national parks.

The actions to be supported include cooperation in the field of joint management of natural resources, especially in the areas along the border (e.g. mountain range Karavanke/Karawanken, the Drava and Mura rivers), where individual actions can have a direct cross-border effect.

There is quite a number of initiatives for the establishment of nature parks. The cooperation among the existing and the coming ones is to be supported in the sense of finding joint solutions to particular common issues, e.g. public awareness raising, joint park promotion, organising and using joint cross-border transport systems, the development of measures to exploit employment and development potential under the limitations imposed by protected areas, the transfer of know-how, etc.

The actions to preserve biodiversity should also be supported both through direct activities connected to preservation, as well as through the increase of awareness of the wider population and visitors and promotion of cooperation with other land users.

The implementation of these activities shall promote and improve the ground for using the existing resources in a responsible and sustainable way.

### **Environment and energy**

In particular, the following actions are proposed to be tackled:

The objective of the actions presented is to contribute to safeguarding the environment against natural hazards, diminishing environmental pollution and increasing the use of renewable energy sources, etc.

The programme territory includes some tangible areas where natural hazards may occur (rivers, mountain areas). CB-cooperation in the development of joint strategies and plans related to risk prevention, emergency management, environment protection and actions in the case of natural hazards are to be supported in the cross-border area.

In the field of environmental management, joint development of solutions, know-how transfer and technology development in the field of noise, fine dust, waste and sewage management (including sewage infrastructure) and other fields of common cross-border interest can be supported. In particular, the cross-border concept for the proper use of waste as secondary material after full opening of the borders could be prepared. Furthermore, to co-ordinate measurement technologies and measure plans regarding the cross-border aspects e.g. of the fine-dust problem should be tackled.

CB-water management – cooperation in protection and management activities concerning the protection of joint water resources shall be supported.

A great amount of CB-cooperation potential lies in the field of renewable energy sources and efficient energy use. In the first place, the cooperation among institutions and organisations in this field, some of which already possess remarkable competences, is to be supported in order to enable know-how transfer, data exchange and joint cross-border project development.

Joint technology development for CB-exploitation of various renewable energy sources in cooperation with the research and enterprise sector. The development and implementation of demo projects in various fields is to be supported in order to promote the use of renewable energy sources.

In this respect, the transfer of best practices and concepts should be encouraged, e.g. the use of renewable energy sources in public transport, at local levels, etc. Use of innovative approaches in the sense of development of new concepts, such as energy tourism, energy self-sufficient local communities, etc.

The actions to raise awareness of the wider public on the possibilities and benefits of the use should be supported.

In the field of efficient energy use, cross-border cooperation in technology development, development of measures for reducing energy consumption in households and enterprise sector, implementation of demonstration projects, awareness raising, training and promotion activities can be supported.

### **Urban and regional development**

In particular, the following actions are proposed to be tackled:

This complex topic comprises a series of actions covering the development of cross-border cooperation structures, support in location development and the necessary communication infrastructure of a cross-border context that would contribute to the development of regions and improving the socioeconomic linkages between urban and rural areas. In this respect, actions in the field of public transport and spatial planning can also be supported.

New cross-border partnership structures should be stimulated, and at the same time the existing effective and experienced cross-border partnership structures (for example Euregion Styria - North East Slovenia, CBC partnership Karawanke/Karawanken... should be developed further in order to increase the use of the joint integrated and synergetic potential of the entire cooperation area. Key projects will be identified jointly as a part of proactive project development. In particular, the geographical restriction of their orientation to the immediate neighbourhood areas should be removed. By adopting these structures to new requirements, cross-border cooperation along the whole border should be facilitated, and the development of new models for project development suitable to new requirements could be supported.

With regard to the development of a CB-labour market and increasing mobility of worker, CB-cooperation representing the interests of employees and employers should be supported in creating organisational structures for their CB-activities.

Moreover, municipality cooperation in the development of cross-border services and infrastructure contributing to the improvement of the quality of life or the improvement of linkages to urban areas shall be supported. For this purpose, the revitalisation of village and urban centres for new offer development can be supported, including infrastructure investments, if embedded in cross-border projects.

Improvement of cross-border connection of broadband ICT-infrastructure should be targeted, in particular to facilitate cross-border cooperation in business and RTD-fields and to allow the necessary support to actions aimed at rural areas.

Improvement of public transport system across the border should be targeted; particularly between the major towns of neighbouring areas, where relevant potential and high cross-border frequency exist. This should offer a better access to cross-border opportunities to employees, students, customers and tourists, while at the same time contributing to reducing emissions from individual vehicles. The major potential could be expected at the links between Graz and Maribor, Villach / Klagenfurt and Ljubljana, or also between Bad Radkersburg and Murska Sobota, Gornja Radgona, respectively.

