

Interreg
ITALIA-SLOVENIJA



Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale
Evropski sklad za regionalni razvoj

Evaluation Plan

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Acronyms	
MA	Managing Authority
EC	European Commission
MC	Monitoring Committee
JS	Joint Secretariat
AIR	Annual Implementation Report

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Foreword

The new planning cycle for Structural funds during the 2014-2020 period is an important opportunity for the Authorities responsible for managing funding to take another step forwards in terms of developing their organizational, managerial and evaluation capacities in supporting result-orientation of programmes funded from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Title V, Chapter 2 appoints Member States to draw up Evaluation Plans outlining how evaluation reports should be conducted for the entire planning period.

In compliance with Article 114 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the reports should be drawn up within one year of the Programme's approval.

This Evaluation Plan for the Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 has been drafted pursuant to the provisions of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 (CPR, Articles 50, 54, 56, 110 and 114), of Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013 (ERDF Reg., Article 14) and of the EC guidelines (EC - DG REGIO Guidance document on evaluation plans, February 2015 and Guidance document on monitoring and evaluation, March 2014), and also with national Guidelines where relevant.

In order to comply with the Regulations requirement for 2014-2020, all designated Managing Authorities (MA) of Programmes co-funded by the European Union in place in the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia have been working together for the implementation of a comprehensive Evaluation for all Programmes, to be submitted for approval to the respective MCs as required by the Regulations.

The present Evaluation Plan has been drawn up by the MA following the suggestions provided by all relevant Programme Partners on its first version drafted in December 2016 and is subject to the approval of the MC in early 2017, in order to be transmitted to the European Commission (EC) through SFC2014 system. After adoption it shall be published on the Programme's website www.ita-slo.eu.

This Evaluation Plan defines the evaluation strategy for the entire period of implementation of the Programme, and sets out the minimum evaluation activities in order to improve the quality of evaluations, which should help to foster an efficient management of the Programme and to promote a result-oriented decision making. It defines the framework for planning and carrying out the evaluations on the Programme quality in order to ensure its effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

The Plan provides a general outline of the evaluations to be carried out during the Programming period (Article 56, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), establishing the process and mecha-

nisms for implementing the Plan, the involvement of Programme Partners in evaluations, the links between the evaluation and monitoring system, the financial resources to be used for the evaluation and the strategy to ensure the use and dissemination of the evaluation.

Finally it provides an indicative list of the evaluations to be performed during the 2014-2020 programming period, the field of analysis for each evaluation, the financial resources allocated and indicative deadlines.

This document contains broad indications of the planned evaluations, however new evaluation requirements could anyhow emerge. Therefore, this Evaluation Plan will be reviewed annually.

The Evaluation Plan is drafted and adopted in English language.

1. Context, objectives and coverage of the evaluation plan

1.1 The Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia

The present Evaluation Plan focuses on the Interreg Programme V-A Italy-Slovenia for the programming period 2014-2020.

The overall objective of the Programme is **“Promote innovation, sustainability and cross-border governance to create a more competitive, cohesive and liveable area”**.

The Programme intends to implement smart solutions answering to territorial challenges in the fields of innovation, low carbon economy, environment, natural and cultural resources, and institutional capacity building.

The following 4 Priority Axes, hereinafter referred as PA, - together with their 6 Specific Objectives, hereinafter referred as SO - have been identified to answer to the existent needs and challenges

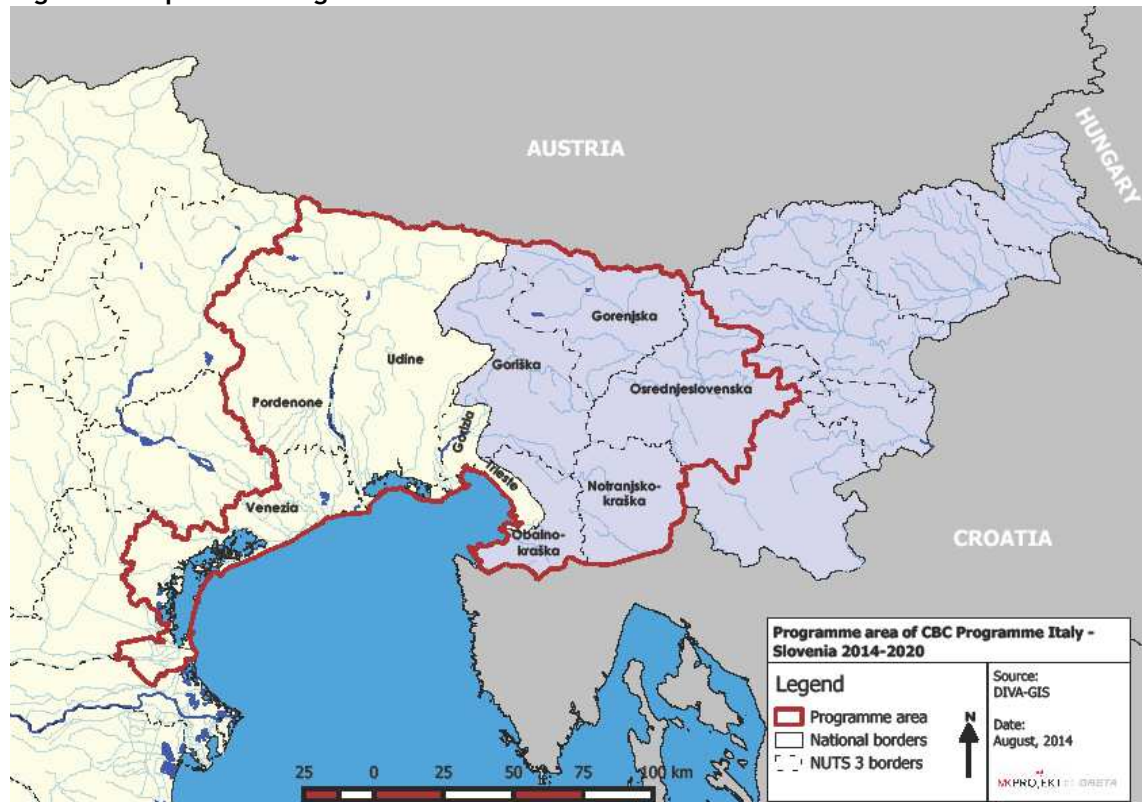
Thematic Objectives	Investment priority	Priority Axes	Specific Objectives	Type of actions	€ Amount
TO 1	1.b) Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialization, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies.	PA.1. Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area	SO 1.1. Strengthen the co-operation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area	1. Awareness raising, knowledge transfer and capitalization activities, development of tools and services (analytical tools, strategies, management tools, capacity building etc.) in relation to jointly developed innovative products and/or services; 2. implementation of innovative activities and investments in key sectors of the Programme area, taking into account KET, FET and overlapping regional smart specialization strategies.	22.003.752,00
TO 4	4.e) Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.	PA.2: Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans	2.1. Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning	1. Fostering the reduction of energy consumption also by promoting the implementation of energy saving strategies and action plans; 2. Decreasing emissions level, also by piloting the use of alternative transportation systems and the general use of alternative energy sources (only renewable ones).	13.752.345,00
TO 6	6.c	PA.3: Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources	3.1. Conserving, protecting, restoring and developing natural and cultural heritage	1. Developing common strategies, plans and tools related to conservation and protection of natural resources; 2. Development and practical implementation of common strategies, plans and tools related to conservation, protection, attractiveness and valorization of material and immate-	32.088.805,00

