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Cross-border cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia

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*“Any cooperation, well-intentioned, with clearly defined principles in which everyone is equal, is positive. Cooperation bridges historical misunderstandings and conflicts between peoples suppresses unpleasant things of the past and develops a friendship. Projects that raise the standard of citizens in every respect from economic to cultural are welcome. There are certainly such projects and they should be supported and encouraged. Only malicious people can oppose cooperation and friendship between peoples, especially peoples of similar descent and common culture.”*

*Anon*



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## Abstract

The large differences in the degree of development of individual regions represent a serious obstacle to the development of the countries as a whole, preventing the achievement of interests within the country's development priorities.

Compared to other European countries, regional differences in the Western Balkans are the largest in Europe and show an increasing trend year by year. The catastrophic policies of the 1990s led to the emergence of new underdeveloped areas combined with the consequence of the transition process since 2000.

Cross-border cooperation, in which municipalities and regions of the former SFRY participated without the intervention of central authorities, took place with countries that had open borders (Austria, Italy). It was not developed between the municipalities at the northeastern and eastern borders and neighboring municipalities in Hungary, Bulgaria or Romania because of the closed nature of these countries. That is why there wasn't experience in these parts of the countries when it comes to cross-border cooperation.

In the Balkans, cross-border cooperation is not the result of an initiative from within, but rather of pressure and an initiative of the European Union, which financially supports their formation and consolidation to the maximum. The area is characterized by a burden and instability in the past. Both countries stepped late into the process of regional differentiation and the formation of the new as well as the confirmation of existing spatial and functional units. The formation, consolidation, and development of Euroregions would also be important for the optimal development of potentials contained in a geographical location.

In the meantime, cross-border cooperation has gained new meanings, contents, and functions, especially in the EU enlargement policy, and is a new development instrument whose potentials of the local community have yet to be met, valued and mastered. In any case, cross-border cooperation is an instrument of stabilization in the Western Balkans, closely linked and conditioned by the quality and content of numerous national policies, but certainly closely linked to regional development policy. Its reach and efficiency depend to a large extent on the territorial organization of a country, on the degree of regionalization and decentralization, and the extent to which cross-border cooperation as a development instrument will be used is conditioned by national and local institutional and administrative capacities.

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## List of abbreviations

AEBR	Association the European Border Regions
BiH, Bosnia	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CRO, HR	Croatia
BMUB	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
CADSES	Central Adriatic Danubian South-Eastern European Space
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
CEMAT	Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning
COE	Council of Europe
EC	European Commission
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EGTC	European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
SEA	Single European Act
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TA	Technical Assistance
TEU	Treaty on EU



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# 01

# introduction

## 1.1 Research Questions

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the development potential for cross-border cooperation in the Bosnian-Croatian border area under the current framework conditions. It examines which forms of cross-border coordination and cooperation of cross-border spatial development in the border region exist and which level of cross-border interaction has been reached. The focus is on a bilateral interaction in the period of the last 10 years. The aim is to identify factors that inhibit or favor cross-border interactions in order to develop recommendations for action that can be used for the future development of cross-border cooperation in the region.

The goal of this thesis is therefore to answer the following research questions:

- What are the development potentials of cross-border cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia?
- Which obstacles and success factors for cooperation in the Bosnian-Croatian border area can be identified?
- How is cross-border cooperation developing with current cooperation experience and what can be improved in the future?

On the other hand, information is prepared for the actors in practice and recommendations for the management of cross-border cooperation processes in spatial development are formulated. The goal here is to provide knowledge to support more successful and more continuous cooperation processes.

## 1.2 Methodology

Various methods have been used in different sections of the work. The work is basically divided into a theoretical, an empirical and a conceptual part.

First of all, a distinction must be made in quantitative and qualitative data collection, whereby combinations of both are possible. Qualitative data collection is characterized by principles of openness and flexibility. Due to the complexity of the issues and the aim of identifying the factors influencing the success of cross-border cooperation processes, qualitative methods appear to be more appropriate in this work, while quantitative measures are limited due to the small number of project, project participants, etc. (Gläser et al, 2004).

Since openness and flexibility in data collection are particularly important, this work results in a combination of different approaches. These are primarily qualitative, guided expert interviews with project participants, but also document analysis and participant observation.

### *Expert interviews*

For this work, the method of the standardized, guideline-based expert interview was chosen. Guideline-based interviews have the advantage of being able to ensure the connection to theoretical considerations on the one hand, but on the other hand to take account of the principle of openness. It is possible to deviate from the sequence of questions, to ask questions and thus to respond to the interviewee and the interview process (ibid.)

Expert interviews allowed access to non-publicly communicated or accessible information and provided insights into the personal experiences of people directly involved in the projects. Also, my own knowledge and personal experiences, which were conducted by the growing up in Bosnia, were very helpful and at the same time motivation for this work.

The preparation and structure of the guideline were based on the knowledge of the subject of investigation. In the present work, the five phases of project management formed the basis for the main questions of the interview guide. The five phases: initialization phase and idea development, planning phase, implementation phase, the final phase and post-project phase are combining over 60 qualitative and 30 quantitative questions intended to provide a better insight into the projects (see the interview guide in the appendix).

In this work project participants from the eight projects were selected and 18 experts were interviewed in 10 interviews. The expert interviews took place between November 2018 and March 2019 and lasted between 60 and 120 minutes.

### *Evaluation of the collected data*

The collected data from the expert interviews are first summarized for each project and then evaluated on the level of all projects. Thus, it is possible to first obtain assessments of the respective project and then project-independent assessments of the respective influencing factors.

In addition to the influencing factors and obstacles, the benefits of cooperation processes and the motivation of the participating actors to participate in the processes are also highlighted. These two general criteria have emerged as important during the data collection.

## **1.3 Outline of the Thesis**

The present work is an empirical case study. On the basis of the problems and questions presented in this chapter, the following chapter 2 discusses relevant theoretical explanatory approaches, summarized through the historical and systematical development of cross-border cooperation in Europe with the aspect of spatial planning in the border regions.

From this historical overview, Chapter 3 outlines the current state of knowledge with a detailed description of the border area, factors and conditions that influence cross-border cooperation, as well as the



barriers and challenges for cooperation. Besides that, spatial planning laws and regulations are presented for both countries, comparing the similarities and dissimilarities in that sense, forming the framework for further work.

Chapter 4 analyses the cross-border cooperation in BiH and HR within the EU funding programs. The chapter focuses on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and clusters available operational programs within IPA for both countries.

Chapter 5 provides a closer look at the case studies based on the experts' interviews. First of all, the starting point is presenting case studies (projects). This is followed by the evaluation of the case studies, in which the eight case studies will present comparative insights into the benefits and factors influencing cross-border cooperation. The projects are evaluated individually and then it is made a general evaluation summarized through the five phases of the project management circle. In the end, the recommendations are formulated for the management of cross-border cooperation projects and processes. This consideration initially includes general recommendations based on the identified influencing factors of the eight case studies.

The work concludes with a reflection in Chapter 6 where the general challenges of both countries for CBC are discussed with the spatial aspect relying on tourism development and environmental protection.



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# 02

## cross-border cooperation – motives and development

## 2.1. Historical Overview and European Borders

The boundaries represent the qualitative transition of one geographical phenomenon to another. The state border is a social fact in the form of an imaginary line, zone or front that divides the territory of the state from all others or from the open sea. The border represents the limit of state power and the instrument of the protection of sovereignty. It is not just a line that divides two countries, but also a contact zone. Borders are an important element of a modern world economy. They are also symbols of national identity. The border always split 'us' from 'them'. Modern state borders are like imaginary membranes. In the past, the boundaries were often broad zones or boundary belts without specific affiliation. They were usually deserts, forests, mountains or swamps. For example, the uninhabited 50-90 km zone, known for centuries, separated China from Korea. Settlement in that zone was punishable by death, only three times a year the farewells for residents of both sides were maintained at a certain point. This barrier was eliminated in 1870 (Ratzel, 1903 in Grcic 1998).

Throughout history, civilization boundaries have also often been defined. For example, the role of the defense line had the Chinese wall. The wall supposed to defend the population of the 18 Chinese provinces that formed the core of the state from the attack of the nomads but did not have the function of the state border (Nadilo, 2011). Stalin established the 'Iron Curtain' as a system of defense of the Eastern bloc in Europe, and East Germany (DDR) was erected by the Berlin Wall in 1961 at a length of 44.8 km, which were symbols of the 'cold war'. This process continued in the Balkans, where could be observed a very dynamic phenomenon of the formation of nations. Today's concept of boundaries is linked to the concept of the established boundary lines.

The semi-transitional borders dominate in the world: the boundaries of a unifying type were formed only in North America (NAFTA) and Europe Union (EU), where the integration boundaries (Schengen Agreement) arise. Boundaries among South Slavic countries have been changed from a unifying type (in the former SFRY) through semicircular to barrier type. Also, the degree of barrier can be interpreted through the different significance and meanings of the border, which means that borders should be explored as dynamic spatial barriers that are changing all the time. Therefore, when it comes to borders, three mutually connected factors should be taken into account: connections, space and time (Grčić, 1998).

The long struggle and efforts to create national states in Europe did not lead to the ideal distribution of territories among them. In Western Europe, international organizations such as NATO, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Benelux Economic Union, the Nordic Council and the EFTA have caused the slow elimination of barrier border functions. The Schengen Agreement abolished border control within the European Union.

The bordering regions in Europe were always less populated, relatively backward regions, poorly invested, without academic, research and cultural institutions, inhabited by low-educated peoples, etc. initially

due to fears of military aggression (AEBR, 2000). This phenomenon is undoubtedly seen in South Eastern countries, especially in Western Balkan countries.

There are two main factors regarding cross border cooperation related to the importance of the borders in Europe. First, Europe bears more than anywhere else the ‘scars of history.’ This phenomenon is a consequence of the recent history where borders were defined after the military aggressions. Second, the importance and permeability of European borders are evolving. Reducing the importance of national borders for European economic players was a key element of the European integration process, in order to create a large market in which national borders no longer stand in the way of free movement of population, goods, services and capital (Levrnat, 2007).

Today the modern international relations rest on three bases: communication, cooperation and integration. This implies not deleting, but defunctionalization of the border. The new type of ‘connecting borders’ refers to a poorly formalized and indirect, easily overcoming a spatial barrier, characterized by the effect of attraction, thanks to the benefits of localization and the overflow of investment capital on the other side of the border. The border, in this case, becomes a more attractive place of localization than a separation line. The processes of international cooperation, regionalization and transnational cooperation reduce the degree of barrier of the borders and suppress the role of politics in favor of the economy (Grcic, 2000).

## 2.2. Origins of CBC in Europe

For the local and regional authorities in Europe, engaging in cross-border cooperation meant entering the field of activities that have been reserved for the national level for a long time (Perkman, 2003). Cross-border cooperation supports the mutual connection of lower authorities in different countries that do not have legal power in accordance with international law and that’s why they are not able to conclude international agreements with foreign authorities. Although some of the cross-border initiatives date back to the 1950s, the greatest increase in the number of cross-border initiatives and regions across Europe took place in the 1990s. It can be said that today there are no local or regional authorities in border areas that are not involved in some kind in cross-border cooperation.

Throughout history, border issues in Europe have mostly been the subject of conflict and separation. Before World War II, bilateral cross-border cooperation in Europe was always a matter of relations between dominant states at that time. This situation changed after WW II when the first forms of cross-border cooperation between neighboring cities emerged. This form of cross-border cooperation after the war was the result of a policy of reconciliation in Europe with the aim of turning former enemies into new friends (Hebert, 2015). The first example of the institutionalization of cross-border initiatives is a cross-border cooperation between Germany and the Netherlands by establishing the first cross-border region, EUREGIO, in 1958. EUREGIO was a cross-border region on the Dutch-German border, in the Enschede region of the Netherlands and in the Gronau in Germany (Perkman, 2007). Since then,

Euroregions and other forms of cross-border cooperation have developed across Europe. In Scandinavia, cross-border cooperation was promoted by the establishment of the Nordic Council. The Agreement on Cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (Helsinki Treaty) in 1962 provided the basis for cooperation in the field of culture, social and economic policy, transport and environmental protection (UN, 1962).

Following this successful example of local initiatives aimed to improve cross-border cooperation, during the 1960s, many local cross-border initiatives in the border regions of Western European countries had progressed. At the same time, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) is formed, with the aim of coordinating various initiatives and exchange of experiences. AEBR is still the most important organization in today's cross-border cooperation in Europe. The 1970s were marked by the official recognition of the cross-border cooperation matter by the governments of the West European countries. In order to define the official framework for this new type of decentralized cooperation between local and regional authorities, the countries of Western Europe at that time defined cross-border cooperation issues through bilateral conventions and the establishment of the state commissions at the local level (AEBR, 2012). However, with the increase in the number of cross-border initiatives in Europe, there was a need to establish common standards and basic rules for the implementation of cross-border cooperation initiatives. Therefore, in 1980, the Council of Europe adopted the Madrid Convention, which strongly influenced the further development of cross-border cooperation in Europe. Since these initiatives and legal instruments have led to the development of basic principles and the conclusion of numerous agreements for cross-border cooperation, the issue of cross-border cooperation has been developing very dynamically during the 1990s and additionally changes technical and geographical scope, primarily due to the significant support of the European Commission through the INTERREG program (EC, 2015). With the fall of the 'Iron Curtain', the number of new countries on the external borders of the European Community has increased, which has led to the establishment of numerous new Euroregions in the new border regions in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Finally, the creation of a single European market has provided a new framework for expanding the scope of cross-border activities, and cross-border regions and cooperations have become, in some way, the path to successful European integration (Sousa, 2012).

Two transnational bodies - the Council of Europe and the European Union - were of main importance to improve the conditions under which regional and local levels of government in Europe intensified cross-border cooperation. While the Council of Europe was particularly active in improving the legal framework for cross-border cooperation, the EC provided significant financial support for cross-border initiatives (Perkmann, 2007). The Council of Europe played a major role in the process of developing cross-border cooperation in Europe in establishing legal instruments that enabled local authorities to carry out cross-border affairs in accordance with their national laws. Apart from improving the legal framework for cross-border cooperation, the Council of Europe played a major role in promoting cross-border cooperation and providing technical and legal assistance to cross-border cooperation actors.

The role of the Council of Europe in this area has been defined by the representation of regional and local authorities in this organization since 1957 within the Framework of the European Conference of Local Authorities, then the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, which was replaced by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) four decades later (COE, 2018). The first recommendation of the Council of Europe for cross-border cooperation was the starting point for the later Madrid Convention, with the idea to provide a form of cooperation adapted to the needs of territorial communities, the legal basis for the establishment of an agreement dates back to 1966. Before that, since 1950, this international organization has adopted a number of international legal instruments in the form of international conventions or protocols, mostly in the fields of human rights protection, economic and social rights, culture, but also local and regional administration. Efforts aimed at finding a single legal framework that would be applicable to all countries in the field, first of all transboundary, and then transnational and interregional cooperation, were the first results in the early 1960s and the late 1970s (COE, 1980). The example from the North European countries affected Western European countries and their officials to start formal meetings within already established bodies of the Council of Europe.