CB-transport planning for the improvement of the cross-border links and level of service, joint market research, feasibility studies, organisational concepts, marketing and promotion of public transport and inter-modality supporting facilities could be eligible activities. As a specific matter, cooperation and coordination activities regarding the airport infrastructure and strategies can be supported, especially at the level of joint feasibility and marketing studies.

Schengen facilities at the border crossings could be used for the development of new cross-border services and infrastructure: the evaluation of the potential of this existing infrastructure in the respective regional context and the development of the alternative use or follow-up activities should be carried out jointly. There is a clear cross-border context of the potential and of the impact on the local and regional structure of any option.

Due to the various locations, a series of alternative opportunities are possible and could make sense:

- Transport-logistic related opportunities at the main highway border crossings (international truck-service stations including catering and accommodation)
- Commercial and business zones at the border crossings with high frequency
- Tourism opportunities at the border crossings in the Alpine zones
- Integration into the respective city and local infrastructure in case of inner-city border crossings (potential for town renovation)

Joint working groups could tackle the task jointly and elaborate a series of proposals and alternatives by integrating suitable experts and scrutinising good practises.

Detailed implementation should be based on concrete feasibility studies. In any case, the potential, the interests and the impact of both sides should be the basis of these joint deliberations and decisions. Furthermore, implementation projects could also be part of the programme up to certain limits.

Support for small scale cross-border local and regional initiatives could be implemented through the programme's Micro Projects Funds, specific implementing modalities will be stated at the level of the MC.

The proposed activity fields will help to achieve one of the main programme objectives – the improvement of the quality of project development and implementation of the programme and the improvement of the locations and support infrastructure.

### **Social and cultural development**

In particular, the following actions are proposed to be tackled:

The objective of the proposed action fields is to foster cross-border cooperation in culture and social affairs, and thus contribute to the improvement of the programme area identity, visibility and quality of life.

CB-collaboration of cultural institutions and organisations in the programme area with the aim of developing long-term cross-border cooperation in various fields, such as cultural heritage, arts, creative industries, etc., should be supported.

Actions related to cross-border cooperation in the field of cultural heritage (movable and immovable) should contribute to its valorisation and sustainability, whereby support in development of the new cultural products/offer is the key focus.

Promotion of the CB-cooperation of culture organisations and the creative industries with an aim to develop new innovative cross-border products and services, which can, in the long run, also contribute to creating employment potential in culture.

CB-culture cooperation should also be supported through the development of new joint (coming to be) traditional events, festivals, and exhibitions, which provide place for the introduction of the creative potential of the programme area and strengthening of the cultural identity of the participating regions. To ensure sustainability of such actions, involvement of the business sector should also be considered. In this respect, joint actions to present and promote the cultural offer on the third markets are also included.

Promotion of cross-border cooperation of artists and other groups, such as youth, children, students, people working in culture and education by means of cultural exchanges and events that can contribute to learning more about cultural diversity, language promotion, education, arts. In this context, the cooperation of the media also presents an important factor.

In relation to the mentioned fields, innovative approaches, use of modern technologies and digitalisation in cross-border development of cultural offer, products and services should be encouraged.

The quality of life in the programme area is to be enhanced by promoting CB-cooperation, especially in terms of social development, in particular focusing on promotion of health protection and a healthy life style, promotion of healthy food, cooperation of hospitals, pest protection, and establishment of joint monitoring, data exchange and control of epidemics, as well as joint emergency planning for natural disasters or ecological accidents. Joint use of infrastructure, exchange of best practices and improvement of service quality could be supported. This could also include the exchange of experiences or joint actions in medicinal waste management, in particular for hospitals.

## **Beneficiaries**

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- local, regional and national authorities and organisations
  - enterprises, clusters and networks
  - institutions and organisations in the field of nature protection and conservation, environment and risk prevention, emergency management, spatial planning, public transport
  - institutions and organisations in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency
  - institutions and organisations in the field of culture, health, medicine, education and training, rural development, tourism, social affairs, labour market
  - associations and NGO in the field of nature protection, environment, culture, education, social issues, rural development, tourism, sports and leisure
  - institutions and organisations representing economic and social interests of employees, employers, cities and/or municipalities
  - research institutions
  - universities and high schools
  - associations and agencies
  - local and regional development organisations
  - training and education organisations and institutions
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## **Specific targets and indicators**

<b>Indicators reflecting priority 2 - “Sustainable and balanced development”</b>	Quantification
Strengthening cooperation on regional and national level, in particular in aspects of sustainability	<b>50</b>
<b>AF “Management of nature resources”</b>	
Number of projects	<b>17</b>
<b>AF “Environment and energy”</b>	
Number of environmental projects	<b>10</b>
Number of energy projects	<b>12</b>
Number of risk prevention projects	<b>5</b>
<b>AF “Urban and regional development”</b>	
Number of projects in urban and regional development	<b>20</b>
Number of public transport projects	<b>4</b>
<b>AF “Social and cultural development”</b>	
Number of cultural cooperation projects	<b>13</b>
Number of cooperation projects in the area of health	<b>3</b>