Thematic Objectives	Investment priority	Priority Axes	Specific Objectives	Type of actions	€ Amount
				rial cultural heritage; 3. Implementation of small investments and trainings;	
	6.d		3.2. Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory	1. Definition of common tools, protocols and plans concerning protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystems; 2. Testing and implementing integrated strategies, tools and green infrastructure addressing protected and environmentally highly valuable areas, including Natura 2000 sites; 3. Promotion of sustainable and responsible awareness and behaviors, in particular inside the protected and nature value areas	
	6.f		3.3. Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management	1. Developing, demonstrating and implementing small-scale innovative environmental friendly technology investments - pilot projects.	
TO 11	11 ETC	PA.4: Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance	4.1. Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges	1. Operations addressing institutional capacity building aimed at development of structures, systems and tools; 2. Operations addressing the human potential and needs.	18.336.464,00
	PA.5: Technical Assistance				5.550.938,00
TOTAL					91.682.300,00

The Programme area extends over a total surface of 19,841 km² and has a total population of approximately 3 million inhabitants. The entire Programme area includes 5 Italian Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics - NUTS3 level regions (provinces of Venice, Udine, Pordenone, Gorizia and Trieste) and 5 Slovenian statistical regions (statistical regions of Notranjsko-kraška, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška and Goriška).

The reduction of the Programme area brings the Programme to its previous INTERREG II and INTERREG III geographic configuration. The new territorial dimension could help to strengthen the cohesion level of the Programme area and better focus strategic approaches and actions on the three pillars of concentration, territorial connection and administrative cooperation. Moreover, the need to contribute to the new-born macro-regional strategy EUSAIR requires more specific attention to coordination and demarcation of activities among all the ETC Programmes concerning the interested area. The Programme area takes part to two macro-regional strategies: the EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the EU strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), moreover the Danubian Strategy (EUSDR) affects the Programme in the Slovenian side of the Programme area.

Figure 1: Map of the Programme area



The overall Programme budget is € 91.682.300,00, with an ERDF contribution of € 77.929.954,00 (85%) and a national co-financing of € 13.752.346,00. The funds allocated to

Priority Axes 1, 2, 3 and 4 (corresponding to the selected Thematic Objectives 1, 4, 6 and 11 ETC) amount to 94% of the Programme financial resources; the remaining 6% is allocated to TA. The Programme foresees three project typologies (strategic, standard, ITI).

Highlights of the Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

- ✓ Within Programme Priority axis 1, crossborder economic cooperation is strongly linked to research and innovation and to transfer of know-how therefore it is essential the interrelation among SMEs and research centers;
- ✓ Within Priority axis 2, transport system is closely linked to a concept of sustainability and environmental preservation;
- ✓ Within Priority axis 3, tourism is connected to urban accessibility and to the safeguard of natural and cultural heritage;
- ✓ Priority axis 4 is focused on the pivotal role given to institutional cooperation;
- ✓ the Programme implements another EU Regulation novelty such as the ITI managed by the EGTC GO as Intermediate body.

1.2 Evidence of the evaluations carried out in the previous period

The evaluation activities will take into account the outcomes of previous studies/evaluations carried out by the Programme.

In the period 2007-2013, the relevant outputs of the evaluation activities were:

1. **Evaluation Report based on the ongoing evaluation**. It analyzed in particular the relevance, consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of the fulfilled interventions with the following aims: i) to identify problems and solutions for Programme implementation, ii) to ease EC ex post Evaluation.
2. **Thematic report**. It investigated on the features of beneficiaries and on project partnership with a territorial approach at NUTs III level.

Both documents are published on the Programme website http://www.ita-slo.eu/documenti_di_riferimento/documenti_di_programma/#rapporto_di_valutazione

Those documents highlight needs and development's drivers that have been taken into consideration in the Evaluation Plan: from the need expressed by the Programme Area to invest in innovation and in strengthening cooperation between R&I actors and SMEs towards an increased competitiveness, to a more sustainable growth - with a focus on smart mobility, green and cultural resources. Last, but not least, previous analysis underlined as a strategic element

a more integrated governance supported by investments in PA and stakeholder capacity building.

In the period 2014-2020, the documents produced up to now are the following:

1. **ex ante evaluation**. It considered the following key elements: Programme strategy, indicators, monitoring and evaluation; consistency of financial allocations, Programme contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy; Strategic Environmental Assessment;
2. **Strategic Environmental Assessment**. It included: the description of the environmental status of the Programme area and its eventual evolution; a comparison analysis of Programme objectives with environmental policies at EU, national and local levels, identification of Programme objectives of Environmental sustainability, tools of environmental monitoring and governance;
3. **Methodology for measuring results and output indicators**

1.3 Objectives of the Evaluation Plan

The EC "Guidance Document on evaluation plans" dated February 2015 provides recommendations for the design of evaluation plans. The main objectives of the evaluation plan for the 2014-2020 Programming period are:

- provide a reference framework for evaluations, especially those for assessing effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Programme (Reg. 1303/2013, Art. 56.3);
- improve the quality of evaluations through effective planning, production and collection of the necessary data ensuring all necessary and appropriate resources (equipment, personnel, facilities, etc.) (Reg. 1303/2013, Art. 54.2);
- promote an evidence/evaluation-based policy;
- facilitate consolidated decisions on the implementation and the strategic orientation of the Programme;
- facilitate the synthesis, interpretation and use of results from monitoring and evaluation activities;
- ensure that the assessments provide useful information for the AIRs and for the Member States' reports;
- collect useful information on the impact of the Programme;
- ensure a realistic assessment of the Programmes impact;
- draw lessons for future programming periods;
- set out how partners were involved.

In particular, Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 requires evaluations to be conducted in three main phases: ex-ante, on-going and ex-post.

This Evaluation Plan is mainly focused on the ongoing evaluation: the ex-ante evaluation has already been submitted for EC approval together with the Programme; the ex-post evaluation will be performed at the end of the Programming period by the EC or the Member State working together with the Commission.

The on-going evaluation shall be performed through a series of evaluation exercises aiming at providing constant supervision of the Programme's implementation.

These can be divided into:

- evaluations designed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the activities funded by the Programme;
- evaluations designed to check how the funds allocated to the Programme contributed to the objectives of each Priority;
- in-depth evaluations of all strategic and implementing aspects affecting the Programme.

Based on this approach, the following evaluations are planned for 2014-2020:

- Evaluations on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme (products: Evaluation Reports);
- Strategic Impact Evaluations of each Priority axis specific objectives of the Programme (products: Thematic Reports).

The evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Programme are defined by art. 54 (1) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 and the EC Guidance documents (in particular, the "Guidance document on monitoring and evaluation" and the "Guidance Document on the evaluation plan"). In line with Article 56 (3) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 the ERDF support contribution to the achievement of the objectives of each Priority shall be evaluated at least once during the Programming period.

The evaluations on effectiveness and impact are essential for the collection of information on the fulfillment of Programme objectives and they help improving the Programme impact during the Programming period and after its closure. Such evaluations are also essential to make visible the benefits brought by the Programme interventions also by ensuring greater transparency.

In light of the new context described, evaluation shall:

- highlight Programme visibility in terms of contribution to a strategy for the development of local productive network;

- measure results in terms of better capacity of innovation and higher competitiveness of enterprises according to the logic of networking and participative development;
- valorize territorial promotion and safeguard in terms of enhancing its attractiveness as an added-value of the Programme interventions;
- valorize experiences of institutional crossborder governance in order to test advanced models of joint management of territories.