### *Madrid Convention*

European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Madrid Convention) was the first legal framework in the area of cross-border cooperation adopted on 21 May 1980. The adoption of this document was preceded by a proposal of the Committee of Ministers with the aim of promoting the cooperation of local authorities in areas recognized by national legislations, procedures and new regional cross-border committees and instruments appropriate for this area (COE, 1980). The Madrid Convention enabled the direct cooperation of border regions with respect to the territorial sovereignty of the countries of the border region, by setting up a full range of solutions for regional and local actors in their mutual cooperation. The convention for the first time enabled territorial communities to cooperate across national borders. However, the Madrid Convention could not provide legal conditions to regional and local partners because it does not define a list of appropriate forms of cooperation, nor any kind of usable instrument for developing those cooperations.

For years, a number of agreements have been signed regarding cross-border cooperation. One of them is the agreement between the Netherlands and Germany from 1991, which is an example of an interstate agreement that has enabled the most developed form of cross-border cooperation between the border authorities. Concerning the conclusion of international treaties, different autonomy of rights is governed by different European states. In federal states such as Austria, states (Länder) have the right to conclude international agreements, while in unitary states approval must come from a national level.

After a certain period, the Addition to the Madrid Convention was drawn up and has offered a list and explanation of the forms of establishing cross-border partnerships and models of interstate agreements. The proposed models of the agreement do not have neither contractual value, nor does the Convention



oblige the contracting parties to adhere to the lawfully apply. With this addition, countries and territorial communities open the possibility of choosing a wide range of forms of cooperation that are most suited to them.

Since its adoption, the Madrid Convention has been supplemented with 3 additional protocols. The changes made by these protocols were mainly aimed at overcoming the problem of state control in the process of cross-border cooperation, as well as limiting cooperation exclusively to neighboring, cross-border territorial communities.

Unlike the Additional Protocol, which enabled the establishment of a cross-border cooperation body between the countries, the Third Protocol provides a solution by introducing a comprehensive legal instrument that would enable countries to offer standardized legal documents to their regional and local authorities (COE, 2009). Through this protocol, cross-border cooperation has been significantly improved by removing obstacles resulting from different legal powers of regional and local levels of government when establishing companies, associations and other forms of grouping.

#### *European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions*

Following the adoption of the Madrid Convention, the European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions was adopted. This document was first adopted by the AEBR in 1981, to be later adopted by the Euroregion Pomerania (Poland / Germany) in 1995. The text of the Charter was further modified after a major wave of European Union enlargement to the east of 2004 (AEBR, 2011). According to the Charter, more intensive development of cross-border cooperation is necessary in order to use the broad spectrum of development opportunities on both sides of the borders in Europe in the most efficient way, as well as the potential for solving common problems. Cross-border cooperation, therefore, represents the first and most important task and political objective of the European Union, which needs to be implemented at the regional and local level and in partnership with the state authorities (AEBR, 2011).

### **2.3. Development of regional policies**

For over 50 years, the policy of economic cohesion within the EU and the reduction of disparities in the level of development between the member states has been one of its most important policies, which currently accounts for a third of the EU budget (Casalino, 2018).

The idea of European balanced territory and its development dates back to the creation of the European Community and the writing of the Treaty of Rome in the 1950s when the European Social Fund was established in 1957. Nevertheless, until 1975, especially financially, it did not attach much importance to regional politics. Only a large part of the financial resources have been invested in attempts to achieve the basic goal since then.

The purpose of regional policy, or one of the most important policies of the EU, is to provide assistance to less developed regions in order to reduce regional difference, to facilitate the development of the region and the restoration of old industrial areas, as well as the development of the entire territory of the EU by increasing cohesion and reducing disparities (EC, 2014).

Regional policy, as the second most expensive policy of the Union after the agricultural (38%) (EC, 2015) balances the negative effects in the field of the common market and monetary union or the implementation of some common policies that lead to faster development of the already developed Western European regions. Therefore, countries also have different levels of development in individual regions and therefore are unable to independently finance regions within national borders. The regional policy provides an opportunity for all regions within and across the borders of the European Union to develop, allocating optimal resources as a source and instrument for their development (EC, 2014).

Regional policy not only had (and continues to have) a major impact on the equality of quality of life in the territory of the European Union, but has already become condition of improvement and strengthening of cross-border relations in Europe.

Cross-border cooperation has become important, especially in the context of globalization, which complicates decision-making processes not only at the European level but also at the regional and local levels. Today, apart from the above, we are talking about the cross-border level of governance (Zumbusch et al, 2015). Cross-border and interregional cooperation represents an extremely important segment of regional development, and the EU was seen as an important factor in highlighting the importance of using borders, not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity, due to increased representation of local government units at the supranational level of the EU (Lechevalier et al, 2013).

EU funds represent the most frequently used instruments for the implementation of regional policy objectives. However, achieving regional policy objectives is also implemented through the so-called Community Initiative, launched by the European Commission. Over the past twenty years, through the implementation of several different initiatives - the most important of which is the Community Initiative INTERREG - cross-border cooperation has become a priority for the European Union. On the one hand, Community initiatives and programs have increased the possibilities for establishing such forms of cooperation and the formation of different forms of cross-border regions, as an integral part of the administrative framework in most of the border areas in Europe. On the other hand, programs supported by the Community have contributed to the institutional cooperation of under-developed regions (AEBR, 1997).

### *INTERREG*

Compared with the Council of Europe, the Community's activities in the field of cross-border cooperation are of a financial nature and focus primarily on the balanced development of the territory of the Union. Having in mind the peripheral status and the poor development of certain regions, the European

Commission launched a special Community Initiative INTERREG in the late 1980s, whose main goal was to promote cross-border cooperation in the process of economic development and the preparation of border regions for dealing with all benefits and obstacles in European integration process (INTERACT, 2010).

The formation of this initiative had a political context. Different aspects have significantly contributed to the further development of the EU's regional and cohesion policy during the 1980s, and influenced considerations on territorial and cross-border cooperation in Europe. Some of the major points were definitely the enlargement of the European Union to the poor Mediterranean, which further increased the disparities among the regions, and then the adoption of the Single European Act of 1986, which was the basis of cohesion and regional policy.

As a representative and protector of Community interest, the Commission recognized the need and benefits of the integration of lower levels of government, but also improved communication between the regional and local authorities of the Member States and Community institutions. That was one of the reasons why Commission, since 1976, began to develop the concept of cross-border cooperation in accordance with Article 10 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government putting the focus on cooperation between local authorities which will be recognized by the state (COE, 1985). International cooperation is seen as a right of local self-government, and the same applies to association, which creates a new institutional form of cooperation (in the form of associations, joint bodies or services), with the aim of protecting and promoting common interests. Accordingly, local authorities are entitled, under conditions that may be prescribed by law, to cooperate with the relevant local authorities of other countries (COE, 1985).

The specific of the Initiative is reflected in the fact that EU grants are not necessarily assigned separately to countries or regions, but could also be allocated by specific cross-border structures, such as the Euroregion (Perkmann, 2005). The basis of this initiative was the 1986 cross-border cooperation program, the Euroregion Meza-Rhine (cross-border program), which included five regions in the territories of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. The first more concrete steps, starting from 1988, since the introduction of the practice of a five-year renewal of the EU budget, resulted in the establishment of the INTERREG program. Previously launched projects aimed at solving structural problems in border areas were a good basis for the final launch of this Initiative in 1990.

INTERREG is part of the regional policy of the EU and is the only financial instrument of the European Union that covers the areas of cross-border and transnational cooperation and spatial planning, but it is also a key mechanism for implementing the European perspective on spatial planning. This is a set of financial programs supported under the European Union Structural Funds, above all, the ERDF established in 1975 - the sources of funding for the implementation of the regional and cohesion policy of the European Union. ERDF is the main instrument of the EU's regional policy, designed to reduce differences in development and imbalance between regions and to strengthen economic and social

cohesion in the EU. In the current period, the role of the Fund is reflected in support of cross-border cooperation programs focused on regional development, economic change, competitiveness, and territorial cooperation through research, innovation, environmental protection and risk prevention (European Parliament, 2019).

## 2.4. Spatial planning in border regions

Since the adoption of the Treaty of Rome, the goal of regional policy has been to promote balanced development in the different regions of the Community. The ERDF was created for this purpose (EC, 2018). The spatial dimension still didn't have a significant role in regional policy. The Single European Act (SEA), which came into force in 1987, strengthened the goals of regional policy (Article 130b-e) (European Community, 1987).

The EU Maastricht Treaty (The Treaty on European Union - TEU) signed in 1992 sets out new guidelines for a European spatial development policy and contains general provisions on the spatial development of the Union, with a main focus on 'creating a space without internal borders' and 'promoting economic and social cohesion' (Council of the European Union, 1992).

According to the European Charter for Regional/Spatial Planning of the Council of Europe (Torremolinos Charter), adopted in 1983, after more than 20 years of work on solving spatial planning issues within the European Conference of Ministers responsible for spatial/regional planning (ECMRP), the term 'regional/spatial planning' is defined as 'spatial expression of the economic, social, cultural and environmental policies of every society' (COE, 2010). At the time, all 22 member states of the Council of Europe managed to agree on this very wide concept. However, great differences can also be found today when interpreting the term 'spatial planning' or 'spatial development', that's why, since 1994, the EU Member States use a traditionally neutral and determined the term 'spatial development policy' in their policies (AEBR, 2000).

On the basis of the European Charter on Regional/Spatial Planning since 1989, numerous political discussions have been held in the spatial planning ministries and the documents of the European Commission Europe 2000 and Europe 2000+ have been developed. Also, European Union ministers responsible for spatial planning at the informal Council meeting in Leipzig in 1994 decided to adopt the so-called Principles of European Spatial Development Policy, which represents the political basis for future cooperation in spatial planning policy in the European Union (European Commission, 1999).

The first European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) plan was submitted in 1997 in Nordvik (Holland) to finally be approved at the informal meeting of ministers responsible for spatial planning in Potsdam, 1999, as a result of the discussion process throughout Europe. For cross-border cooperation, the measures and plans contained in Chapter 4 of the ESDP are of main importance (EC, 1999).

With the political objective of building a single European market in the 1990s, cross-border cooperation continued to develop throughout the European Community. Spatial planning plays an essential role in the effort to coordinate the development of cross-border regions.

As it was not possible to take into account the large number of European countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the ESDP, the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT), met with a decision to consider the Guiding Principles for a Sustainable Spatial Plan development of the European continent. This document was drafted in 1997 and it was adopted at the 12th European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning in 2000 in Hanover (COE, 2000).

After the integration of 10 new members from Central and Eastern Europe into the EU in 2004, the ESDP was the subject of discussion, revision and adaptation, which resulted in the first version of the European Territorial Agenda (TA) approved in Leipzig in 2007 during the German Council Presidency with three main aims (BMUB, 2007):

- development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural partnership;
- securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge;
- sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage.

During 2008, the Commission published the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. This document added a territorial perspective to economic and social cohesion, setting the goal for a more balanced and coherent development of the European territory (EC, 2008).

The new Territorial Agenda was adopted in 2011 under the name Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA2020) and is the result of agreements reached between the Member States and the European institutions with regard to territorial cohesion. The agenda defines six territorial priorities: promote polycentric and balanced territorial development, encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific areas, territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions, ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies, improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities, and enterprises and managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions (EU, 2011).

Over the years many different measures and methods of cross-border spatial planning were developed. Clearly, the spatial planning was always defined through appropriate legal levels of governance and therefore defined by state borders and its specificity is unique for each state individually. Taking into account that cross-border planning has to equalize all legal aspects, practices and cultures, this type of cooperation is very complex. In spite of numerous European efforts, there is still no competence for spatial planning at the level of the European Union.

The first significant legal and technical bases for cross-border spatial planning are defined in the European Regional Spatial Planning Charter, approved by the CEMAT at the Council of Europe during

their meeting in 1983 (COE, 1983) and Framework Convention on Improving Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, held in Madrid in 1981 (COE, 1980). Since then, many member states of the Council of Europe have concluded bilateral and trilateral agreements, applying the Convention's tasks over the past several years. Also, one of the important documents approved by CEMAT in 2000 was Guiding Principles for the sustainable spatial development of the European continent (COE, 2000).

As already mentioned, the European Commission supports cross-border cooperation since 1990 through INTERREG and other programs oriented to the EU's external borders, neighboring countries and those preparing their accession. This also meant a push factor for cross-border spatial development between neighboring territories.

The great importance of cross-border cooperation and spatial planning was represented by the bilateral and trilateral spatial planning documents after WW II between Germany and its neighbors. Thanks to these agreements, government departments, commissions for regional and spatial planning have been created in order to implement cross-border cooperation in spatial planning development.

Also, Euroregions have begun to develop specific spatial concepts influencing national and spatial planning on both sides of the borders and their cooperation with state institutions contributes to the development of the regional planning policy of border countries.

Cross-border successes are achieved primarily through partnership in the field of planning, through (AEBR, 2000):

- elaboration of cross-border guidelines with the participation of municipalities and regions
- development of cross-border nature reserves
- transport and communication planning at all European borders;
- development of cross-border facilities and services: industrial, commercial and technological parks, sewage networks, waste management, water and electricity supply;
- inclusion of spatial planning recommendations and objectives in the development of cross-border and action programs of regional policy, and in the Operational Programs INTERREG I and II-A

The request for inter-sectorial strategies of the European territory has grown in line with the territorial development of the European Union and has led to the development of the idea of the European Territorial Observatory Network (ESPON). Testing the Observatory later led to the first ESPON 2006 Program. The goals of the ESPON Program 2006 were mainly applied to research and studies on territorial development and spatial planning seen from the European perspective in order to support development policy. By providing the necessary research capacities for the applied research within ESPON, a special effort was made to build a scientific community that will support all processes in the field of European territorial development (ESPON, 2004).

ESPON 2013 Program - European Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion Observation, adopted by the European Commission on November 7, 2007. The € 47 million budget was partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund (75%) within Objective 3 for European Territorial Cooperation. The rest is funded by 31 participating countries - the 27 EU Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (ESPON, 2007).

Adopted by the European Commission on 12 February 2015, ESPON 2020 aims to promote and foster a European territorial dimension in development and cooperation by providing evidence, transferring knowledge and learning about individual policies to public bodies, and other actors involved in policy-making at all levels in 28 EU Member States, as well as 4 partner countries - Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (ESPON, 2015). The € 49 million budget was partly financed by the ERDF and rest is funded by participating countries.

Adopted in 2006, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) instrument has been established to facilitate cooperation between Member States, regional and local authorities and public law bodies. Due to its independent legal form, the EGTC instrument provides the basis for legal and planning security. The instrument thus also serves directly to implement the EU cohesion policy. The EGTC will enable partners to implement joint projects, exchange expertise and improve the coordination of spatial planning (Wassenberg et al, 2015).

It is also important to emphasize that cross-border cooperation does not only depend on favorable or unfavorable economic factors, but also on the 'environment' of the region. Cross-border cooperation can utilize its full potential and maximize the added value if peaceful coexistence on the borders is taking place, if the borders are not separation line, and if there is a socio-cultural environment that creates confidence. The full added value of cross-border cooperation in Europe has become noticeable only in an environment created after more than half a century of peace, European integration and open borders (AEBR, 2015).

