

Interreg Cross-border Cooperation Programme

Italy-Croatia 2014-2020



CITIZENS SUMMARY
July 2015

PROGRAMME ELIGIBLE AREAS

Italy	NUTS III (Provinces)	Pordenone, Udine, Gorizia, Trieste (Friuli Venezia Giulia Region) Venezia, Padova, Rovigo (Veneto Region) Ferrara, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini (Emilia Romagna Region) Pesaro e Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno, Fermo (Marche Region) Teramo, Pescara, Chieti (Abruzzo Region) Campobasso (Molise Region) Brindisi, Lecce, Foggia, Bari, Barletta-Andria-Trani (Puglia Region)
Croatia	NUTS III (Counties)	Primorsko-goranska, Ličko-senjska, Zadarska, Šibensko-kninska, Splitko-dalmatinska, Istarska, Dubrovačko-neretvanska (Adriatic Croatia Region) Karlovačka (Continental Croatia Region)

PROGRAMME FINANCIAL ENVELOPE

The Programme is co-funded:

- up to 85% by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a budget of 201.357.220,00 EUR
- for remaining share (minimum 15%) by National co-financing.

The Programme total budget is 236.890.849,00 EUR.

TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS

The whole Programme area spreads over 85.562 km², with a population of 12.465.861 inhabitants according to the last census (2011).

Since early 2000s, the emerging cross-border ties established within the framework of previous platforms have resulted in many diverse collaboration networks spreading across the area and involving: regional and local authorities, business organisations, research and academic institutions and non-governmental organisations.

The Italy - Croatia area shows a distinct **blue and green** pattern, featuring the sea basin, coastal landscapes, green but also urban areas. The location of the Adriatic Sea in the very centre of the territory requires, on one hand, more efforts to accomplish collaboration aims related with the cross-border integration of economic, educational and labour markets. On the other, it is a joint economic and environmental asset, and a natural platform for cooperation building on long-dating trade exchange contacts reflected in some common traits of cultural heritage.

As a key feature **Adriatic Sea**, with its coast and islands is the most valuable, but also a most vulnerable natural systems of the Programme area. Adriatic Sea is a unique and highly sensitive marine ecosystem which differs from the rest of the Mediterranean Sea even though it is an integral part of it. Coastal areas are characterized by a high degree of biodiversity, including numerous endemic species, sensitive habitats and ecosystems. Both Adriatic Sea and coastal areas play a significant role in the development of economy, cultural and social life of the Programme area.

The area contains territories with different levels of socio-economic development. **Economy** of the Programme area is still affected by the economic crisis from 2008; the whole territory needs strengthening of competitiveness in order to ensure GDP growth and exports development.

Important economic strengths are traditionally present assets like fisheries, aquaculture and shipbuilding.

Tourism is one of the most important industries in the whole Adriatic area, including Italy - Croatia Programme territory. It is focused on coastal touristic offer, maritime/nautical tourism, cultural assets and attractions around big cities, with a strong rural and agro tourism development in the hinterland during the last 10 years

Research and Development expenditure in both countries lag behind the EU28. Even though institutional setup for R&D is well organized, the model offered demonstrated some limits, especially referring to the creation of efficient synergies/network between clusters and SMEs, research centres and universities, sometimes not able to fully exploit their potentials by creating an appropriate critical mass.

The Programme area is under the **influence of climate change** as much as other parts; so it is particularly exposed to many natural risks: consequences range from extensive damage to landscapes, real estate and other country's resources to endangering people's safety and causing casualties. Due to specific elements such as high temperatures and long-lasting severe droughts, this area is more than ever susceptible to open air fires.

Due to its long lasting tradition and dynamic history, the Programme area represents a **culturally rich and worldwide recognized territory**. The Adriatic Sea has traditionally constituted a basin for economic and social exchanges between different cultures and religions for centuries, till modern times. There are 29 UNESCO World Heritage protected sites, natural heritage and intangible heritage in the area. The Adriatic Basins, characterized by a high degree of biodiversity, including numerous endemic species, sensitive habitats and ecosystems, is the most valuable environmental asset in the area. Long dating strong pressure due to human activities is a threat for it; both countries have many national parks and protected areas, anyway more environmental protection measures are needed.

There is a long lasting tradition of circulation of people, goods, capital, knowledge and technologies in the Programme area. The **accessibility** of Italian coastal territories is ensured by network of motorways and Adriatic state roads, together with the railways that serve the harbours. In Croatia road network is quite extensive, even if it is mostly of regional and national importance, and the navigation and **maritime transport** capability of the harbours is good. Anyway, connection to the hinterland are sometimes limited and there are traffic congestion problems because of the high seasonality of tourism and the great concentration of touristic flows in few areas. Promoting multimodality could improve transport services.