2. Evaluation framework. Actors, process and strategy

2.1. Relevant Authorities and bodies of the Cooperation Programme

According to the Regulation No. 1303/2013 there are no substantial changes in the functions of Programme Authorities for the period 2014-2020 compared to 2007-2013. Core Programme Authorities will remain the same, ensuring institutional stability and smooth transition to the new EU framework.

Managing Authority (MA)

The MA, assisted by the JS, is responsible for managing the Programme. It ensures that the different Programme Authorities and structures interact in a smooth and co-operative way. MA role and functions are included in a specific organizational Unit, functionally independent and separated from the other Authorities and FLC bodies in the Friuli Venezia Giulia autonomous Region.

Joint Secretariat (JS)

In compliance with Art. 23 (2) of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the JS shall assist and support the MC and, where the case, the MC Working Groups (WGs) in carrying out their respective functions.

Monitoring Committee (MC)

MC supervises the implementation of the Programme in order to monitor its effectiveness and quality and the responsible implementation of the selected projects. Detailed MC functioning provisions are established in the MC's Rules of Procedure adopted on its first meeting (March, 8 2016). The MC may set up WGs to facilitate its decision-making process on specific issues.

2.2. Evaluation functions and evaluation process

In compliance with Art. 114 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 the **Managing Authority** is responsible for the evaluation process. The following table sums up its responsibilities regarding the ongoing evaluation:

Authority	Role
<p>Managing Authority Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia. Central Directorate for Finance, Property, Coordination and Programming of Economic and EU Policies. Department European Territorial Cooperation, State Aid and General Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - draws up the Evaluation Plan and submits it to the MC, in order to ensure a favorable framework to perform the evaluations (Article 114 (1) of Reg. 1303/2013); - transmits to the EC for information purposes the evaluation plan and any of its amendments approved by the MC; - ensures that evaluations are carried out on the basis of the Evaluation Plan and that each evaluation is subject to appropriate follow-up. At least once during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess how support from the ESI Funds has contributed to the objectives for each Priority (Article 56 (3) of Reg. 1303/2013); - by 31 December 2022, submits to the EC a report summarizing the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period and the main outputs and results of the Programme, providing comments on the reported information (Article 114 (2) of Reg. 1303/2013); - assesses the suitability and feasibility of the proposed follow-up measures; - supervises, participates in meetings and discussions about the evaluation outputs; - ensures that monitoring data and information needed are collected and made available to the evaluators for conducting evaluations as far as possible; - ensures that the evaluation objectives and quality criteria are met; - ensures the involvement of partners in evaluation within the framework of the Monitoring Committee; - ensures the use and communication of evaluations; - ensures networking with the EC and other relevant Authorities at national and local level; - ensures the tender procedure for awarding the evaluation service.

The Joint Secretariat cooperates with the MA in implementing its tasks and actively supports the MC and, where the case, its Working Group.

Authority	Role
<p>Joint Secretariat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is the contact point for external evaluators; - is the contact point with secretarial role for the Working Group on Evaluation;

- prepares summary of the outcomes of Working Group for the MC;
- communicates Programme evaluations results;
- manages the evaluation of the communication strategy;
- assists the MA in its tasks regarding Evaluation issues.

The **Monitoring Committee** has a controlling and decisive role in the elaboration and implementation of the Evaluation Plan, pursuant to article 110 of the EU Regulation 1303/2013. All Programme partners are represented in the MC and can therefore directly influence the evaluation process, within the MC itself or within a dedicated Working Group.

Authority	Role
Monitoring Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - examines and approves the evaluation plan of the Programme and any amendment (Article 110 (2) of Reg. 1303/2013) - examines the Integrated Evaluation Plan; - examine and review progress made by the Programme towards achieving its objectives; - evaluates the progress made in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to findings of evaluation; - makes observations to the MA regarding implementation and evaluation of the Programme. The MC shall monitor actions taken as a result of its observations (article 49 (4) of the EU Regulation 1303/2013); - examines the progress made in the implementation of the Evaluation Plan within the AIR, approved by the MC itself.

In compliance with section 5 of the CP and with art. 8 of the Internal Rules of Procedures of the MC, in order to coordinate the planning and implementation of evaluations as well as to exchange evaluation's outcomes and methodology, the MC will set up a Working Group on Evaluation. The composition of the Working Group will be defined in its memberships by the MC at its establishment with minimum two members per State Delegation with experience covering the tasks assigned to the WG itself. The external Evaluator may be called to participate to the WG as well.

Authority	Role
Working Group on Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - examines and discusses the implementation of the evaluation plan and its amendments; - examines and discusses the integrated Evaluation Plan; - examines and discusses the evaluation reports; - monitors the implementation the follow-up measures

- ;
- examines and discusses related issues to be further submitted for approval to the MC.

2.3 External experts

The MA is responsible for activating all procedures for appointing external experts as independent evaluators through procedures assuring transparency and according to provisions in force.

External experts shall be contracted out of the Programme budget of Technical Assistance.

In particular, in consideration of the administrative organization of the autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (Single Centralised Committee), the tender has been divided into two lots, one for the evaluation of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 and one for the evaluation of the Regional mainstream Programmes in relation to the ERDF, ESF and EAFRD funds.

In August 2016 the competent office of the autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia provisionally awarded the service of Evaluation for all EU-funded-Programmes 2014/2020, included that on the Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia. The evaluation service has been awarded following a specific public tender drafted in order to guarantee the quality of evaluation products. The contract with evaluators in charge was signed by the MA in December 2016.

The MA, for the tendered service and contract provisions, shall be the contact point for the external experts, who, as regards the technical and methodological aspects, shall keep a link not only with the MA but also with the MC, through the Working Group on Evaluation.

The external experts in the implementation of their tasks shall abide to the Programme Evaluation Plan as finally updated, amended and approved by the MC.

The MA shall, if necessary and with regard to issues relating to technical, methodological and qualitative aspects of evaluation, rely on the support of the relevant evaluation bodies/agencies representing the Member States.

Apart from the above mentioned joint tender, in October 2016 a Notice was published on the programme website www.ita-slo.eu in order to form a List of experts to be selected for projects assessment under the Programme. This list can have a residual aim to select also experts for eventual programme evaluation needs on specific topics to be identified. The list of experts, divided into Italian and Slovene language proficiency, was published on Programme website www.ita-slo.eu in December 2016 and will be valid, according to the law in force, for three years and it shall be subject to eventual updates and amendments.

2.4. Human and financial resources for the management of the Evaluation Plan

The Evaluation Plan has been drawn up by the MA, who is responsible for its implementation. The human resources needed for the evaluation activity in order to ensure it functioning correctly are estimated at two (one from the MA and one from JS and their substitutes).

A JS staff member shall cooperate with the MA in its tasks regarding Evaluation issues and related activities as described in the table above describing the role of the JS on this field.

The technical assistance Programme financial plan (Priority Axis 5) - as part of the Specific Objective 5.1 "Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the Programme" - Action A - "Actions supported to improve the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation Programme", "Drafting and implementing the Programme evaluation plan and follow-up actions for the results of independent evaluations of the Programme" - reserves for Programme evaluation a maximum amount of € 100,000.00 (including VAT), as approved by the MC on 8th March 2016 in its first meeting, as part of the total amount for "core activities" in charge of the MA. The contract for the Evaluation service has been signed for gross amount of € 81.751,00, VAT included.

The contract has been signed for the delivery of the Evaluation service as an integrated output. The total cost of the service includes the implementation of several outputs; the value of each output was included in the economic bid and have been considered appropriate and proportionate.