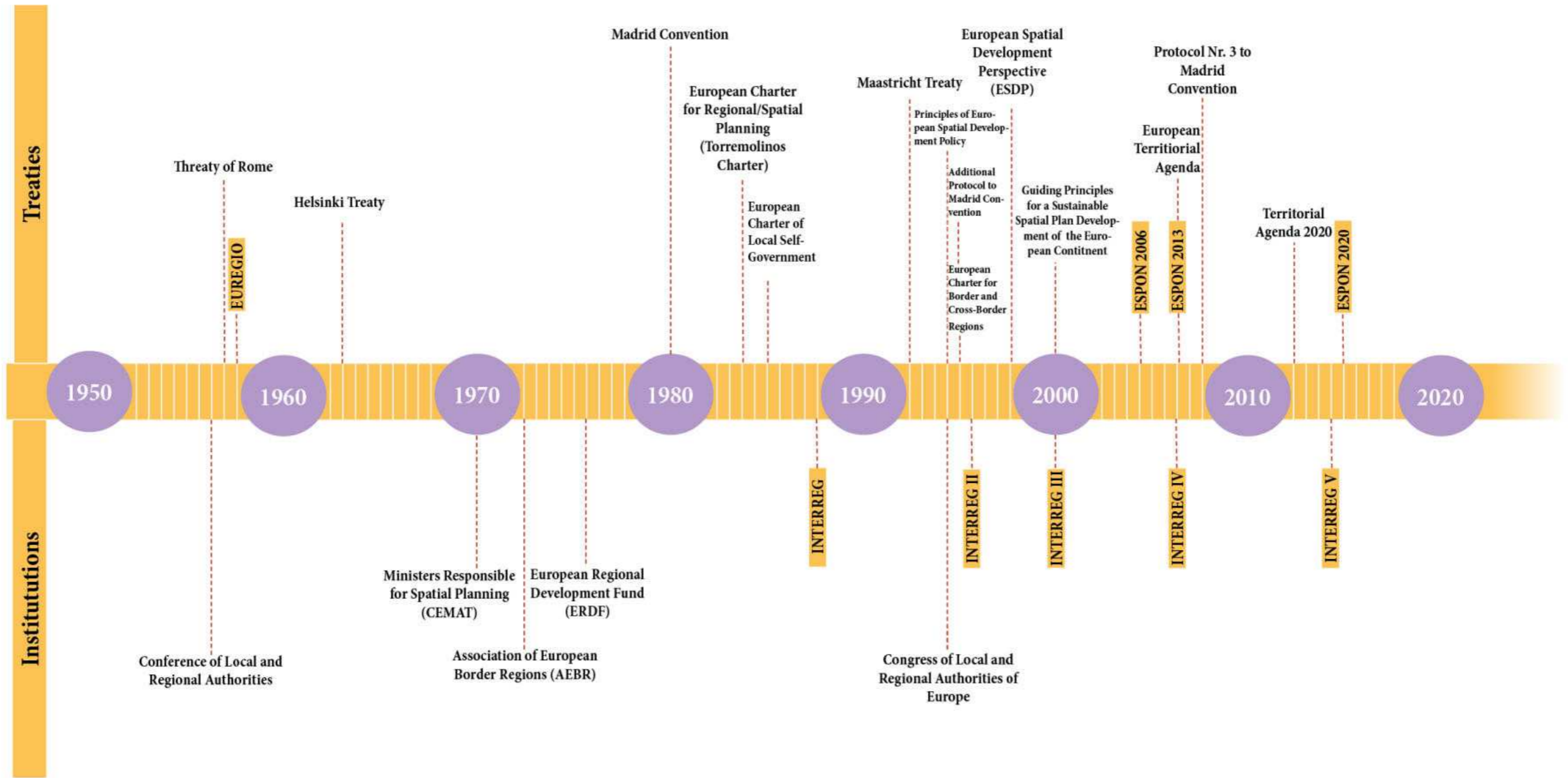


Figure 1 Treaties and Institution responsible for the facilitation of CBC in Europe in the last 60 years (own illustration based on official documents, 2019)





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# 03

## cbc between bosnia and herzegovina and croatia

### 3.1. Description of the border region

#### 3.1.1. Historical development

During the history, in a certain time, the states and people of the cross-border region belonged to the same country, and then they were divided by boundaries and conflicts in the following era. This has generated very powerful and interdependent connections between societies in the border region.

Croatia and sections of BiH have been incorporated into the Hungarian Empire in the 12th century, while other areas of BiH have been integrated into the Byzantine Empire. BiH became part of the Ottoman Empire until the 19th century after a brief period of independence under Kulin Ban from the 13th to 14th century. Croatia has been part of the Hungarian Empire and later Austria-Hungary during this long period of time.

Due to continuous military conflicts, migration of the local population and very different cultural and religious influence from both sides of the border, these 500 years have been very difficult for people in the border area. The scholars of this region began to promote the idea of united Slavic peoples at the end of the 19th century, which would eventually lead to the formation of the first Yugoslavia. After World War II, the Kingdom collapsed and in 1945 second Yugoslavia was created. The areas of today's Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were then defined and lasted until the beginning of the 1990s when the civil war started. After the end of the war, two of the six Yugoslav republics became separate countries - Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

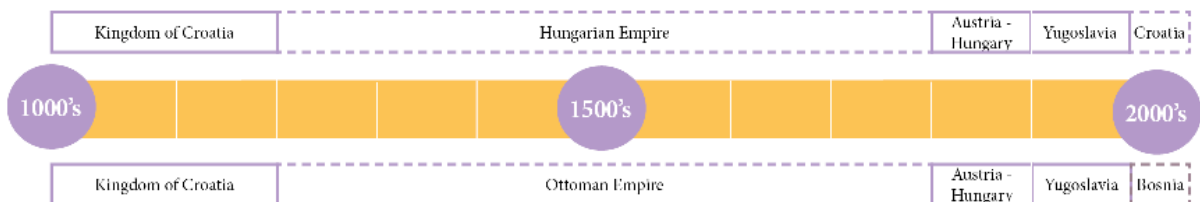


Figure 2 Timeline of the Croatian and Bosnian history (own illustration, 2019)

#### 3.1.2. Geographical position

The Croatian - Bosnian border region is characterized by different natural characteristics. In the north of the region flows the Sava River, forming the border between Bosnia and Croatia, and is characterized by a plain relief, the most suitable for agriculture. The central and western parts of the region, which are mostly in the territory of BiH, are characterized by mountains, with a high share of forest and recreational tourism. The natural region in the south has the characteristics of a maritime region, with tourism potential based on the Adriatic Sea and the valorization of cultural heritage.

The border between Croatia and BiH is almost 1000 km and it is the longest border between two countries funded by IPA.

### 3.1.3. Demography

Boundary area is characterized by large migrations inside and outside the region due to the 1990s war, which significantly changed the demographic structure. Today, Croats are one of the constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the necessity of cooperation between these two countries becomes greater. At the same time, the Serbs, who are also one of the constituent peoples in BiH, are also the largest national minority in Croatia, and their mutual ties need to be strengthened and supported. During the 1990s, large-scale emigrations of the population between Croatia and BiH took place on both sides of the border. As a consequence of this, today's demographic picture of the border area is significantly changed with regard to the one that existed before the war. These changes appear to be irreversible for the slow and difficult return of refugees. The most visible is the decrease in the number of inhabitants in the municipalities - most of the rural area - along the border

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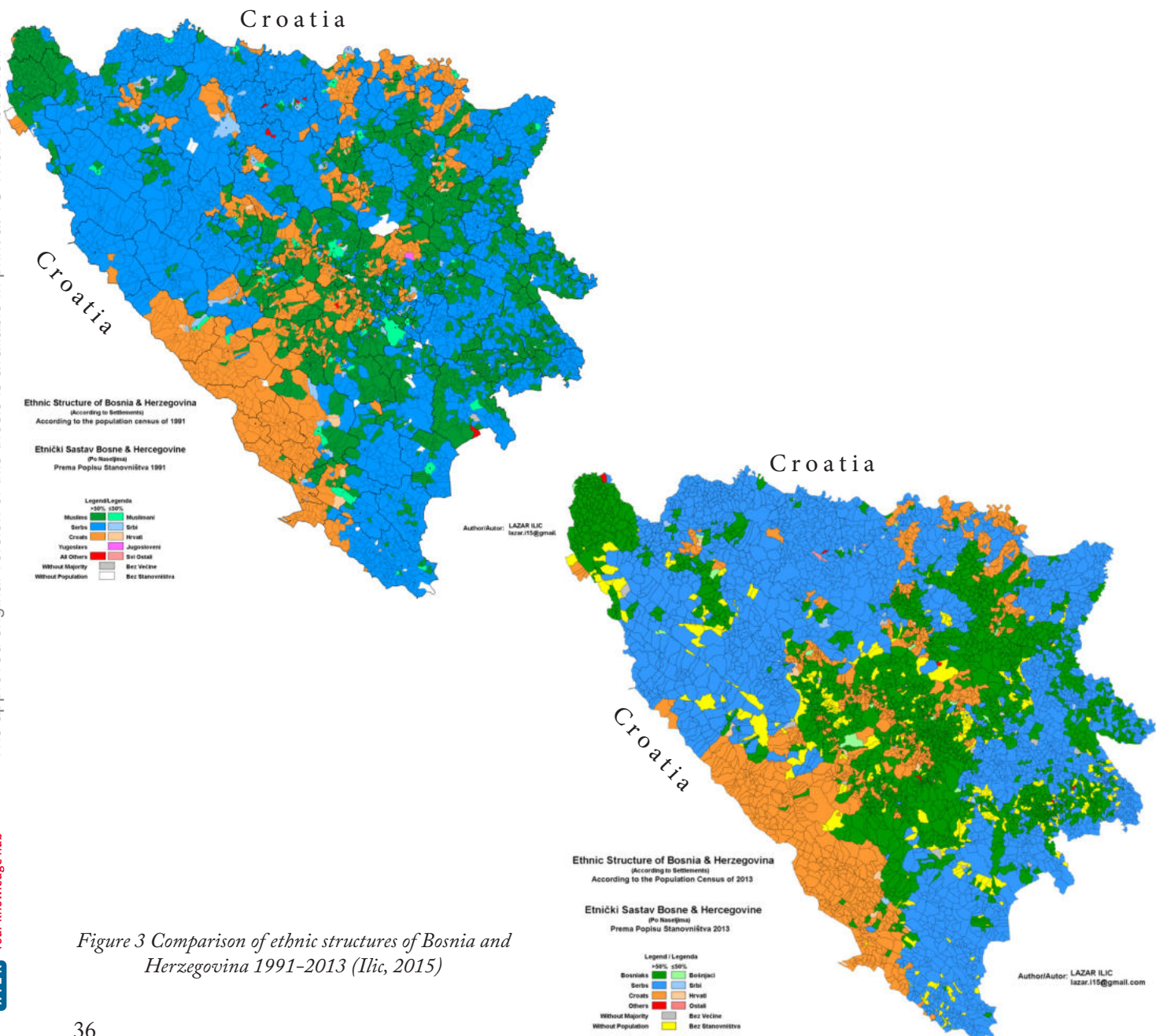


Figure 3 Comparison of ethnic structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991–2013 (Ilic, 2015)

The previous two maps show the share of three constituent peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the war (1991) and 20 years after, in 2013, when the first census was made in BiH after the end of the war in the early 1990s. Areas populated by Serbs, Bosnians, and Croats have remained largely the same as they were before the war, although they are more homogeneous today, especially when it comes to the border area.

Throughout history, Croatia has had a number of national minorities that have been assimilated and/or emigrated over time. The biggest difference is seen in the post-war period where Croatia turned into one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries with 90% of Croats.

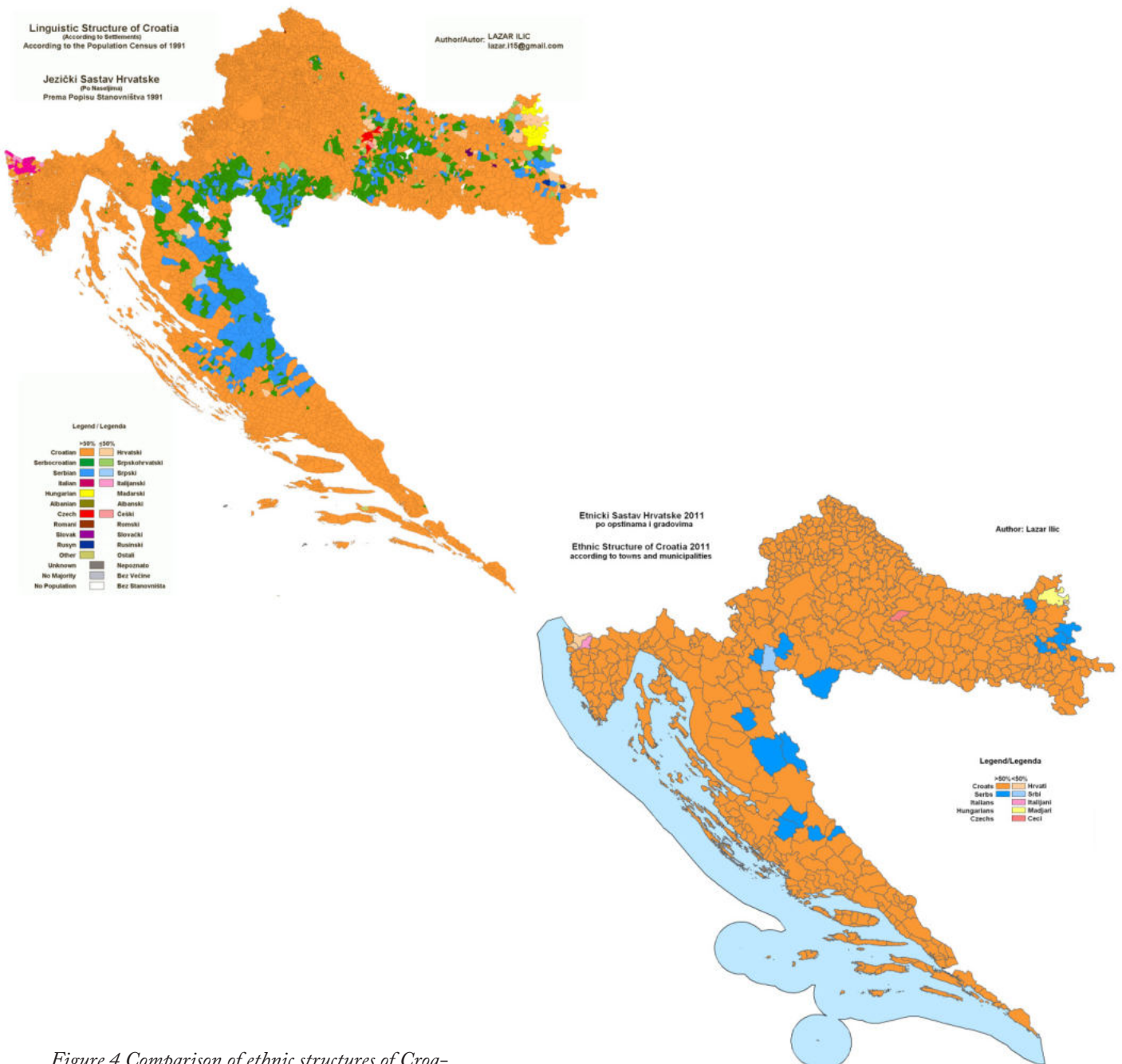


Figure 4 Comparison of ethnic structures of Croatia 1991-2011 (Ilic, 2015)

### 3.1.4. Infrastructure

Road density in the border area is below the national level. The roads are in very poor condition and the state does not put these roads as a priority. Major roads such as highways are regularly maintained, while local roads are not a national priority and therefore remain in poor condition for many years.