PROGRAMME STRATEGY

The central location of the sea basin (affecting the transportation patterns and socio-economic processes in the Programme area), the maritime character of historical trade relations, the joint asset of natural areas and cultural heritage, the shared importance of economy branches exploiting the rich natural sea based resources show the essential role of the blue and green economy for the sustainable regional growth in the cooperation area.

At the same time, the area shows considerable disparities in the socio-economic characteristics, exemplified by urban-rural, and north-south divides in the economic attainment of the SME sector, innovation capacity and labour market trends as well as east-west mobility patterns that need to be addressed by joint actions across the borders.

These issues are at the core of the strategic intervention by the Italy - Croatia Cross border Cooperation Programme, driven by the overall objective: **"To increase the prosperity and the blue growth potential of the area by stimulating cross-border partnerships able to achieve tangible changes"**.

By directing the intervention to the stimulation of **blue growth** by means of joint cross-border actions between the Programme regions, the Programme will:

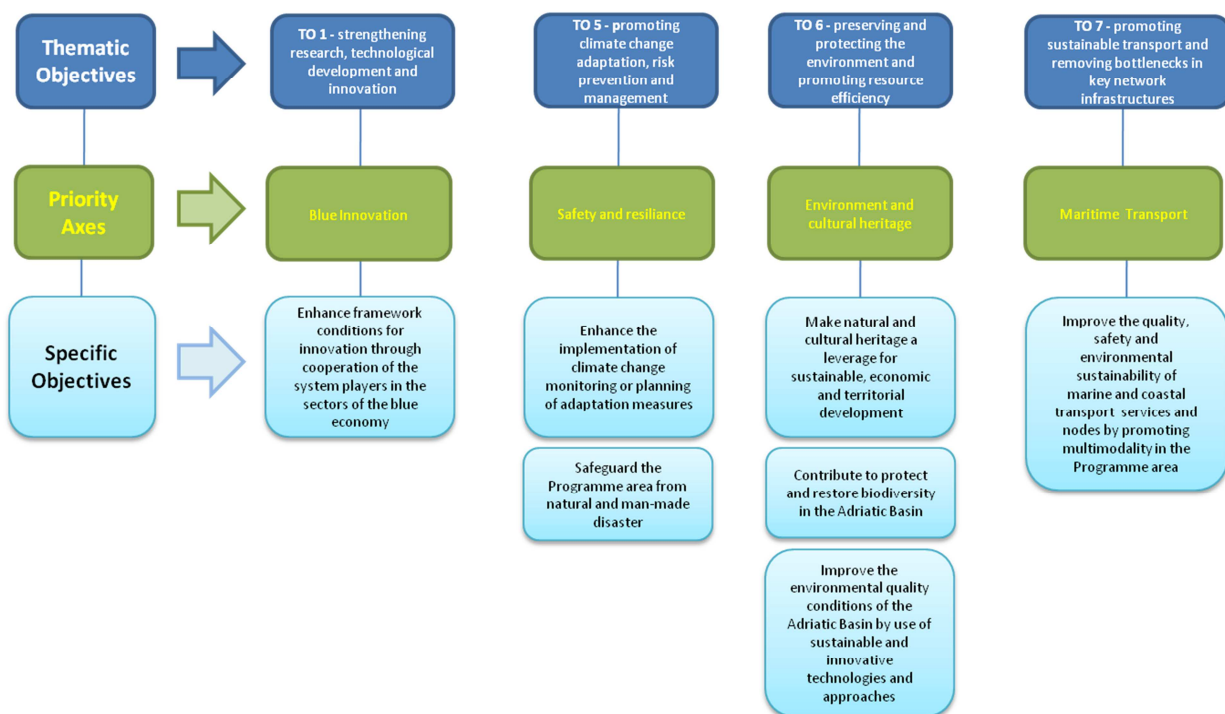
- maximise its impact towards tangible results;
- show complementarities to other EU-funded interventions that aim to reinforce economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Programme regions;
- meet the priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- support the implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region and the Integrated Maritime Policy;
- continue and strengthen collaboration between institutions, organisations and networks facilitated by the SEE, MED and IPA CBC 2007-2013.

"Blue Growth" is part of the Europe 2020 strategy and addresses the economic potential of the oceans, seas and coasts for sustainable growth and jobs, to be developed in harmony with the marine environment and through cooperation between public and private partners, including SMEs.

PROGRAMME PRIORITY AXES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The Programme supports project interventions under the following priority axes (related to selected TOs) and specific objectives:

Thematic Objectives / Priority Axes / Specific Objectives



TYPES OF PROJECT

The Programme supports the following types of operation:

- Standard projects, implemented in a bottom up approach
- Strategic projects, selected through an institutional top-down approach because of their strategic nature and characterized by relevant financial amounts, wide area partnership coverage and particular institutional and technical competences