The cost of participating in training courses for experts is not included in the contract.

Eventual experts to be selected through the List of experts published on the Programme website in December 2016 shall fall into the same item of core activities within Programme Technical Assistance.

During the implementation of the Programme unexpected developments might bring about new evaluation issues, not initially foreseen in the evaluation plan. For this reason, a part of the total budget allocated to the evaluation activities is reserved for these arising developments.

2.5. Training

In order to ensure a good understanding of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, a smooth planning and management of evaluations, MA and JS staff can take part in training courses organized in particular by INTERACT. Participation in these training activities will be

funded through the Programme's technical assistance, with the amount foreseen explicitly at this scope under the budget line "travel and accommodation costs" related to JS and MA staff. Please note that Technical Assistance budget has been approved by the MC in its first meeting only regarding the MA core activities and limitedly to total amounts; the detailed Technical Assistance budget will be re-proposed for approval to the MC (a revision of the plan in case of changes is possible).

2.6. Timetable

Three evaluations (Evaluation Reports¹) refer to the Programme's progress on 31/12/2017, 31/12/2019 and 31/12/2021.

Two strategic evaluations (Thematic Reports²) will be conducted from 2017 onwards, based on the calendar and the evaluation questions that come up during the implementation of the Programme.

Each evaluation product is outlined in the Synthesis table below according to its legal framework, its specific content, the main topics it focuses on, its specific timeline and the method used and necessary data.

Synthesis table

WHEN	WHAT	REF.
<p>Within 60 days from the approval of the Work Plan and annual updates by 31 December each year</p>	<p>Presentation of the <u>Integrated Evaluation Plan</u></p>	<p>Foreseen by the bid as an evaluation product</p> <p>It could be assimilated to the Inception Report* as foreseen in the EC "Guidance Document on evaluation plans" dated February 2015.</p> <p>*Description of the Evaluation team foreseen in the Work Plan</p> <p>Timeline for delivery of evaluation products</p>

¹ See tables 3, 4 and 5, §3.5. "Evaluation products and timeframe".

² See tables 6 and 7, §3.5. "Evaluation products and timeframe".

		described also in this table
By 31 March each year from 2017 to 2023	Summarized contribution related to the implementation of the Programme evaluations, functional to presentation of the AIR (see table 2, §3.5). Verification of performance of strategic measures and short assessment report to be provided to AIR on S3	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 articles 50 and 111
By 15 May 2017	1 st extensive Evaluation Report and summary: programme management and implementation, project application and selection procedures, communication strategy+ description of the I.T.I.as for implementation of ITI principles in the Programme - s.c Evaluations on the efficiency and effectiveness of Programme (see table 3, §3.5. "Evaluation products and timeframe")	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 articles 56.3
By 15 May 2019	2 nd extensive Evaluation Report and summary: summary of assessments and contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives/Intervention Plan goals + contribution of the Programme to the 2020 EU Strategy + description of the I.T.I. included in the Programme + assessment of the integrated use of ERDF resources - Evaluations on the efficiency and effectiveness of Programme (see table 4, §3.5. "Evaluation products and timeframe")	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 article 50.5
By 31 December 2021	3 rd extensive Evaluation Report and summary: summary of assessments and contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives/Intervention Plan goals + contribution of the Programme to the 2020 EU Strategy - Evaluations on the efficiency and effectiveness of Programme (see table 5, §3.5. "Evaluation products and timeframe")	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 articles 50.5 and 114
By 31 December 2023	2 Thematic Reports - Strategic Impact Evaluations of each Priority axis specific objectives of the Programme (see tables 6 and 7 §3.5. "Evaluation products and timeframe")	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 articles 65.2

2.7. Use and communication of the evaluations

The Evaluation Plan and the results of the evaluations will be presented to the Monitoring Committee before being submitted to the EC, through the SFC portal.

For transparency reasons, pursuant to art. 54 (4) of Regulation 1303/2013, the results of the evaluations will be made available to the public. This occurs primarily through the publication on the Programme website www.ita-slo.eu of AIRs, which summarize the evaluations results.

On the same Programme website it will be published the Programme Evaluation Plan and summaries of other evaluation reports or products.

For any matters not covered by this document, please refer to the relevant EU Regulations.

2.8. Strategy for a quality management of the evaluation process

To ensure the high quality of the Programme evaluations and their results, the following measures are adopted:

1. In order to guarantee the principle of independence, evaluations are performed mainly by external experts not involved in Programme implementation. This allows a high level of objectivity as the legitimacy of the work of experts is not based on the Programme successful establishment, but on scientific evaluation standards. The service of Evaluation for all EU-funded Programmes 2014/2020, included that on Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia awarded in August 2016 by Region Friuli Venezia Giulia followed an open tender in which were well-specified quantitative and qualitative criteria for ensuring the quality of evaluation products.

Therefore, requirements for the evaluations were well identified in the tender and the contract well specifies the conditions to be applied in the event of early termination of the contract, or in the event that the evaluator shall not fulfill at all or shall unsatisfactorily fulfill his obligations.

2. The awarding has been done according to the most advantageous tender principle, taking into account the relevant expertise of applicant evaluators.

3. Following the signature of the contract (December 2016), the evaluator shall submit a detailed work plan and timeframe.

4. A further important aspect of the quality management strategy consists in ensuring that all the relevant actors involved in the Programme implementation are informed on evaluation outcomes. The MC is informed on the evaluation products, its reports and thematic evaluations. After each evaluation the MA, in coordination, where the case, with the Working Group on Evaluation, may draw up a list of suggestions aimed at improving the performance of the cooperation programme and establish deadlines and tasks according to the contract; the MC has in turn the opportunity to take a decision with respect to the adjustments proposed by the MA.

5. The MA shall provide to the evaluator all the relevant information and data resulting from the monitoring system and all the other information needed, including those not public and confidential.

3. Planned evaluation

3.1. Subjects and rationale of the evaluation

The evaluations aim at improving the coherence, effectiveness and quality of the Cooperation Programme as well as its strategy and implementation in terms of specific structural issues characterizing the Programme area, while also taking into account the EU objectives of sustainable development and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The ongoing evaluation process is divided into the following components:

- Efficiency and effectiveness evaluations (Evaluation Reports), designed to support the supervision of the Programme;
- Strategic Impact Evaluations (Thematic Reports), designed to examine the performance of the Programme in terms of EU, National and Regional priorities;

The mentioned evaluations will be used as integrated management tools, providing useful indications for improving the mechanisms used to implement the activities, to identify corrective actions and pinpoint best/bad practices.

Efficiency and effectiveness evaluations - Evaluation Reports

These evaluations will aim at supporting the supervision of the Programme's progress in terms of implementation and results, including environmental indicators. They will formulate recommendations that could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions and suggest corrections and/or integrations to the implementation methods in place.

As required by Article 56 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, these evaluations will also assess the Programme's contribution to the achievement of the objectives for each Priority axis.

In particular, in compliance with Article 114, paragraph 2, of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, evaluation report will be performed to show the findings of the evaluations carried out during the programming period along with the main results achieved by the Programme.

Strategic impact evaluations - Thematic Reports

Strategic evaluations look at the entire range of policies and aim at investigating the impact of certain types of intervention and the Programme's contribution to achieving the main specific objectives and European benchmarks that are particularly relevant to the Programme area.