There are six airports within and near to the border area with headquarters in Split, Dubrovnik, Zadar, Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Mostar.

River traffic represents one of the greatest infrastructural potentials of the entire border area, given that the Sava River flows along the border between two countries, about 250km in length. Opportunities for integrating transport (roads, railways and waterways) in the area have been identified in the pre-war survey but have not yet been realized. Key river ports on the Sava River are in the Brčko, Sisak and Slavonski Brod. The potential of these ports was untapped during the 1990s and large funds needed to be invested in order for ports to have a European standard and cost-effectiveness.

Large settlements and municipal centers in the border area are covered by water supply systems. In addition to the water supply network in larger municipalities and settlements, there are numerous small capacity water supply systems in the villages. Suburbs and rural areas without water supply systems use alternative systems such as local sources and wells, cisterns, reservoirs, etc. The quality of the water supplied is not always satisfactory. The lack of water supply systems at all levels contributes to the poor living conditions of the population and represents a stall in economic development. In addition, since most existing systems are old, damaged by war and improperly maintained, water leakage is huge. There are numerous interruptions in water supply, especially during dry summer periods.

Sewage is regulated only in large cities and is often discharged without any prior treatment directly into rivers, streams or septic tanks, which is a huge environmental problem. Only a few cities have sewage treatment plants and thus treat wastewater. The solid waste management system is based on the collection, transportation and disposal of solid waste through municipal companies at municipal level. Solid waste is disposed of in landfills that often do not meet the minimum sanitary and hygiene standards. Waste management by compaction, recycling, ignition, etc. is very poorly organized or nonexistent.

### 3.1.5. Economy and labor market

The cross-border area still faces many consequences of war and serious economic and financial problems. Similar problems affect both countries, but the border area is further economically devastated because it is marginalized and remote from capital and major cities, which is a disadvantage, especially in highly centralized countries such as Bosnia and Croatia.

The wartime events and largely destroyed economic facilities and infrastructure represented the greatest difficulty in rebuilding economic activities. The state of the economy is typical of countries in transition from communism. Although privatization and reorganization have taken place in all areas, the main problems are high unemployment and weak economic reforms. Formerly successful industrial production has not yet reached the 1990 level due to war circumstances and most often privatization illegally conducted. The situation is further aggravated by the poor judiciary and administration system, especially with regard to property ownership.

In the post-war period, the main priorities were the rebuilding of the demolished state and the introduction of market reforms in its previously planned economy. Although agriculture was almost exclusively privately owned, the farms were small and inefficient. The industry was left with a large workforce, a legacy from the socialist economic structure of the former Yugoslavia.

Today, the main problems of the BiH and HR economy are a large budget deficit and a high unemployment rate. According to official data, the general level of economic development is extremely low compared to the EU average.

The regional unemployment distribution is very uneven, with the highest unemployment rates in rural micro-regions where it is often the cause of serious social problems. Unemployment is most common among unskilled workers, the elderly, young people and women. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the structure of employment has changed significantly as a result of structural reforms, leading to the decline of large traditional employers. Another important factor is the periphery or rurality of much of the region. The distance of the border area from the center and major cities make the region relatively unattractive to foreign direct investment. The employment rate in the service sector is very low and almost half of the employees work in the public sector.

### 3.1.6. Tourism

Due to its geographical location and its proximity to the fast-growing tourism sector on the Croatian coast, the western side of the border region has special tourist opportunities. The multitude of tourism potentials (for example mineral waters, salt lakes or medicinal mud) creates the possibility of various forms of health /wellness tourism with well-developed coastal tourism on the Adriatic coast. Tourism in the central and eastern continental areas is underdeveloped. The mountain areas have comparative advantages for skiing, hiking, biking, etc. Cultural tourism can be developed in some urban centers, given the rich cultural heritage and the wide variety of cultural events organized throughout the year. The potentials of agrotourism and ecotourism have not been fully realized yet. Religious tourism in the southern part of the BiH represents an additional opportunity to develop a joint tourism offer. The main obstacles to tourism development are poor tourism infrastructure (primarily inland areas), low level of market processing, insufficient exchange of information in the tourism industry and cooperative marketing, low level of networking between tourism operators and other sectors (especially agricultural).

### 3.1.7. Environment

From a natural, geographical and ecological point of view, the border area of the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite homogeneous. On both sides of the border, there is a lack of integrated and coordinated environmental protection and promotion of sustainable development, despite numerous opportunities to do so, for example through the development and improvement of special protected areas, special conservation areas, visitors' information systems, exchange programs, development of information systems and implementation of public-private partnerships for nature protection.

There are more than 200 protected areas on the Croatian side of the border, 6 of which are national parks. There is also potential in the BiH border area in this respect (Kozara National Park, Bardaca (Ramsar Area), Hutovo Blato, Blidnje, etc.). Furthermore, there is a natural and clear need for cooperation in the protection of the Sava, Una, Krka, Neretva and other rivers in the area.

Undeveloped wastewater systems are recognized as one of the major risk factors for rivers and groundwater. As a legacy since the war, there are still areas suspected of being mined in the program area.



### 3.2. Factors and conditions that influence cross-border cooperation

According to Knippschild, from the theoretical state of knowledge and from practical previous knowledge, nine influencing factors are derived that can explain the emergence and the success of cross-border cooperation in spatial development (Knippschild, 2008).

The following identification of influencing factors is certainly not a final consideration, but it can be applied to the Bosnian-Croatian border area. Also conceivable are exogenous influencing factors, such as hardly predictable events.

The analysis showed that all nine factors assumed to have an influence are indeed relevant but to varying extents in varying ways (cf. Knippschild, 2008):

- *Size of cooperation area and cooperation experience of participating cities and regions*

Analysis has shown that there is a clear link between the size of the area of cooperation and the experience of the partners involved, as well as the form and function of the cooperation. Border cities and regions with similar motives and interests are more likely to cooperate successfully if they are at a shorter distance than at a greater distance. Border cities in general often have more experience when it comes to border cooperation than some more distant cities that are not directly at the border and have not benefited much from such cooperation so far.

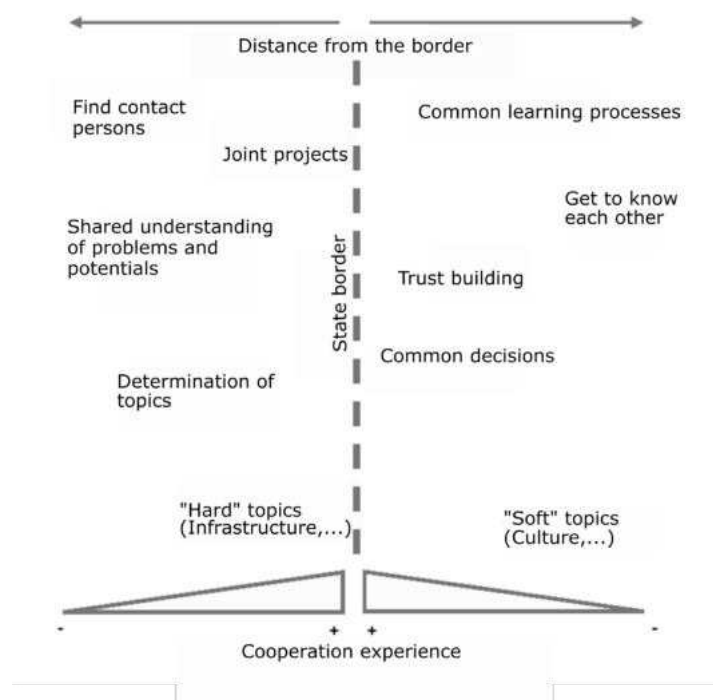


Figure 5 Theoretical assumption on the connection between the size of the cooperation area, the cooperation experience and the character of the cooperation (Knippschild, 2008)

- *The need for cooperation in cities and regions*

The need for cooperation may be quite clear between specific cities and/or regions. Such a concrete need is often integrated into certain development cross-border strategies of cities and regions, and in this case, the need for cooperation is quite unambiguous and it is only necessary to find adequate partners. However, unless there is a clear need for cooperation, it is important to find common fields of cooperation or to analyze the problems before the actual process of cooperation. Especially in conditions where such cooperation is supported by different EU funds. The potential of each region should certainly be harnessed.

- *Transformation processes, different administrative structures and the relationship between politics and administration in cities and regions*

The administrative structures of certain municipalities/regions are often unable to cope with the specific processes brought by cross-border cooperation. Since these are not routine processes, cross-border cooperation procedures may be hindered by policy gaps and political thinking in administrations as bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations. Uncertainties in the relatively young administrative systems of Croatia and BiH due to ongoing transformation processes are making the situation even more complicated. This can lead administrations to avoid cross-border cooperation processes because of an abstract procedure and the risk of failure. Also, there are different rules in administrative systems that are difficult for partners to understand, as well as different administrative channels that can complicate the flow of information. Municipal development offices in both countries are already addressing these problems and have found solutions by involving external development agencies.

- *Transnational organizations and regulations*

Given that cross-border cooperation is outside the national context, certain transnational organizations and regulations should provide a minimum of security. If Bosnia is a member of the European Union as Croatia, it would be regulations and organizations at the EU level, which is not applicable in this case. For these reasons, there are specific contracts, agreements or organizations within cross-border cooperation programs that serve as an institutional framework (co-operation agreements and arrangements based on projects or regions and cities).

- *Languages and cultural differences*

Cross-border contexts can lead to significant communication problems due to different languages, lack of linguistic and intercultural skills. The great advantage, in this case, is the same language of communication between BiH and HR. Personal contacts as well are very important for building trust, and they are much easier to reach if there is no language barrier between people. Also, when it comes to cultural similarity or diversity, both countries have been parts of the same state for many years, sharing a common past and cultural heritage. Of course, it is hard not to mention the unfortunate events during the 1990s, when the two countries fought against each other and destroyed their relations, which are still even today difficult to rebuild.

- *Transaction costs, financial resources and funding*

The goals of cross-border cooperation processes are the acquisition of joint funding or the rapid initiation of joint concrete follow-up projects. Therefore, the resulting transaction costs, the financial resources of the cooperation partners and the funding to compensate for transaction costs play an important role in the success of cross-border cooperation processes.

Currently, cross-border cooperation between these two countries is taking place within the framework of an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) which replaces a series of European Union programs and financial instruments for candidate countries or potential candidate countries. Although there are certain smaller forms of cooperation between BiH and HR, the largest and most significant is certainly within the IPA.

- *Objectives, expectations and topics of the cooperation process*

Many factors influence the goals, expectations and expected outcomes of the process. These are also an essential factor in their success. The prerequisite for cooperation is the intention of the actors to achieve greater benefits in the long term through a coordinated approach with the partner as well as clear ideas and interests of their own. If there are interdependencies between cities and regions, goals can be achieved through a coordinated approach. However, goals and expectations in political processes are often not only different in a cross-border context. Often there are only fields of action. In some places, the motivation for cross-border cooperation processes is not technical interest, but the desire for personal profit. Particularly in large cooperation areas without an obvious need for cooperation, the search for common themes and the agenda-setting seems to be important. It should be noted that difficulties can arise here. The actors are not always willing to reveal their concerns, or there are already different interests in the selection of topics and conflicts of interest are starting to develop.

- *Participating actors, their competencies and human resources*

The central and most important influencing factors of each network are the actors involved, their skills, human resources and motivations. Although the composition of the actors seems to be of great importance for success or failure, this happens frequently in cross-border cooperation processes.

Despite all tendencies in spatial development, the public actors in public authorities and administrations still play the central role. Actors in public administrations need to justify why they engage in informal, voluntary processes. They are skeptical of innovative processes outside the compulsory tasks and routines since competitive situations can arise with politics and because the success of such processes is uncertain, whereas the risk of failure is perceived as high. Early and constant involvement by political decision-makers turned out to be important.

- *Design, management and moderation of communication processes*

In general, the form of the cooperation process, the frequency of the meetings, the moderation and the nature of the sessions seem to influence their success. It is important to have repeated interactions in order to build shared experiences, make long-term trade-offs, and build a long-term perspective.

When it comes to cross-border cooperation between the two countries, the number of meetings is

defined by the rules of the IPA program, but the number of internal meetings and the exchange of information should be much higher than foreseen by the program. The development of certain projects requires much more interaction of the partners involved, and therefore communication must be frequent and regular. Proper moderation of meetings, as well as the clear formulation of meeting goals, leads to the successful implementation of each project.

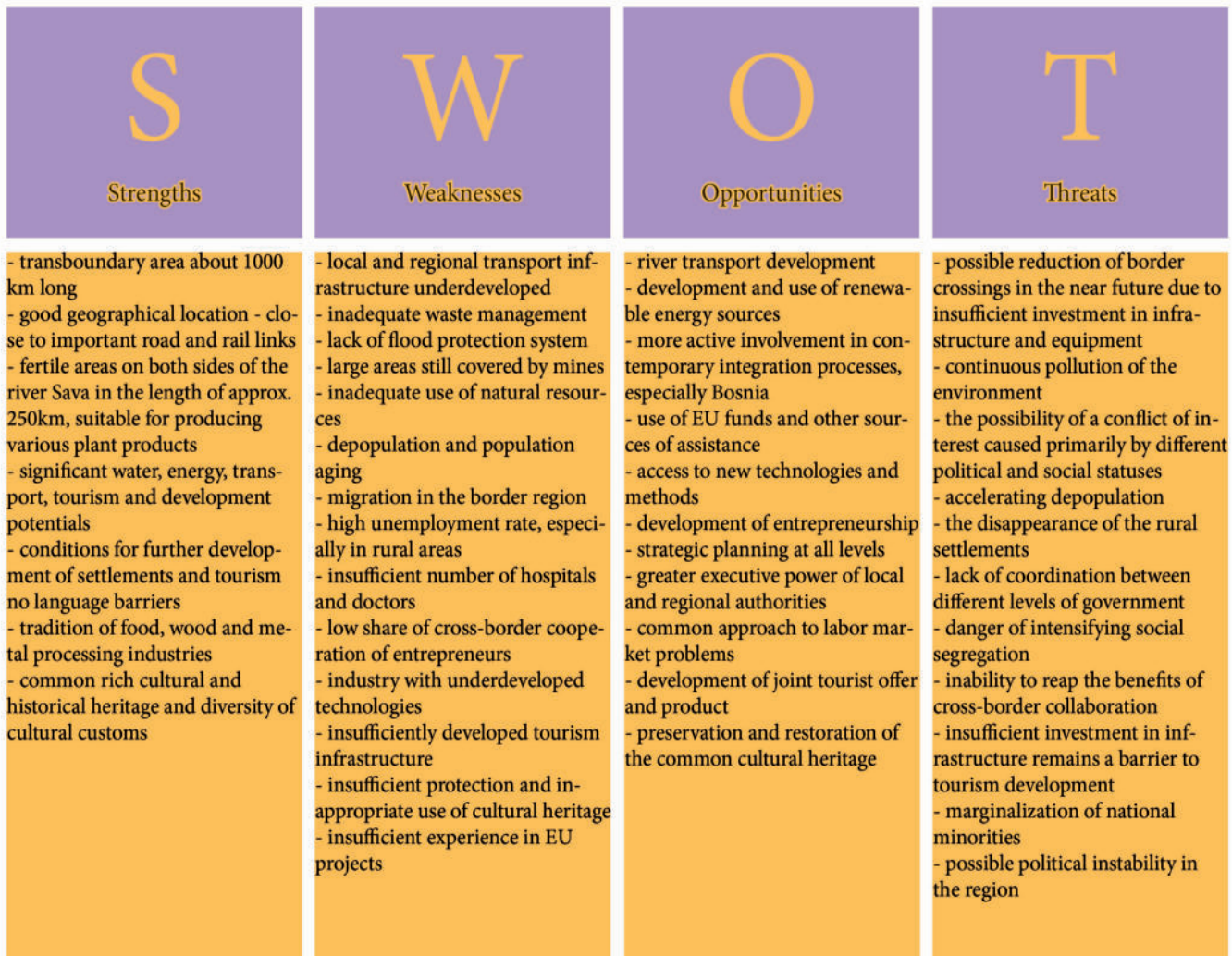
### 3.3. Barriers and challenges for cooperation

Due to the length of the Croatian-Bosnian border (almost 1000 km) and the heterogeneity of the border area, it is difficult to single out one specific issue common to all areas. On both sides of the border, the declining population continues to cope with the adverse effects of the war and the disappearance of the old industry and market that followed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Even Croatian counties located on the coast that benefit greatly from the development of tourism face tremendous difficulties in their hinterland, which is often economically separated from the coast by the former war zone.