In accordance with Article 56 (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, at least once during the Programming period, an evaluation shall assess how the support from the ESI Funds has contributed to the objectives for each Priority (i.e. at the Priority axis level).

Two thematic reports are currently foreseen, as described in tables under section 3.5. and according to evaluation topics, evaluation questions and methodologies as described in table under section 3.2. The Integrated Evaluation Plan shall design evaluation objectives, fine tune evaluation questions and define evaluation methods analysing their feasibility.

3.2. Evaluation topics



Priority Axis I - Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area

Thematic objective 1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	
Specific objective	Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area
Result indicator	Increased level of crossborder cooperation among key actors of the Programme area
Evaluation topics	1.1. Interaction and connection between business sector (in particular SMEs) and R&I actors and players (Evaluation Reports) 1.2. Level of innovation and competitiveness of the area (Evaluation Reports- Thematic Reports)

The strategy of Priority Axis 1 aims to promote more effective investments in research, innovation and education and targets the strengthening of existing innovation potentials in all sectors - which attract foreign investment and capital flows - through a better cooperation among public and private actors of the R&D system. The Programme area reveals a strong R&D base and the presence of public and private actors committed in research and innovation activities. At the same time these actors still create weak linkages and short-term cooperation with the business sector, whose role is fundamental for the competitiveness and the growth of the productive system and for an innovation-friendly context. For this reason, the Programme will develop and implement strategies and actions contributing to increase the competitiveness on international market creating common comparative advantages for SMEs operating in the eligible area. The Programme will realize a deep integration with the guidelines contained in smart specialization documents of the three territories involved, promoting and multiplying business opportunities provided by “regional specialization areas” especially in the overlapping fields - sustainable living and working environment, smart and integrated approach to natural resources and traditional productions (e.g. Smart Agrifood, cross border circular chains) and smart factories.

Evaluation topic 1.1. Interaction and connection between business sector (in particular SMEs) and R&I actors and players

It is clear for the CP strategy that the role played by a more interconnected system of business and R&I actors can be pivotal to strengthen assets and foster opportunities in the whole Programme area. Interest and vision towards innovation and technology development are widespread at different levels, although they need an articulated set of relationships among the previously recalled types of actors to pave innovative paths, along with stronger links within the territory and a critical mass of actors actually involved in innovation processes.

Evaluation will focus on how co-financed actions are trying to improve the general innovation capacity of the area, both accelerating result oriented cooperation among actors of the innovation system - in particular private and public R&I actors - and providing favourable conditions for synergies between enterprises, research centres and the higher education sector and for the involvement of SMEs and stakeholders in R&I development and transfer.

Evaluation topic 1.2. Level of innovation and competitiveness of the area

The CP identifies the need of the area and of its entrepreneurial system to relaunch its competitiveness mainly through innovation and business investment in R&I, considering research and innovation as key factors for the competitiveness of a territory and as strategic features to improve SMEs' capacity to face global competition.

Therefore evaluation activities will pay specific attention to the support and development of clusters, networks, knowledge transfer and capitalization projects, development of tools and services (analytical tools, strategies, management tools, living lab, pre-commercial public procurement, etc.), best practices exchange.



Priority Axis II - Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans

Thematic objective 4 Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	
Specific objective	Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning
Result indicator	Level of capacities of the public sector in decreasing energy use
Evaluation topic	2.1. Common strategies for emissions reduction and green energy supply (Evaluation Report - Thematic Reports)

	2.2. An integrated sustainable transportation system and urban smart mobility systems (Evaluation Reports)
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A society making use of lower carbon economy is possible by promoting emissions cutting in an integrated manner in all involved sectors as well as by intervening in life attitudes. The Programme will face these challenges and needs developing and implementing place based low-carbon energy and mobility strategies contributing to reduce GHG emissions and to achieve EU energy targets. By capitalizing projects and past experiences it will be possible to improve local actors' - especially public ones - capacities of implementing established solutions. The strategy aims at introducing innovative solutions for energy saving, resources efficiency, better exploitation of local sources for renewable energy production, smart grids, etc. New solutions for urban smart mobility will be defined, fostering their sustainability, better quality, accessibility and innovation.

Evaluation topic 2.1. Common strategies for emissions reduction and green energy supply

The CP clearly expresses the need to improve place-based energy planning for optimizing resources consumption, exploiting local renewable energy potentials, mobilizing private investments, developing energy neutral communities. Emissions reduction must be promoted and fostered through integrated actions in several sectors, involving at the end also life attitudes.

In this perspective, the evaluation will dedicate efforts in assessing the impact of the CP's interventions supporting the implementation of energy saving strategies and action plans, the promotion of the use of renewable energy sources and the use of more sustainable transportation systems. Moreover, support to knowledge and experience exchanges concerning the planning, financing and implementing of emissions reduction actions will be taken into consideration, as well as local public actors' capacity building interventions in defining strategies and models of innovative solutions for energy saving, resources efficiency, better exploitation of local sources for renewable energy production, smart grids, etc.

Evaluation topic 2.2 An integrated sustainable transportation system and urban smart mobility systems

The CP highlights that the increase of CO2 emissions and the use of transports with a high environmental impact contribute to the worsening of air quality, in particular in urban areas, and to climate change.

Furthermore, in the CP area mobility system is strongly unbalanced towards road transportation and private mobility, causing pollution and affecting traffic flows management.

Fundamental evaluation objects will cover actions supporting the diffusion of sustainable public transportation systems, the definition and adoption of integrated, sustainable and accessible urban mobility concepts, of multimodality and smart services, also facilitating cycling and walking.



Priority Axis III Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources

Thematic objective 6 Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	
Specific objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conserving, protecting, restoring, and developing natural and cultural heritage - Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory - Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management
Result indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of Cross-border cooperation in the sustainable valorization of cultural and natural heritage - Level of preservation of status of habitats - Average quality of bathing waters
Evaluation topic	3.1. Protection of natural and cultural resources in the light of sustainability and efficiency (Evaluation Report - Thematic Reports) 3.2. Natural and cultural assets for a sustainable development (Evaluation Report - Thematic Reports) 3.3. Innovation and knowledge sharing for more efficient and sustainable waste and water management (Evaluation Report - Thematic Reports)

The Programme responds to the need for better protecting natural and cultural heritage and resources, also by promoting their sustainable use as a development asset of the area. The valorisation and promotion of natural and cultural sites as an attractive touristic destination will be pursued, also fostering the diffusion of ICT tools, new skills and competences, territorial marketing, branding and communication strategies, social media. Moreover, new jobs and growth may be created stimulating green technologies, capturing new demand for more sustainable products and services and at the same time improving environment quality with the help of innovative tools. The link between natural assets, managed by the several parks, cul-

tural heritage and tourism will be developed in a sustainable, environment friendly and resource efficient way. Projects in this Priority Axis will also aim at the conservation, protection, attractiveness and valorisation of material and immaterial cultural heritage. The Programme recognizes the importance to preserve biodiversity finding common approaches and sharing visions and tools for the protection of the habitats.

Evaluation topic 3.1. Protection of natural and cultural resources in the light of sustainability and efficiency

The Programme area, as underlined in the CP, holds relevant natural and cultural assets, with a wide diffusion of protected areas and valuable sites. Cooperation in this field seems to be crucial, in particular looking at shared resources, such as water resources or maritime and coastal areas or waste cycle management, where a common approach and a shared strategy are fundamental to achieve long-lasting objectives.

Supporting actions must then be evaluated in their capacity to impact on the development of common strategies, plans and tools related to conservation and protection of natural resources, on the definition of common tools, protocols and plans concerning the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, on the testing and implementation of integrated strategies, tools and green infrastructures targeting protected and environmentally highly valuable areas, including Natura 2000 sites. Promotion of sustainable and responsible awareness and behaviours will also be taken into consideration.

Evaluation topic 3.2. Natural and cultural assets for a sustainable development

Natural and cultural heritage represent an important factor for the attractiveness of the area and significant development drivers. Valorisation policies can be much more effective whereas their planning and implementation take place at cross-border level, particularly if they are able to involve public and private actors.

The evaluation process will therefore focus on actions promoting better coordination and interaction among stakeholders, the capitalization of past experiences and the exchange of best practices, the definition and implementation of innovative initiatives (ICT, mobile cultural heritage, creative industries, smart tools, services for target group carrying special needs, etc.) to stimulate a sustainable economic development and job opportunities.

Evaluation topic 3.3 Innovation and knowledge sharing for a more efficient and sustainable waste and water management

The CP describes properly the importance of waste and water management in the Programme Area. A relevance that is worth pointing out not only looking at the quality of life, but also by the perspective of economic and local sustainable development. In this filed, also due to horizontal and cross border benefits and threats coming from waste and water management, innovation and knowledge sharing can play a pivotal role, most of all in future perspective.

Processes, approaches and solutions must be planned, shaped and implemented coherently with the concept of sustainability in its proper meaning of “respectful use of resources” such as of “long-lasting”, and with a high level of integration among all the relevant actors (public, private, business, R&D, etc.).

Such focus on Programme supported policies and co-financed operations can lead to an extra boost to a widespread range of economic and business actors in the whole Programme Area.



Priority Axis IV Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance

Thematic objective 11 Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration	
Specific objective	Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges
Result indicator	Increased capacity of public authorities and stakeholders in cross-border cooperation and governance
Evaluation topic	4.1. Integration and cooperation among institutions and communities (Evaluation Reports - Thematic Reports) 4.2. PA and stakeholders capacity building (Evaluation Reports)

The Priority Axis 4 will enhance modernization and quality of public administrations and services benefitting from mutual experiences, shared knowledge and harmonized and coordinated practices among the population of the two borders. The Programme will also foster the cooperation between public and private sectors on some key issues (e.g. vocational education, energy, health technologies, etc.). Public administrations should put together available resources, even immaterial ones (competences, knowledge, open-data, technical support, etc.), to gain critical mass and achieve common results and targets. The strategy also aims at bring-

ing together citizens, public bodies, NGOs, minorities, companies and any other entities, in any combination needed for strengthening cooperation. The intent is to define common frameworks, joint strategies, networking tools concerning the aspects that are particularly sensitive to a more cooperative and cohesive approach between the two borders.

Evaluation topic 4.1. Integration and cooperation among institutions and communities

The CP correctly looks at cooperation between institutions and public administrations in the area - and not forgetting territorial stakeholders and communities - as a crosscutting issue with a strategic horizontal value impacting all Priority Axes, mainly for its enabling force to achieve different specific objectives. Closer integration and understanding of the legislative and governance framework, as well as of the administrative procedures and practices, in the two countries is a key success factor for the competitiveness of the whole programme area.

Therefore, the evaluation process will highlight contributions towards a closer correlation and consistency in the processes concerning regulatory frameworks, functional networks, common structures, coordination of policies and investments, agreements specifying modalities of the cross border cooperation, development of common approaches to common problems, exchange of experiences.

Evaluation topic 4.2. PA and stakeholders capacity building

PA and stakeholders capacity building is a main issue not only for the CP, but also - and much more relevantly - for the entire EU strategy towards 2020. In fact, for the first time in the EU cohesion policy, a specific thematic objective (TO 11) is dedicated to this topic. A more efficient public administration, along with an efficient and effective partnership with the territorial stakeholders, is considered a fundamental element for development. The Programme area is still characterized by some unbalances in its different territories, in particular in terms of public services - for instance those related to social inclusion and welfare policies - that must be tackled and overcome.

Evaluation will coherently pay attention to how the co-financed interventions support capacity building actions aimed at development of structures, systems and tools, and addressing the human potential and its training and development needs.

Cross-cutting strategic evaluation topics

Along with the specific evaluation devoted to the different Priority Axes, a strategic assessment will also be carried out, taking into consideration other issues, horizontally impacting all the Axes, in an overall, homogeneous and exhaustive evaluative perspective.

At this stage of collection of information and working in a strict coherence with the CP, it is possible to identify the following topics:

- integration in the whole strategy of the horizontal principles such as equal opportunities, gender equality, non-discrimination;
- information and Communication Technologies, for their fundamental impact on development in terms of innovation and knowledge sharing;
- SMEs as a special target of many actions of the CP, whose performance and behaviour have a deep impact on the cooperation strategy;
- integrated programming and management approach, in particular looking at other EU programmes investing in the Programme area.

Those topics will be addressed without further specific detail in terms of key-questions, but evaluation questions will be defined in a shared process involving relevant stakeholders and other actors providing a contribution to the topic itself.

Evaluation topics

The evaluation will assess the level of improvement of the CP management structure's capacity to guarantee a smooth programming, management, monitoring and control processes.

Evaluation will also focus on direct actions supporting potential beneficiaries for the definition of proposals, supporting beneficiaries for the delivery of projects, and those actions supporting the effectiveness of the CP management teams/Authorities.

Furthermore, the evaluation will pay specific attention to the quality and efficiency of the Communication Strategy complying with the objectives, actions and tools adopted, as well as to its impact in terms of increased programme knowledge complying with the specific indicators defined by the Strategy itself.

3.3. Evaluation questions

In the evaluation process, the definition of the evaluation questions plays a crucial role. In order to strengthen evaluation's capacity to provide well-founded and consistent information and analysis, the questions must be clear, relevant and focused: in this way, they can be actually useful to assess outcomes and impact of the policies supported by the Programme, as well as to provide decision-makers with updated orientations likely to promote policy and resources' reshaping.

Within the Evaluation Plan, some “key questions” have been identified, so that specific crucial evaluations referred to objectives and expected results can be carried out.

For each evaluation topic, key questions are declined in a two ways perspective: on the one hand looking at the project level, on the other considering the Programme level. Those questions are the core of the evaluation process, in a shared process - with the Managing Authority and the relevant stakeholders - of widening and deepening the terms of reference of the assessment, leading to a final set of questions founded on the available sources of information and data.

The Evaluation Plan sets out the principles and orientations that evaluation questions must fulfil to comply with its objectives and with the different relevant perspectives (Managing Authority/programming structure, beneficiaries and stakeholders):

- evaluation questions must be focused on different relevant actors, either individuals or organisations, in terms of impact on quality of life, quality of services, development and opportunities;
- evaluation questions must pay specific attention to innovative instruments - such as new services - and methods - such as new incentives - supported by the Programme;
- evaluation questions must be focused on processes, procedures and systems, using tools and methodologies of the evaluation not only to measure quantitative effects, but also to raise the awareness of the actual impact of the Programme on creating conditions for change and for local development. This will lead to the definition of questions concerning the reasons why some outcomes have been determined and some other not, detecting where monitoring and management systems have proved to be efficient and effective, even envisaging fine-tuning orientations;
- evaluation questions must be shaped to cover the life cycle of the Programme, identifying the system of cause and effect relationships bounding different evaluation steps and assessing the fundamental hypothesis of the whole programming process. Those are very challenging questions, with a high level of complexity, stressing methodologies and information sources, but also leading to the capacity of dealing with uncertainty and change.