The first cross-border cooperation program between the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was implemented under IPA I and was aimed at addressing these shortcomings by assisting the areas identified by the analysis as having real potential. The border area has indisputable natural and cultural potential, which are not sufficiently used to develop the local economy. The periphery of the area is emphasized by the decline in cross-border activities after the war.

The development of cross-border cooperation is hampered by a number of obstacles affecting the economic development of border areas and the achievement of the objectives of European economic, social and territorial cohesion. At the same time, there are obstacles to cross-border cooperation that are unpredictable, and they are often the result of activities by the Member States and regional and local stakeholders.

Often obstacles are the impossibility of implementing cross-border projects due to differences in legislative frameworks (in relation to transport, health, environmental protection, civil protection, etc.), institutional differences (different levels of territorial organization), insufficient legal certainty for cross-border facilities and common services, differences in economic development along the border due to different national conditions in terms of labor law, taxes and social security.



*Figure 6 SWOT Analysis of CB region (own interpretation based on official documents and data collected during research, 2019)*

One of the most important strengths of the cross-border area is the length of the border (almost 1000km) which offers cooperation in many different fields. Further, the geographical location is very favorable since the area is near to important European and regional roads and rail links. The Sava River flows 250 km along the border between BiH and Croatia, forming fertile areas suitable for the production of different plant species. Significant water, energy, transport and tourism potentials are something that characterizes the entire cross-border area. There are conditions for further development of settlements and tourism without language barriers, which is also one of the greatest strengths of this area. The whole border area has a tradition of producing local products, especially food, wood processing and metal industries. Great potential for tourism development lies in the rich cultural and historical heritage and the diversity of cultural customs.

In addition to many strengths, there are a large number and weaknesses of the cross-border region such as underdeveloped local and regional transport infrastructure, inadequate waste management, lack of flood defense systems, large areas still covered by mines, inadequate utilization of natural resources, de-population, migration, high unemployment rates due to marginality and long distance from capitals, insufficient coverage of health facilities and staff, low share of cross-border co-operation, underdeve-

loped and outdated technologies of industries, underdeveloped tourism infrastructure, inadequate environmental protection and inappropriate treatment of cultural heritage, and insufficient experience in development of projects funded by the EU.

But there are still many opportunities that could be exploited such as the development of river transport, the development and use of renewable energy sources, more active involvement in modern integration processes (especially BiH), the use of EU funds and other sources of assistance, access to new technologies and methods in all development fields, strategic planning at all levels, greater executive power of local and regional authorities, common approach to unemployment problems, the development of joint tourism offers and products, and the preservation and restoration of a common cultural heritage.

The potential threat to the cross-border area is certainly the possibility of reducing border crossings in the near future due to insufficient investment in infrastructure and equipment. Further threats are reflected in unprecedented and uncontrolled pollution of the environment, potential conflicts of interest caused by primarily different political and social statuses, accelerated depopulation, disappearance of entire rural settlements, lack of coordination between different levels of government, danger of intensifying social separation, inability to see the benefits of cross-border cooperation, insufficient investment in tourism infrastructure, and possible political instability in the region.

In order to optimize the use of EU structural funds, the Republic of Croatia, before joining the Union, established two statistical regions of the second level - Continental and Adriatic, in accordance with the Nomenclature of Spatial Units for Statistics and adopted the Law on Regional Development of Croatia. In negotiations with the European Commission and Eurostat, the Croatian government defined the division of Croatia into two statistical regions, instead of the former three (Northwestern Croatia, Central and Eastern Croatia and Adriatic Croatia).

Although in BiH there is an internal political agreement on the need to adopt the European concept of the region and macro-regional integration, the political actors have unfortunately not reached a political consensus on the principles of regionalization in BiH. Therefore, unlike other Western Balkan countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina have neither a regional development strategy nor a legal basis for regional development in line with European principles.

### 3.4. Spatial planning laws and regulations

#### *Croatia*

In the spatial planning system of the Republic of Croatia, there are two types of documents - documents for monitoring the state of space and the spatial planning documents. The spatial monitoring documents consist of a four-year spatial status report, containing an analysis of the state and trends of spatial development, analysis of the implementation of the spatial planning document and other documents, and an assessment of the situation and proposals for improving spatial development with an activity plan and proposal of spatial indicators for spatial planning for the next period.

The Law on Spatial Planning of the Republic of Croatia regulates the system of spatial planning through<sup>1</sup>:

- goals, principles and subjects of spatial planning
- monitoring of the situation in spatial planning
- conditions of spatial planning
- adoption of the Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia
- spatial plans including their preparation and adoption procedure
- implementation of spatial plans
- land development
- property institutes for land development and supervision

#### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The state should be the main carrier of spatial planning, as the highest level of spatial management. Given the complex administrative and political organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, spatial planning has been reduced to the entity<sup>2</sup> level. The Laws on Spatial Planning of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska define lower levels of spatial plans and their holders.

The Law on Spatial Planning of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina regulates<sup>3</sup>:

- land-use planning at the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the preparation and adoption of planning documents and their implementation, type and content of planning documents
- land use at the Federation level
- supervision over the implementation of planning documents relevant to Federation,
- supervision over the implementation of this Law, as well as penalties for legal and natural persons

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1 Law on Spatial Planning of the Republic of Croatia, Narodne novine» broj: 76/07, 38/09, 55/11 i 90/11(zakon.hr)

2 According to the Constitution of 14th XII. 1995 BiH was established as a state of three constituent peoples, Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs; it consists of two entities, the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska, and the Brcko District. Under the Constitution, entities are not states, but they have state functions and organization, and can establish international relations and conclude international treaties. The BiH Constitution establishes a decentralized state model with extensive entity powers and a complex decision-making model.

3 Law on Spatial Planning of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Službene novine Federacije BiH, br. 52/02 www.fbihvlada.gov.ba

The Law on Spatial Planning and Construction of the Republika Srpska regulates<sup>4</sup>:

- system of spatial planning, preparation, drafting and adoption of spatial planning documents
- location conditions
- land construction
- issuing building permits
- types and contents of technical documentation
- construction of structures and mutual relations between participants in the construction
- use and removal of structures
- legalization of facilities
- supervision over the application of this law
- competence and operation of the Chamber of Engineers
- other issues of importance for landscaping, construction land and construction of facilities.

The current situation is such that its main feature is, in fact, the absence of state laws or national spatial development strategies. The consequence of this situation is the absence of a ministry or other organizations responsible for spatial planning and management, which would moreover draw up regional development strategies, thereby defining the roles of cities and seeking to balance economic development.

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<sup>4</sup> Law on Spatial Planning of the Federation of Republika Srpska, ("Sl. glasnik RS", br. 40/2013, 2/2015 - odluka US, 106/2015 i 3/2016 - ispr., 104/2018 - odluka US i 84/2019) [www.paragraf.ba](http://www.paragraf.ba)



*Comparison between levels of planning in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Levels of planning	Croatia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	
		Federation of BiH	Republika Srpska
<b>State</b>	Spatial Planning Strategy of the Republic of Croatia Spatial Planning Program of the Republic of Croatia	Spatial Plan of Federation of BiH	Spatial Plan of Republika Srpska
<b>Regional</b>	County Spatial Plan Spatial plan of the City of Zagreb Spatial plan of areas of special features	Spatial plan of the cantons Spatial plan of areas of special features	Spatial plan of areas of special features
<b>Local</b>	Spatial plan of the municipality/city Urban/site plan	Spatial plan of the municipality/city Urban/site plan	Spatial plan of the municipality/city Urban/site plan

*Table 1 Planning levels, types of plans and relationships among plans in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (own comparison based on the official state documents, 2019)*

The levels of planning between Croatia and BiH do not differ significantly in terms of the types of plans and the relationships between the plans, but a significant obstacle is the entity division within BiH. Also, at the state level, Croatia has a spatial development monitoring program, while no such programs exist in BiH. Apart from the entity division, Republika Srpska is not divided into regions, and at this level, any form of cooperation is difficult, while the Federation and Croatia have regional units (cantons).

The use of GIS is also a major problem, as municipal and cantonal institutions, spatial planning institutes and federal ministries are not connected, and as a result, it is difficult to achieve efficiency in the operation of the spatial planning system in general.

*Comparison of Spatial Planning Laws in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina*

	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	
	<i>The Law on Spatial Planning of Republic Croatia</i>	<i>The Law on Spatial Planning Federation of BiH</i>	<i>The Law on Spatial Planning and Construction of the Republika Srpska</i>
<b>Area of regulations</b>	preparation and adoption procedure of spatial plans and their implementation	land use planning through the preparation and adoption of planning documents and their implementation	system of spatial planning, preparation, drafting and adoption of spatial planning documents
	property institutes for land development and supervision	supervision over the implementation of this Law, as well as penalties for legal and natural persons	supervision over the application of this law
	conditions of spatial planning	type and content of planning documents	types and contents of technical documentation
	adoption of the Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia	supervision over the implementation of planning documents	location conditions
	land development	land use	construction of structures and mutual relations between participants in construction
	goals, principles and subjects of spatial planning		use and removal of structures
	monitoring of the situation in spatial planning		legalization of facilities
			issuing building permits
			competence and operation of the Chamber of Engineers
			construction land other issues of importance for landscaping, construction land and construction of facilities.

*Table 2 Spatial Planning Laws and their regulations in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (own comparison based on the official state documents, 2019)*

As pointed out above, the planning system, as well as the state system of Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, is very complex, and for already known reasons the two roof documents come into force, one at the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and one at the entity level of Republika Srpska. Croatia and the Federation of BiH have spatial planning laws, while in Republika Srpska that law on spatial planning is integrated into the law on construction. All three laws regulate the preparation, adoption and implementation of spatial plans. They are also responsible for supervising the implementation of legal regulations defined by these laws. The Laws on Spatial Planning of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia regulate land use and management, while that part in Republika Srpska is not covered by the Law on Spatial Planning, which focuses more on construction. Also, the planning authorities responsible for spatial planning in the Republika Srpska have put their focus on the legalization of facilities, issuing the building permits and technical documentation, while spatial planning in its entirety has been 'put on hold'. In Croatia, the Law on Spatial Planning has begun to change and adapt to the laws at the European Union level, and from that point of view, it is more comprehensive and detailed, addressing many spatial planning issues that are not yet even a topic of discussion in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As already mentioned, spatial planning has been reduced to the entity level, and the FBiH and Republika Srpska are planning spatial planning issues through their own separate laws within their territorial competencies of regions.

A major problem for further development is the lack of alignment of strategic documents for key development priorities. Few cantons in FBiH have sectoral strategies for the development of particular areas and action plans, which unfortunately are not aligned with either the cantonal development strategies or the higher-level strategies. It can be said that there is currently no strategy in the FBiH to achieve faster growth and development of various sectors, although one of the key criteria in pre-accession to IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) funds was that all strategic goals are coherent with BiH's development goals. In other words, they should be clearly defined, contain action plans with defined financial and implementation timelines and stakeholders, and they have to have sufficient political support from key institutions in the implementation of strategic documents. After all, there is also the problem of the absence of mechanisms and methods for monitoring and evaluating strategic documents. In the BiH it is currently almost impossible to determine the extent to which some strategies have been successful or unsuccessful.



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# 04

## cbc in bih and croatia within ipa funding programme

## 4.1. IPA - The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

While the EU Member States have the possibility of co-financing regional development projects from the Union's structural and cohesion funds, special pre-accession assistance funds for development and cross-border cooperation have been set up for countries in the EU integration process.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is an EU financial instrument that supports the EU's enlargement strategy, which aims to provide assistance to candidates and potential candidates in the EU accession process (EC, 2018).

It is a unique EU pre-accession instrument for the 2007-2013 budget period (IPA I) and for the 2014-2020 budget period (IPA II), which combines previous pre-accession instruments: Phare, SAPARD, ISPA, CARDS, as well as a pre-accession instrument for Turkey.

The priorities of this program are to assist the beneficiary countries in meeting the political, economic and other criteria related to the adoption of EU legal regulations, building administrative capacity and strengthening the judiciary, as well as assisting countries in the process of preparing for the use of EU structural and cohesion funds after accession to the European Union.

Depending on the priorities of the program, beneficiaries may be regional and local government units, non-governmental organizations, research and development institutions and other non-profit institutions and organizations. The priorities of the cross-border cooperation programs include, inter alia, support for economic, social and territorial cooperation in border areas - creating a common economic space, stimulating socio-economic development of border regions and solving common problems in different fields.

### 4.1.1. IPA I (2007 - 2013)

During the first Programme period IPA had 5 components (Pejovic et al, 2011):

#### *IPA Component I - Assistance to Transition and Institution Building*

The first IPA component was designed to provide support within the procedure of approximation to the European Union, in meeting the standards and requirements that mean accession, harmonization of law and, in particular, potential constructing of institutions. This component also includes essential segments of the community acquis and allows the participation of a country that is a possible candidate for membership in EU programs and agencies. For the first component, the EU allocated approximately 4.6 billion EUR for candidate countries and potential candidates for membership within the EU.

### *IPA Component II - Cross-border Cooperation*

Funds underneath the second IPA component are used to reinforce cross-border cooperation through joint local and regional initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainable financial and environmental development in areas such as the environment, natural and cultural heritage, public health, prevention and the fight against organized crime, the provision of efficient and secure borders, and the introducing of small-scale joint actions related to local actors from the border areas. For the second component, the EU has allocated approximately 350 million EUR for candidate countries and potential candidates for membership within the EU.

### *IPA Component III - Regional Development*

The basic precondition for the use of IPA components III and IV is the purchase of candidate status for EU membership and the accreditation of the decentralized EU funds control system. Component III helps infrastructure projects in the environment, regional competitiveness and transport sectors. Bosnia and Herzegovina was now not able to use this component as a potential candidate for membership in the EU.

IPA III, IPA IV and IPA V components apply only to candidate countries. In this period, the IPA III component allocated more than 7 billion EUR for candidate countries for EU membership.

### *IPA Component IV - Human Resources Development*

The fourth component represents a program framework for the use of funds in the employment, education, social inclusion and integration sectors as well as strengthening the institutional capacity and performance of the state administration and public services. Bosnia and Herzegovina was not able to use this component as a potential candidate for membership in the EU.

For the IPA IV component for the period 2007-2013, over 1.5 billion EUR has been allocated to candidate countries for EU membership, Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey.

### *IPA Component V - Rural Development*

Through IPA Component V, the EU membership affiliated countries provided support in the process of adjusting the agricultural sector and rural areas, as well as in preparing for the implementation of EU legislation and management of the Common Agricultural Policy. It is intended for candidate countries and Bosnia and Herzegovina as a potential candidate couldn't use this component.

For IPA V component has been allocated to Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey around 2.5 billion EUR.



#### 4.1.2. IPA II (2014 - 2020)

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), as a support of the European Union, continued to function in the period 2014-2020, through the new Instrument IPA II (EC, 2014). Total IPA II budget for the period 2014-2020 amounts to 11.7 billion EUR. According to the adopted Regulation on the Establishment of IPA II, from the total amount mentioned above, up to 4% of funds will be allocated to cross-border programs between IPA II and the Member States, in accordance with their needs and priorities.

One of the most important changes relates to the structure of the IPA II program, which now includes policy areas, instead of the existing 5 components that were specific to IPA I.

The policy areas under IPA II are (EC, 2014):

- Reforms as part of preparations for EU membership and institution and capacity building
- Social-economic and regional development
- Employment, social policy, education, promotion of gender equality and human resource development
- Agriculture and rural development
- Regional and territorial cooperation

Assistance in all five policy areas will be implemented through support to reforms, law harmonization, capacity building and investment, while particular attention will be paid to good governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption and organized crime. These policy areas are very similar to IPA I components and are now available to all beneficiary countries irrespective of their status in the European integration process (candidates or potential candidates for EU membership).

The second change relates to the sectoral approach in planning the use of IPA II funds. The sectoral approach to planning is a practical approach to planning and management, which strengthens links between sector policies, budgets, activities and results. There was a need to introduce change in approach in order for the funds to be targeted at achieving goals in certain policy areas and not just toward a specific project. Instead of pre-existing independent projects that will continue to be possible, the projects will be grouped into sectorial planning documents. Sectorial planning documents should ensure that the proposed projects are mutually coordinated and embedded in the broader sector-wide strategy. Bosnia and Herzegovina has significant problems with this approach because this approach can only be fully implemented in countries with a well-developed planning system, strong institutions, non-politicized states, and where strategies are developed jointly with the participation of all relevant actors.

The next change brought by IPA II is the need to ensure greater complementarity with the loans of international financial institutions. EU pre-accession assistance through IPA II is only one of the possible sources of funding for financing development projects. Therefore, when deciding on funding priorities, it

is necessary to take into account the activities of other donors and international financial institutions in assisting countries. In this way, better complementarity between the EU and the activities of other donors will be achieved, which results in more effective and efficient use of the available financial resources. The fourth change refers to the introduction of the so-called 'sectorial budget support'. The projects will not be the only way to implement IPA II assistance, but the new budgetary period provides for the possibility of assistance being targeted through the so-called 'IPA II sectoral budget support'. In the previous budget period, there was the possibility that the beneficiary country receives financial resources through direct budget support, but this option was only used in the case of Serbia, which, due to the economic crisis, sought and received budget support of 100 million EUR from the IPA 2009 program.

The last change concerns the introduction of the so-called 'awards for successful users of funds'. The Regulation establishing IPA II provides the possibility of giving an adequate amount of assistance that would remain available in order to reward beneficiary countries if it is determinate that the beneficiary country is making some progress in meeting the membership criteria or the effective implementation of pre-accession assistance, the beneficiary achieves particularly good results in relation to the concrete objectives set out in the indicative strategic documents for that country. If the progress of the accession process and if the achieved results by the beneficiaries of the funds are significantly below the agreed levels, the European Commission will adjust the proportional allocations for each country in accordance with the defined indicators and the defined country success assessment procedure.

## 4.2. Bosnia and CBC within IPA 2007 – 2013

### *IPA Cross-border cooperation programme Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia*

The cross-border program between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina <sup>5</sup> was implemented during the period from 2007-2013. The program supported component II (cross-border cooperation) of the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), within which 6 million EUR has been allocated for the first three years. An additional minimum of 1 million EUR is provided by partner countries, mainly from program users in the border area.

The border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina extends to nearly 1,000 km. In spite of the heterogeneousness of this space, border areas face similar challenges: economic decline related to the collapse of traditional industries after the break-up of Yugoslavia, major migration during and after the war, with permanent depopulation that continues to the current day and great damage to public infrastructure that has solely been partially corrected through insufficient investments. The traditional economic and cultural links between the two countries within the border space were also severely suffering from the conflict and its consequences. Therefore, this program was meant to revive the previous cross-border links and activities by solving a number of common socio-economic and environmental issues.

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<sup>5</sup> Operational Cross-Border Programme Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007 - 2013, Program Summary, Revised Version dated on 30th November 2011

The target program area of this program was the area adjacent to the border of the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The program area consists of 'eligible' and 'associated' areas.

The eligible area includes 9 Croatian (identical NUTS 3 classification) counties (total area of 30.882 km<sup>2</sup> and 1,623,886 inhabitants) and 95 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (total area of 38.022 km<sup>2</sup> and 2.770.945 inhabitants). The associated area includes additional 5 Croatian (identical NUTS 3 classification) counties (total area of 15.266 km<sup>2</sup> and 854.926 inhabitants) and 16 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (total area of 5.296 km<sup>2</sup> and 571.661 inhabitants).

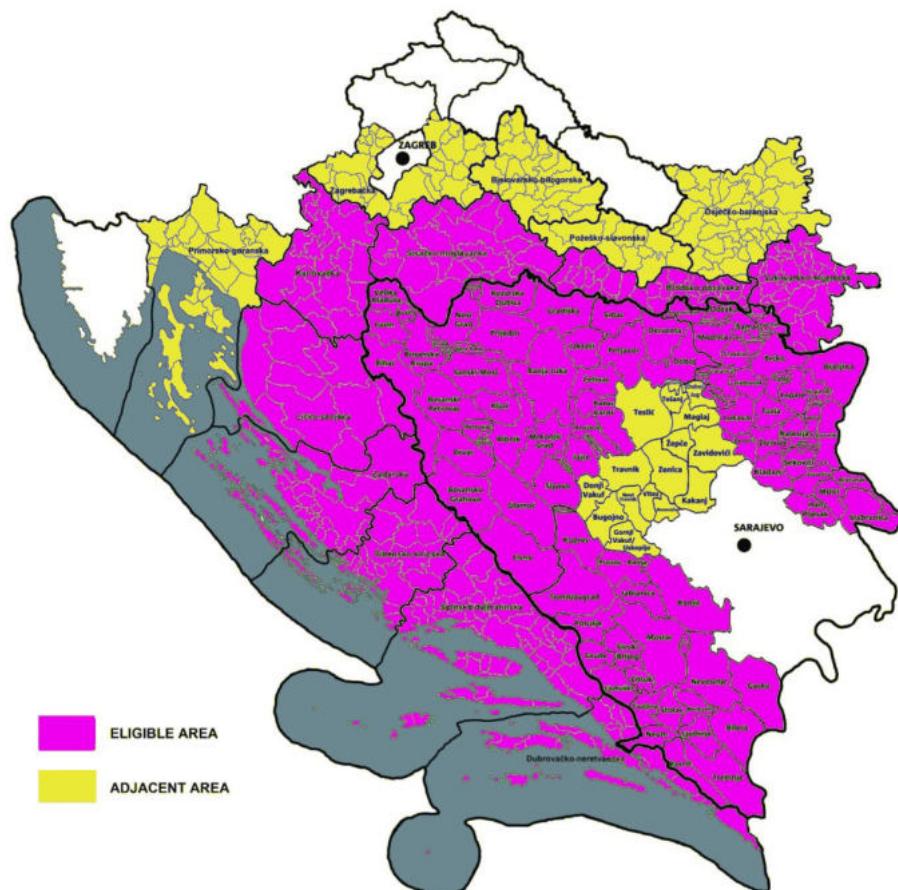


Figure 7 Map of eligible and adjacent area in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (EC, 2012)

Croatian counties bordering with BiH, Serbia and Montenegro had the first chance to apply for small cross-border cooperation projects within the second half of 2006 (New Partnership for Neighborhood). At that point, they had a general lack of knowledge and capability to design and manage projects, and local stakeholders had difficulties to find a partner on the opposite side of the border.

After a certain period and several implemented projects, it had been clear that counties bordering with member states have a lot of capability and greater knowledge of cross-border cooperation than counties bordering non-member states, whose expertise was minimal or not at all. Within the past programs, project beneficiaries principally met smaller projects. A relatively higher grant allocation, that was available under IPA cross-border cooperation programs, will represent a true challenge for several local stakeholders whose capability at that time was still low.

In the period up to 2004, the stakeholders from Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in 17 projects inside the INTERREG IIIA program, primarily with the contribution 'in kind'. Mostly they were only formally enclosed in cross-border cooperation projects with Italian leading partners, however, the expertise gained in that period and also the links established with partners in Italy were a decent basis for later cooperation.

The first real experience with the cross-border cooperation projects was obtained inside the last call for proposals for two new Neighborhood Programs, within which BiH participated in the period 2004-2006: INTERREG IIIA New Adriatic Neighborhood Program and INTERREG III B transnational Program for the Central Adriatic area, the Southern Danube Region and Southeast Europe.

The last call for proposals for CADSES projects resulted in two projects involving Bosnian partners with economic necessities for CARDS regional funds 2004-2006; while out of 93 projects approved within the New Adriatic Neighborhood Program, 28 projects enclosed partners from BiH with such requirements.

The number of applications submitted proves that there was a big interest of partners from BiH for this kind of Program. However, while understanding the requirements of the modalities of the New Neighborhood Programs, the standard and size of projects, and therefore the level of activities carried out in BiH, remained at a lower level.

Because of the length of the Croatian-Bosnian border and also the heterogeneity of the program area, it's difficult to differentiate the problems common to all concerned areas. However, the level of economic development is comparable throughout the whole program area. On each side of the border, the declining population continues to cope with the harmful consequences of the war and also the disappearance of the previous industry and market, which followed the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Even Croatian counties situated on the coast that have a major benefit from the development of tourism face terrible difficulties in their rural area, usually, the former war zone economically separated from the coast. The program space has undeniable natural and cultural potential, that doesn't seem to be sufficiently used for the development of the local economy. The periphery of the program space is emphasized by the reduction of cross-border activities after the war. Given the restricted resources available under IPA 2007-2013 and also the size of the program area, the main focus of this program was primarily to contribute to the revival of border links and activities within the program area by fostering cooperation at the local level in regard to common environmental and social-economic issues.

The goals of the program:

- Support the establishment of cross-border networks and partnerships and the development of joint cross-border activities to revitalize the economy, protect nature and the environment, and increase social cohesion of the program area,
- Build the capacity of local, regional and national institutions to manage EU programs and prepare them to manage future cross-border programs under Objective 3 of the EU Structural Funds.

Specific objectives:

- Improve the standard and coherence of activities inside the program,
- Improve the ability of national and joint structures to manage cross-border programs,
- Guarantee and distribute program information to national authorities, the general public and program users and to make sure that the availability of assistance is published in a manner that raises awareness and helps develop the Program,
- Improving the capability of potential beneficiaries, especially inside the program area for the preparation and succeeding implementation of prime quality program activities,
- Offer technical expertise for external program evaluations

The above-listed goals were achieved through 3 priorities:

#### *Priority 1: Creating a common economic space*

This priority may be a response to the difficult economic situation on each side of the border, which is characterized by a decline within the population, a high degree of dependence on the underdeveloped agricultural sector and therefore the SME sector. The tourism sector is well developed within the western part of the program space - near to the coast of the Adriatic Sea - however, is extremely underdeveloped in its central and eastern part. A number of the essential obstacles to the development of the tourism sector are poor tourism infrastructure (mostly in non-coastal areas), a very low level of promoting, also as deficient information exchange between tourism operators and different sectors of the economy (and especially agriculture).

The analysis of the program area has shown that important growth potential lies within the SME sector, in which research and development could be a source of additional worth for the economy. However, this potential remains incomplete within the presence of certain weaknesses that forestall the emergence and growth of SMEs, especially knowledge-based SMEs, but mostly contribute to the competitiveness of the region. Promoting entrepreneurship and supporting SMEs is crucial in improving the economic perspective of border areas.

#### *Measure 1.1: Development of a common tourist offer*

This measure supported the joint development and promotion of the tourist offer. It encouraged the development, improvement, and diversification of products and services in tourism, the integration of cultural heritage and also the environment into products in tourism, and also the joint promoting of

those products. This mobilized the productive, ecological and cultural potential of the affected areas and contributed to their sustainable development. The measure additionally aimed to boost the knowledge of workers in tourism, culture, and agriculture.

#### *Measure 1.2: Promotion of entrepreneurship*

This measure was created to strengthen ties between Croatian and BiH corporations and increase the involvement of regional development agencies and business support organizations in SME development activities. It promoted a typical understanding of cross-border regional economic opportunities.

The measure also aimed toward promoting entrepreneurship within the border area and supporting initiatives that promote the most recent technologies, innovation, and partnership between SMEs and research and development organizations within the commercialization of scientific innovations.

Also, the measure encouraged regular interaction between entrepreneurs from each side of the border through business-to-business 'networks and clustering; development of support services for small and medium-sized enterprises and common access to them; joint marketing and promotion on domestic and EU markets; exchange know-how; chosen investments in business infrastructure associated with small enterprises.

#### *Priority 2: Improving the quality of life and social cohesion*

The second priority was a response to the social and environmental issues of border areas. The priority was targeted on factors that contribute to the well-being, quality of life and social cohesion of local communities, as well as the development of cross-border relations.

There is a high level of unemployment, particularly in rural areas, and there's additionally a lack of active employment measures that might positively have an effect on this situation. The analysis of the situation found that social exclusion is one of the most threats within the program space. At the same time, the analysis additionally showed that education, health, and work are essential opportunities for cross-border cooperation.

In the environmental sector, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina face identical challenges and have the same opportunities. On each side of the border, there are important natural beauties - nature parks, unspoiled forests, and rivers. Areas have a high level of bio-diversity (including several rare species) associated with the flood plains of the Sava, Una, and Neretva. However, there's no coordination in environmental protection through the management of wastewater and there is no coordination in response to natural disasters like floods or fire extinguishing. Another common issue is that the unregulated disposal of waste that has negative impacts on the quality of life of the population and therefore the overall image of the complete region. The second priority was also the necessity to preserve the natural values of the program space in order to keep up their potential for tourism development and overall improve the standard of life within the border area.

### *Measure 2.1: Environmental protection*

The measure supported joint initiatives that contribute to the preservation and protection of the environment and natural diversity. The measure additionally supported the sustainable use of natural resources and also the use of renewable energy sources, as well as the joint activities that request to prevent or eliminate environmental degradation caused by economic activity.

### *Measure 2.2: Improving the availability of all services in the local community in the border area*

This measure supported the development of ‘people-to-people’ cross-border activities addressing the requirements of the local people within the fields of education and work, social and health care, culture, and sports. In particular, the activities enclosed underneath this measure are meant to facilitate access to basic community services for all citizens and groups within the border area.