Synthesis Table of Evaluation Topics, Evaluation Questions, Methodologies and Data*

*Further details on evaluation questions and methodologies shall be contained in the Integrated Evaluation Plan.

TO	Priority Axis	Specific Objectives	Evaluation Topics	Evaluation outputs	Evaluation questions	Methodologies	Data
TO1	PA1. Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area	1.1 Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area	1.1 Interaction and connection between business sector (in particular SMEs) and R&I actors and players 1.2 Level of innovation and competitiveness of the area PROJECT LEVEL	Evaluation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have integrated actions between SMEs and R&I players been launched/implemented? - Have stable clusters or networks been established among different actors? - Support from the CP to the adoption of shared models of knowledge exchange 	Desk analysis Time series analysis e trend analysis Inferential statistical analysis Factorial design statistical analysis Cluster analysis Focus group	CP monitoring data Statistical data
			1.1 Interaction and connection between business sector (in particular SMEs) and R&I actors and players 1.2 Level of innovation and competitiveness of the area PROGRAMME LEVEL	Second Thematic Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the level of innovation and competitiveness of the system increased (in terms of market share)? - Has the level of innovation and competitiveness of the system increased (in terms of services and tools)? 	Desk analysis Counterfactual analysis Scenario and what-if analysis	
TO4	PA2: Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans	2.1 Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning	2.1 Common strategies for emissions reduction and green energy supply 2.2 An integrated sustainable transportation system and urban smart mobility systems PROJECT LEVEL	Evaluation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the level of knowledge and experiences exchange concerning the planning, financing and implementing of emissions reduction increased? - Support from the CP to the adoption of shared strategies for emissions reduction and green energies supply, involving public and private actors 	Desk analysis Focus group Delphi surveys	CP monitoring data Statistical data Surveys

TO	Priority Axis	Specific Objectives	Evaluation Topics	Evaluation outputs	Evaluation questions	Methodologies	Data
			2.1 Common strategies for emissions reduction and green energy supply 2.2 An integrated sustainable transportation system and urban smart mobility systems PROGRAMME LEVEL	Second Thematic Report	- Did awareness on energy saving and new mobility models (including lifestyle choices) raise? - Support from the CP to the adoption of shared models of urban smart mobility, involving public and private actors	Desk analysis Counterfactual analysis Scenario and what-if analysis	
TO6	PA3: Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources	3.1 Conserving, protecting, restoring and developing natural and cultural heritage	3.1 Protection of natural and cultural resources in the light of sustainability and efficiency PROJECT LEVEL	Evaluation reports	- Support from the CP to the adoption of shared strategies, plans and tools related to conservation and protection of natural resources and habitats - Have integrated projects and tools targeting protected and environmentally highly valuable areas been developed?	Desk analysis Time series analysis e trend analysis	CP monitoring data Statistical data
			3.1 Protection of natural and cultural resources in the light of sustainability and efficiency PROGRAMME LEVEL	First Thematic Report Second Thematic Report	- Support from the CP to the adoption of shared strategies for the improvement of common resources management - Have the promotion of sustainable and responsible awareness and behaviours been strengthened?	Desk analysis Time series analysis e trend analysis	
		3.2 Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory	3.2 Natural and cultural assets for a sustainable development PROJECT LEVEL	Evaluation reports	- Support from the CP to the implementation of actions promoting better coordination and interaction among stakeholders - Have the capitalization of past experiences and the exchange of best practices been promoted?	Desk analysis Focus group Counterfactual analysis Scenario and what-if analysis	
			3.2 Natural and cultural assets for a sustainable development	First Thematic Report	- Support from the CP to the implementation of innovative initia-	Desk analysis Counterfactual	

TO	Priority Axis	Specific Objectives	Evaluation Topics	Evaluation outputs	Evaluation questions	Methodologies	Data
			PROGRAMME LEVEL	Second Thematic Report	tives to stimulate a sustainable economic development and job opportunities	analysis Scenario and what-if analysis	
		3.3 Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management	3.3 Innovation and knowledge sharing for a more efficient and sustainable waste and water management PROJECT LEVEL	Evaluation Reports	- Support from the CP to the adoption of shared strategies, plans and tools related to waste and water management - To what extent waste and water management has been impacted/changed by the Programme?	Desk analysis Focus group Counterfactual analysis Scenario and what-if analysis	CP monitoring data Statistical data
			3.3 Innovation and knowledge sharing for more efficient and sustainable waste and water management PROGRAMME LEVEL	First Thematic Report Second Thematic Report	- Have stable and shared models of waste and water management been developed? - Have shared processes and instruments of waste and water management been put in place at cross border level?	Desk analysis Counterfactual analysis	
TO11	PA4: Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance	4.1 Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges	4.1 Integration and cooperation among institutions and communities 4.2 PA and stakeholders capacity building PROJECT LEVEL	Evaluation reports	- Support from the CP to the implementation of capacity building actions aimed at development of structures, systems and tools - Support from the CP to the implementation of capacity building actions addressing the human potential and its training	Desk analysis Focus group Delphi surveys	CP monitoring data Statistical data
			4.1 Integration and cooperation among institutions and communities 4.2 PA and stakeholders capacity building PROGRAMME LEVEL	First Thematic Report Second Thematic Report	- Have shared processes concerning regulatory frameworks, functional networks, common structures, coordination of policies and investments, governance models been developed?	Desk analysis Focus group	Surveys

3.4. Methodologies

The new programming period 2014-2020 emphasises the role of evaluation as a pivotal feature in the creation of a systems of causal and circular relationships among policy evaluation, policy planning and policy reshaping. Following this concept and complying with the recommendations of the European Commission laid down in its guidelines, focus has been shifted from the assessment of the implementation of projects to an impact evaluation of the policies, meaning the capacity to identify their contribution to the improvement and development process backed by EU funds.

The strategy outlined in the CP Italia-Slovenia implies a complex and articulated system of actions, embracing different targets and different instruments, envisaging innovative solutions and scenarios, in an ongoing process of development. Such a complexity requests consistent and well-founded evaluation methodologies, providing the Managing Authority, the European Commission, relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries at large, with high-level quality information, following few strategic drivers:

- coherence, among evaluation tools/approaches and objectives;
- flexibility, shifting in progress the evaluation topics towards the actual need of assessment;
- feasibility, regarding quantity and quality of data, sources and systems of information.

With a specific orientation to the CP Italia-Slovenia, methodological approaches must be identified as follows:

- evaluation methodologies focused on the implementation, based on logical frameworks for the assessment of the coherence among strategic objectives, specific objectives, operational/implementing strategies;
- evaluation methodologies following the “Theory based evaluation”, mostly qualitative and process oriented, aiming also at identifying causal relations in the implementation flow;
- evaluation methodologies based on counterfactual analysis, involving different statistical methods and evidence-based benchmarking, also looking at alternative policy and decisions making choices;
- evaluation methodologies mixing and combining different approaches and methods, either qualitative or quantitative oriented.

In order to sum-up and to clarify different approaches and instruments, the following table describes how the above mentioned evaluation methodologies will be carried out.

Quantitative tools	Qualitative tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Descriptive statistical analysis ✓ Time series analysis e trend analysis ✓ Inferential statistical analysis ✓ Factorial design statistical analysis ✓ Cluster analysis ✓ Counterfactual analysis: difference in difference; propensity score; discontinuity design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus group ✓ interviews ✓ Participatory analysis ✓ Scenario and what-if analysis ✓ Delphi surveys ✓ Desk analysis

Considering the complexity of the evaluative approach and methodologies, the Evaluation design will dedicate a specific deepening, as outlined in the document in the following section, regarding the sources of information and data collection, in order to provide an integrated and interconnected process of assessment.