It supported the creation or consolidation of cross-border networks and partnerships as a part of the activities to enhance the accessibility of all services within the local community in the border area, social cohesion and therefore the involvement of native authorities, civil society, and social partners. Initiatives promoted by this measure should also contribute to the development of cross-border relations.

### *Priority 3: Technical Assistance*

Technical assistance (TA) was used to finance costs associated with the preparation, management and conduct, information, promotion and training, development and operation of computer information exchange systems, the acquisition of necessary equipment, monitoring, evaluation and control of the program.

Technical help accustomed support the work of the two National operating Structures and therefore the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) ensuring effective and efficient implementation, monitoring, management and evaluation of the program. This was primarily achieved through the establishment and operation of the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and its two representative offices. The Joint Technical Secretariat was managed by the Program on a daily basis and was accountable to the operating Structures and therefore the Joint Monitoring Committee. Technical assistance supported actions that ensured the preparation and selection of high-quality program operations and the provision of data on program activities and achievements.

### *Measure 3.1: Support for the management and implementation of the Program*

This measure was supported by the work of the National Operating Structures, the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Joint Technical Secretariat and its representative offices and all other structures involved in the management and implementation of the Program.

### *Measure 3.2: Supporting information on the Program, the promotion and evaluation of the Program*

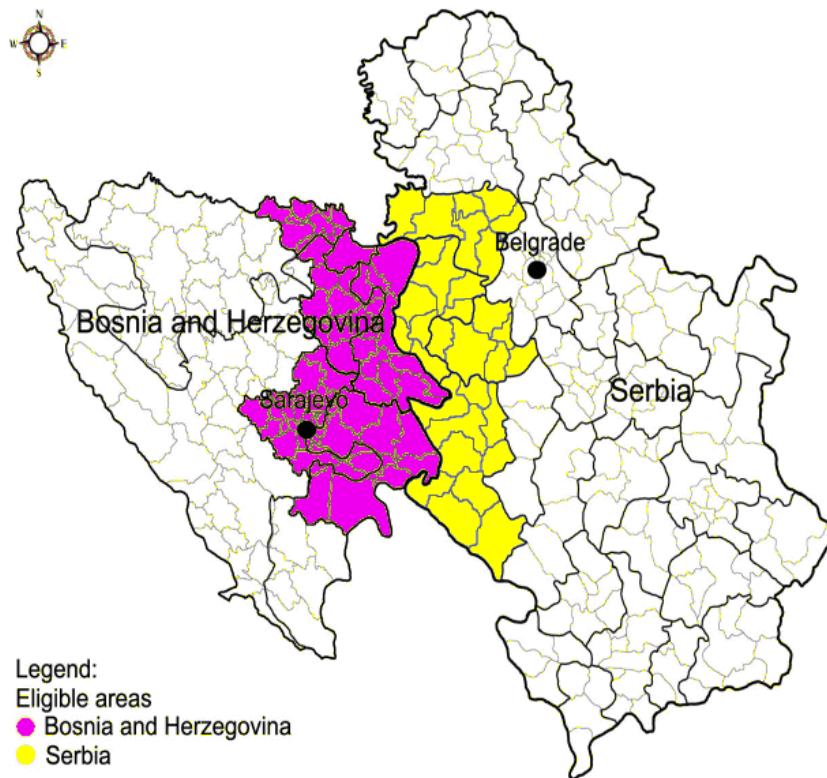
Second Priority Measurement Technical Assistance provided support for information on the Program, promotion and evaluation through activities such as the preparation, translation and dissemination of

Program and promotional information, including the Program website.

44 projects were funded under the programme for a total value of €12.6m. Economic development projects represented 62% of the total (€7.7m) including 12 tourism projects (€4m) and seven entrepreneurship and SME development projects (€2.6m). Environment and people-to-people projects accounted for 28% (€3.5m, 18 projects) and 11% (€1.4m, 12 projects) respectively of the total amount contracted (Georis et al, 2017).

#### *IPA Cross-border cooperation programme Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia*

The program area<sup>6</sup> covered an area of 32.982,01 km<sup>2</sup> and 2.967.023 inhabitants. The territory of Serbia covered by the program consists of 31 municipalities, while the territory of BiH covered 66 municipalities. The total length of the border between the two countries is 382.8 km, of which 154.3 km is provided by land, and 185.2 km are rivers (Drina and Sava). Along the border, there are a total of 8 border crossings.



*Figure 8 Map of the eligible area in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (EC, 2013)*

The overall goal of the program was to stimulate the economy and reduce the relative isolation of areas by strengthening common institutional networks and the capacity of human resources.

<sup>6</sup> Operational Cross-Border Programme Serbia – Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007 -2013. Program Summary, Updated Version November 2013



Priority	Measure
<b>Realizing social and economic cohesion through activities that promote physical, business, social and institutional infrastructure and capacities</b>	<i>Measure 1.1. Improving productivity and competitiveness of economic, rural and ecological resources of the program area;</i> <i>Measure 1.2: Initiatives in the framework of cross-border cooperation aimed at exchanging people and ideas in order to enhance the cooperation of professional public and civil society cooperation.</i>
<b>Technical assistance</b>	<i>Measure 2.1: Management and implementation of the program</i> <i>Measure 2.2: Informing, promoting and evaluating</i>

Table 3 Priorities and measures within IPA BIH-SERBIA 2007 - 2013

45 projects were funded under the programme for a total value of €8.8m. Economic development projects represented 38% of the total (€3.4m) including three tourism projects (€0.6m) and four rural livelihoods projects (€0.9m). Environment and people-to-people projects accounted for 33% (€2.9m, 10 projects) and 29% (€2.6m, 19 projects) respectively of the total amount contracted (Georis et al 2017).

#### *IPA Cross-border cooperation programme Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro*

The program area<sup>7</sup> covered an area of 25.457,98 km<sup>2</sup> and has 1.355.278 inhabitants. The territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina covered by the program consists of 53 municipalities, while the program in the territory of Montenegro covers 12 municipalities. The total length of the border between the two countries is 249 km. Along the border, there are a total of 7 border crossings.

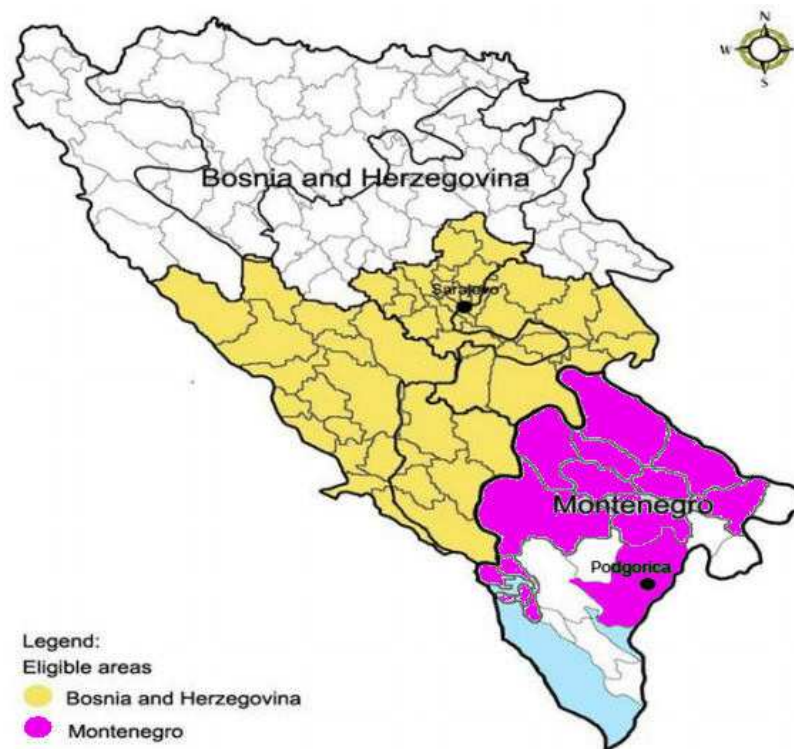


Figure 9 Map of the eligible area in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina (EC, 2011)

<sup>7</sup> Operational Cross-Border Programme Montenegro– Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007 -2013. Updated Version November 2011

Priority	Measure
<b>Support the creation of a common socio-economic environment for people, communities and economies of the program area</b>	<i>Measure 1.1: Incentives focused on cross-border economic development with an emphasis on tourism and rural development.</i> <i>Measure 1.2: Initiatives focused on improving the environment are primarily aimed at protecting, promoting and disposing of natural resources</i> <i>Measure 1.3: Social cohesion and cultural exchange through institutional and people-to-people interventions</i>
<b>Technical assistance</b>	<i>Measure 2.1: Management and implementation of the program</i> <i>Measure 2.2: Informing, promoting and evaluating</i>

*Table 4 Priorities and measures within IPA Bosnia and Herzegovina- Montenegro 2007 - 2013*

38 projects were funded under the programme for a total value of €6.8m. Economic development projects represented 53% of the total (€3.6m) including 11 tourism projects (€2m) and three rural livelihood projects (€1.3m). People-to-people and environment projects accounted for 32% (€2.2m, 19 projects) and 15% (€1m, 4 projects) respectively of the total amount contracted (Georis et al., 2017).

### 4.3. Croatia and CBC within IPA 2007 – 2013

#### *IPA Cross-border cooperation programme Croatia and Hungary*

The Croatian-Hungarian border area has in the past experienced several changes. However, since the end of the First World War, the area is relatively stable after the border between Hungary and its southern neighbor has been established. A larger part of the international border follows the river Drava. The total population of an acceptable border area is 2.302.552 inhabitants (2001), which are almost equally distributed on both sides.

The Hungary-Croatia CBC Programme<sup>8</sup> was operated between 2007 and 2013 partly as IPA Programme and partly funded by ERDF resources.

The overall goal of the programme was a development based on culture and knowledge through the successful management of natural and cultural heritage and intense socio-economic interaction between the two sides in a programmatically acceptable area.

<sup>8</sup> Operational Cross-Border Programme Hungary-Croatia 2007 – 2013, 2008

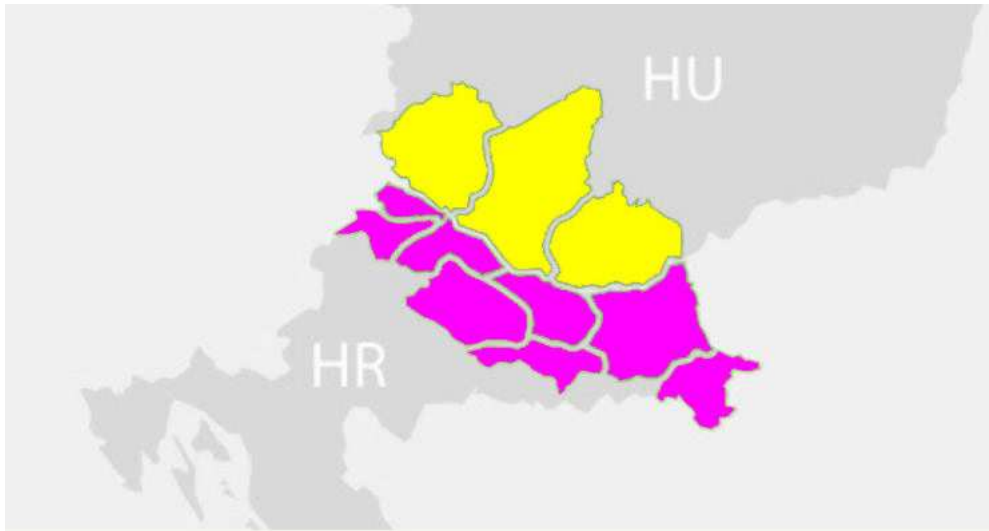


Figure 10 Map of the eligible area in Croatia and Hungary (EC, 2008)

Priority	Measure
<b>Sustainable development and tourism development</b>	Intervention 1.1: Sustainable development and attractive environment Intervention 1.2: Sustainable development of tourism in the area of the Mura, Drava and Danube rivers
<b>Development of economic cooperation and common human rights capacity</b>	Intervention 2.1: Economic cooperation Intervention 2.2: Development of common human capacities
<b>Technical assistance</b>	Assistance for covering the costs of running the programme.

Table 5 Priorities and measures within IPA CROATIA-HUNGARY 2007 – 2013 (own illustration based on Operational Cross-Border Programme Hungary-Croatia 2007 – 2013, 2019)

38 projects were funded under the programme for a total value of €6.8m. Economic development projects represented 53% of the total (€3.6m) including 11 tourism projects (€2m) and three rural livelihood projects (€1.3m). People-to-people and environment projects accounted for 32% (€2.2m, 19 projects) and 15% (€1m, 4 projects) respectively of the total amount contracted (Georis et al., 2017).

#### *IPA Cross-border cooperation programme Croatia and Slovenia*

The length of the Slovenian-Croatian border is 667.8 km and covers 31.453 km<sup>2</sup>. Very different topographic and climatic characteristics can be observed, as well as the structure of settlements and economic opportunities: the Mediterranean area, the Dinaric Mountains, the Alps and the Subalpine Mountains and the Pannonian Basin. Some administrative units stretch across several geographical units.

The strategic goal of the Program<sup>9</sup> was to provide support and promote the sustainable development of the entire cross-border area between Slovenia and Croatia. The objectives were achieved by increasing the competitiveness of key sectors and by supporting cooperation between different sectors (tourism, SME development), as well as the protection of nature and the environment and cultural heritage for sustainable development. The program area has a very important geostrategic position and acts as a bridge between central, western, and southeastern Europe.

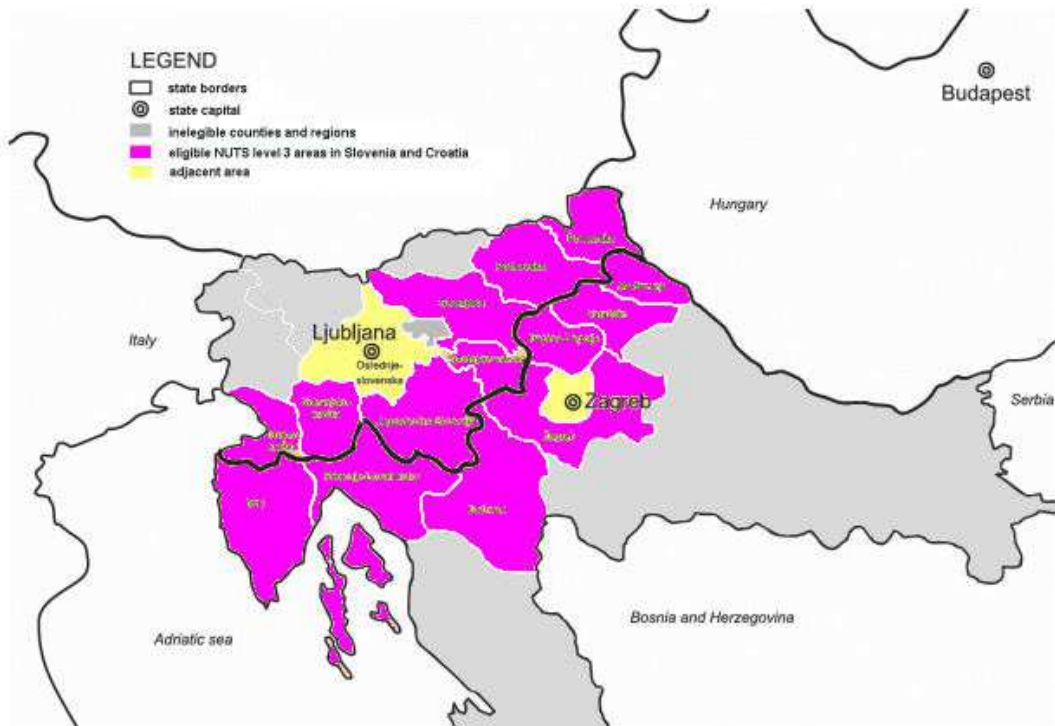


Figure 11 Map of the eligible area in Croatia and Slovenia (EC, 2011)

Priority	Measure
<b>Economic and social development</b>	Measure 1.1: Tourism and Rural Development Measure 1.2: Entrepreneurship development
<b>Sustainable management of natural resources</b>	Measure 2.1: Environmental protection Measure 2: Preservation of protected areas, ecologically important areas and cultural heritage, .
<b>Technical assistance</b>	Assistance for covering the costs of running the programme.