3.5. Data collection and monitoring system

The Programme recognizes the importance of having a well-functioning **monitoring system**.

The main source of information for the evaluations consists of the monitoring data, integrated with all data of periodic reporting system.

In addition to the Programme's indicators, reports can include additional elements (for example, for environmental assessments).

The MA is responsible for providing the evaluators with all the monitoring and supervision data, including the performance and results indicators.

The autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia has put in place a computerized management system for all its Programmes. This system manages the initial phases of implementation and obtains the information to be submitted to the evaluators regarding the management of single projects.

In particular, the monitoring data can be used as the main information basis for operative evaluations, allowing for physical and financial indicators (performance and results indicators defined by priority axis, specific objective and activity) to be tracked regularly.

The data can also be used as an initial or additional base for strategic evaluations, which involve an in-depth investigation of the information provided by the system. Additional information and data collected by the evaluator must be made available to facilitate subsequent studies and to stimulate the application of the most suitable research methods.

External experts might be asked to assist the Programme in the definition of these additional indicators. Moreover, they will have an "on-demand" role for the collection of qualitative information through, for example, questionnaires, analysis and surveys.

Additionally, relevant information could be also provided by the monitoring systems of both Member States, and, therefore, a cooperation with the key actors on this field, in Slovenia and Italy, shall be fostered.

3.6. Evaluation products and timeframe

Each product as listed in the synthesis table provided under § 2.6. "Timetable" is better detailed herein:

Table 1 - Integrated Evaluation Plan

Product	Integrated Evaluation Plan
Legal reference	-
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of the Cooperation Programme - analysis of the Evaluation reports and Thematic Reports of the Programme in the period 2007-2013 - analysis of policy for each Programme's NUTS III areas - analysis of interaction with other Programmes financed by Structural Funds (see section 6 of the Programme) - mapping of relevant actors - set of indicators for each Specific Objective and Investment Priority of the Programme - mapping of existing or acquirable relevant data (through monitoring system, official statistics, relevant studies and investigations, through surveys) - designing of evaluation objectives - fine-tuning of evaluation questions and definition of evaluation methods to be adopted and analysis of their feasibility
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of the Cooperation Programme - analysis of past experience of the Programme
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring system - official statistics - relevant studies and investigations - surveys
Timeline	- within 60 days from the approval of the Work Plan and annual updates by 31 December each year

Table 2 - Annual synthesis functional to the submission of AIRs

Product	Annual synthesis functional to the submission of AIRs
Legal reference	AIR - Article 50 and 111 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (from 2016 to 2023 included). The report pertains to the previous year. Final Implementation Report for the year 2023 and a synthesis for the entire period - Article 50(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013
Content	Collection of all key information required in the AIR (implementation of the Programme and its priorities, including indicators, reference framework, summary of the evaluations performed, etc.). Structure and content of the AIR must meet the requirements of Article 50 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.
Main topics	Monitoring the state of implementation with regard to the content and financial data: - in terms of specific objectives, on the basis of result indicators; - in terms of investment priorities, by using common and Programme-specific output indicators; - including the implementation of Technical Assistance. Information on the use of funds depending on the categories of intervention according to the CP, including support used for climate change objectives. There are additional requirements regarding the AIR, in compliance with Article 50(4) and (5) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 for Progress reports to be submitted in 2017 and 2019. In particular in 2019 shall be included “information and assessment of the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the Programme and its contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The evaluator shall give also a summarized contribution on implementation of the Programme strategy. Verification of performance of strategic measures and short assessment on S3
Methods	1. Evaluation of financial data (state of financial implementation); 2. Evaluation of data from monitoring system and referred to output indicators (state of operational implementation); 3. Evaluation of data on horizontal principles. The research and analysis of data on progress on the annual basis of output indicators are carried out in accordance with the Cooperation Programme.
Data	Monitoring system
Timeline	AIR: each year as from 2016, submission of the AIR to the EC; respectively by 31st May of the year following the financial year concerned, except in 2017 and 2019 (by 30th June); Final Implementation Report (financial year 2023): submission to the EC by 30 June 2024.

Table 3 - First extensive Evaluation Report (efficiency and effectiveness evaluations)

Product	First extensive Evaluation Report
Legal reference	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 Article 56(3)
Content	1st extensive Evaluation Report and summary:
Main topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme management and implementation • project application and selection procedures, • communication strategy • description of the I.T.I.as for implementation of ITI principles included in the Programme
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk-research - analysis of indicators - consultation with beneficiaries
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data from monitoring system - qualitative information on the implementation of the Programme
Timeline	By 30 May 2017

Table 4 - Second extensive Evaluation Report (efficiency and effectiveness evaluations)

Product	Second extensive Evaluation Report
Legal reference	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 Article 50(5)
Content	2 nd extensive Evaluation Report and summary:
Main topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of assessments and contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives/Intervention Plan goals • contribution of the Programme to the 2020 EU Strategy • description of the I.T.I. • assessment of the integrated use of ERDF resources
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk-research - analysis of indicators
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data from monitoring system - qualitative information on the implementation of the Programme - consultation with beneficiaries
Timeline	By 30 May 2019

Table 5 - Third extensive Evaluation Report (efficiency and effectiveness evaluations)

Product	Third extensive Evaluation Report
Legal reference	EU Regulation No 1303/2013 articles 50.5 and 114
Content	3 rd extensive Evaluation Report and summary:
Main topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of assessments and contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives/Intervention Plan goals • contribution of the Programme to the 2020 EU Strategy
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk-research - analysis of indicators - consultation with beneficiaries
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data from monitoring system - qualitative information on the implementation of the Programme

	-
Timeline	By 31 December 2021

Table 6 - First Thematic Report (Strategic impact evaluations)

Product	Thematic Reports (Strategic impact evaluations)
Legal reference	-
Content	Development of joint projects regarding environmental sustainability and upgrading of attractiveness of the area and valorization of territory thanks to the interventions cofinanced by the Programme
Main topics	
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk-Research research - analysis of indicators - consultation with beneficiaries - interviews - focus group - network analysis - nominal group technique - counterfactual analysis
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data from monitoring system - qualitative information on the implementation of the Programme
Timeline	By 31 December 2021

Table 7 - Second Thematic Report (Strategic impact evaluations)

Product	Thematic Reports (Strategic impact evaluations)
Legal reference	-
Content	ITI performance and/or institutional cooperation
Main topics	Analysis of the place-based territorial approach Valorization of the participative local development Capacity of networking Crossborder governance Pilot actions of institutional cooperation
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • desk-research • analysis of indicators • consultation with beneficiaries • interviews • focus group • network analysis • nominal group technique • counterfactual analysis
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data from monitoring system • qualitative information on the implementation of the Programme
Timeline	By 31 December 2023 (according to contractual terms and in line with EU Regulation No 1303/2013, articles 65.2)

Table 8 - Ex post evaluation

Product	Contribution on ex-post evaluation
Legal Reference	Articles 57 and 114 EU Regulation No 1303/2013.
Content	Effectiveness and efficiency of the ESI funds and their contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth taking into account the objectives defined in the strategy
Main topics	<i>Topics are defined by the EC and Member State</i>
Timeline	2024 (supposed by 31.12.2024) to the Member State