Table 6 Priorities and measures within IPA CROATIA-SLOVENIA 2007 – 2013 (own illustration based on Operational Cross-Border Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013, 2019)

### IPA Cross-border cooperation programme Croatia and Montenegro

The cross-border area between Croatia and Montenegro<sup>10</sup> is recognized as a region of high quality of life and one of the most successful European tourist destinations due to its unique and preserved natural resources, cultural and historical heritage and high quality of services, as well as the region where socio-economic partners are in opportunities to achieve in managing the optimum development potential of this area. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the Program is: to improve the quality of life in the cross-border area between Croatia and Montenegro.

The eligible area covers 1 region in Croatia and 7 municipalities in Montenegro while adjacent regions cover also one region in Croatia and 3 Montenegrin's municipalities. The border length between those two countries is 22,5km.

<sup>10</sup> Operational Cross-Border Programme IPA Croatia - Montenegro 2007 -2013., 2011

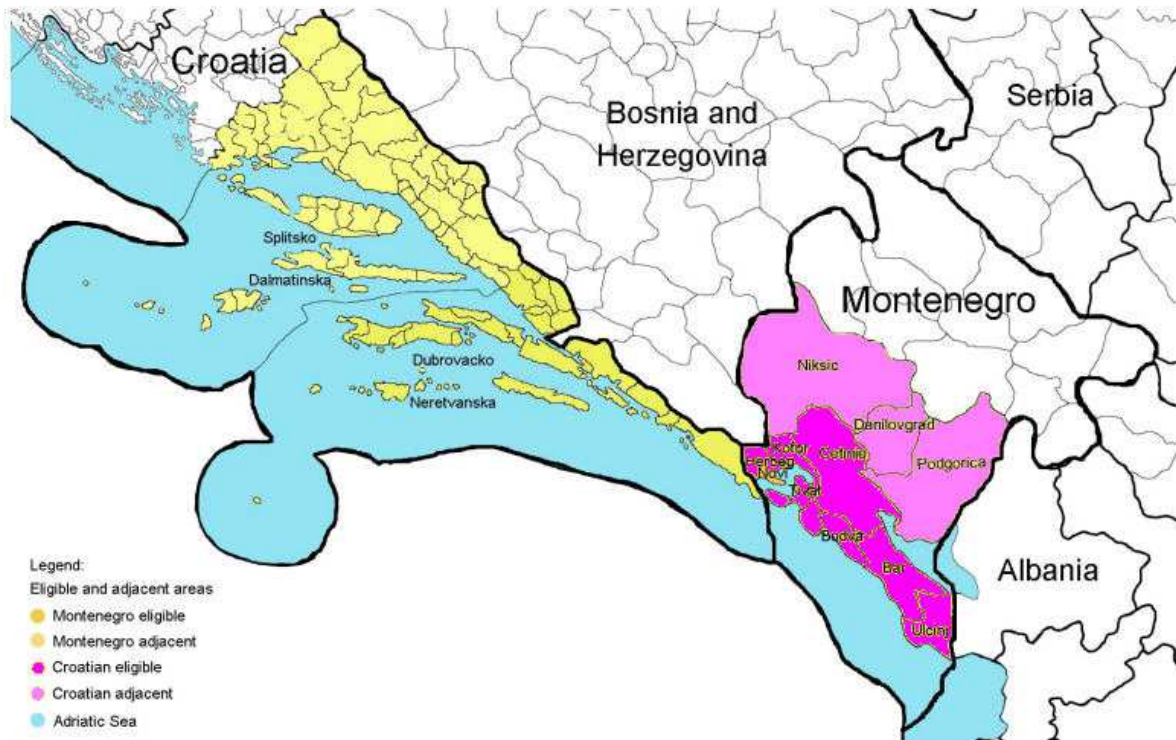


Figure 12 Map of eligible area in Croatia and Montenegro (EC, 2011)

Priority	Measure
<b>Creating suitable natural and socio-economic conditions in the program area by improving cooperation in jointly selected sectors and inter-neighborhood relations in acceptable areas</b>	<i>Measure 1.1: Joint actions for the protection of the environment, natural and cultural heritage</i>
	<i>Measure 1.2: Common tourist and cultural space</i>
	<i>Measure 1.3: Small cross-border community development projects</i>
<b>Technical assistance</b>	Ensure the effective and efficient administration and implementation of the cross-border program.

Table 7 Priorities and measures within IPA CROATIA-MONTENEGRO 2007 – 2013 (own illustration based on Operational Cross-Border Programme IPA Croatia – Montenegro 2007 –2013, 2019)

19 projects were funded under the programme for a total value of €5.6m. Economic development projects represented 53% of the total (€2.9m) including eight tourism projects (€2.5m) and one IT and connectivity project (€0.4m). Environment and people-to-people projects accounted for 37% (€2m, 6 projects) and 10% (€0.5m, 4 projects) respectively of the total amount contracted (Georis et al, 2017).

*IPA Cross-border cooperation programme Croatia and Serbia*

The program area<sup>11</sup> lies on both sides of the Danube, in north-eastern Croatia (Eastern Slavonia) and in northwestern Serbia (western Vojvodina). For historical reasons, the population of the border area is one of the most ethnically diverse in Europe. Both sides of the border, at a certain time in the past, were partly the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, and are subject to extensive migrations from the surrounding countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The 1990 war broke numerous cultural, social and business links across the border. Since these relationships have slowly re-established, they have not yet returned to their previous level. The length of the common border is 317.6 km, of which 259.3 km is by the river Danube.

The overall goal of the program was to encourage cross-border cooperation in order to create diversity and improve the regional economy in a socially and environmentally sustainable way, while at the same time improving good neighborly relations.

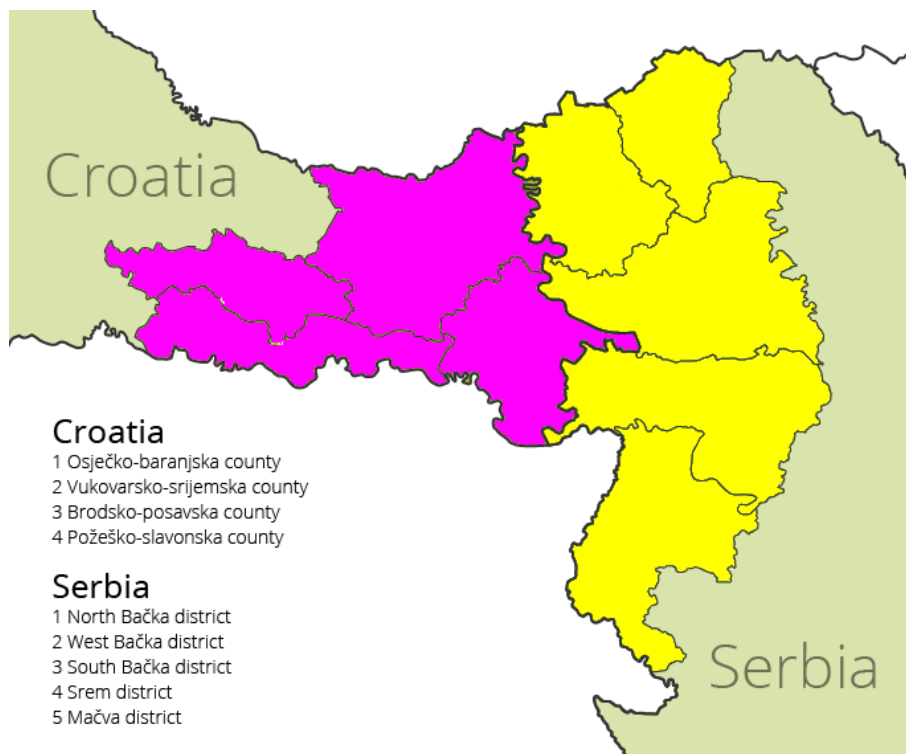


Figure 13 Map of eligible area in Croatia and Serbia (EC, 2011)

Priority	Measure
<b>Sustainable socio-economic development</b>	Measure 1.1: Economic development Measure 1.2: Environment protection Measure 1.3: People-to-people
<b>Technical assistance</b>	Measure 2.1: Program Management and Program Implementation Measure 2.2: Program information, promotion and evaluation of the Program

Table 8 Priorities and measures within IPA CROATIA-SERBIA 2007 – 2013 (own illustration based on Operational Cross-Border Programme IPA CBC Croatia - Serbia 2007 -2013, 2019)

<sup>11</sup> Operational Cross-Border Programme IPA CBC Croatia - Serbia 2007 -2013, 2011

40 projects were funded under the programme for a total value of €11.1m. Environment accounted for 50% of the total amount contracted (€5.6m, 13 projects) including 1 strategic project (0.9m). Economic development projects represented 34% of the total (€3.8m, 13 projects) including seven rural livelihoods projects (€2.1m) and two education and training projects (€0.8m). People-to-people accounted for 15% of the total amount contracted (€1.7m, 14 projects) (Georis et al, 2007).

#### 4.4. Bosnia and CBC within IPA 2014 – 2020

##### *IPA Cross-border Programme Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro*

IPA II CBC Program Bosnia and Herzegovina - Montenegro 2014-2020<sup>12</sup> is the territorial cooperation program, which continues to the previous program phase, implemented in the financial period 2007-2013. The program area covers a total of 30.367,33 km<sup>2</sup>. It consists of 56 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the program area in Montenegro consists of 14 municipalities.

The overall program objective is sustainable development in the cross-border area between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro is promoted through the implementation of joint projects, based on the effective use of the comparative advantages of the program area.

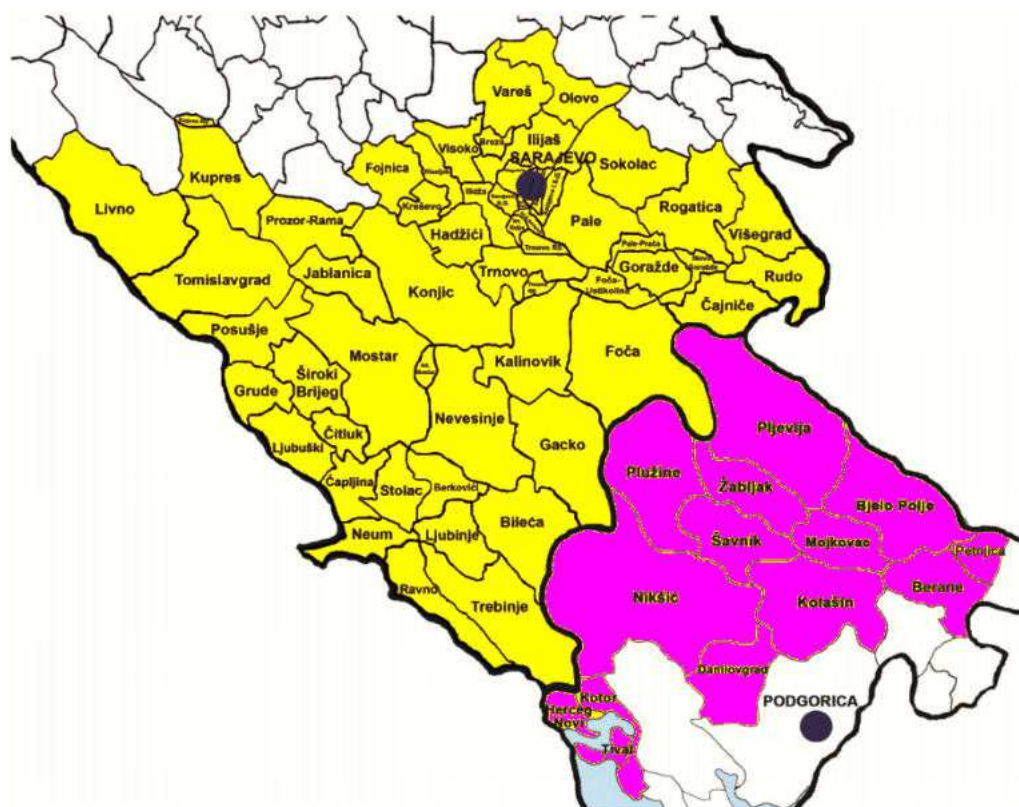


Figure 14 Map of the eligible area in BiH and Montenegro (EC, 2015)

Priority Axis	Specific Objectives
<b>Promotion of employment, labor mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border;</b>	Access to the labor market and the environment for generating new jobs has been improved; Opportunities for employment and social inclusion of vulnerable groups have increased.
<b>Environmental protection, promotion of adaptation and mitigation of climate change, prevention and risk management</b>	The management and energy efficiency of local water supply systems, wastewater and solid waste systems and environmental protection have been enhanced by cross-border coordination and joint activities; Adaptation and mitigation measures for climate change, as well as risk prevention and risk management measures have been improved
<b>Encouraging tourism, cultural and natural heritage</b>	Improve the quality and diversity of the tourist offer based on natural and cultural heritage.
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	

*Table 9 Priorities and objectives within IPA BOSNIA-MONTENEGRO 2014 -2020 (own illustration based on Operational Cross-Border Programme IPA Bosnia And Herzegovina – Montenegro 2014 – 2020, 2019)*

The program contributes to achieving the goal of the Southeast Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020) and Europe 2020 for smart, sustainable, inclusive and integrated growth and the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Total IPA funds for the cross-border cooperation program of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro 2014-2020 amount 8.4 million EUR, of which at least 7.6 million EUR will be allocated to cross-border cooperation activities.

#### *IPA Cross-border Programme Serbia - Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The cross-border program Serbia-Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014-2020<sup>13</sup> is implemented as part of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) and as such is the result of joint planning of the governing structures and other stakeholders of the two countries. IPA II supports cross-border cooperation with the aim of promoting good neighborly relations and socio-economic development, as well as fostering European integration.

The program analyzes the socio-economic situation of the border area and sets common strategies for solving the identified problems through the determination of common development thematic priorities. The program is based on a detailed analysis of the challenges and specificities of the program area.

The total co-financing of the European Union for the Cross-Border Cooperation Program between the Republic of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2014-2020 is 14 million EUR, while the co-financing expected from the beneficiary amounts to a minimum of 2.2 million EUR.

The overall objective of the Program is the strengthening of socio-economic development in the cross-border area between the Republic of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, through the implementation of targeted and concrete measures based on the comparative advantages of the program area and the joint efficient use of resources.

<sup>13</sup> Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 Serbia-Bosnia And Herzegovina, 2014



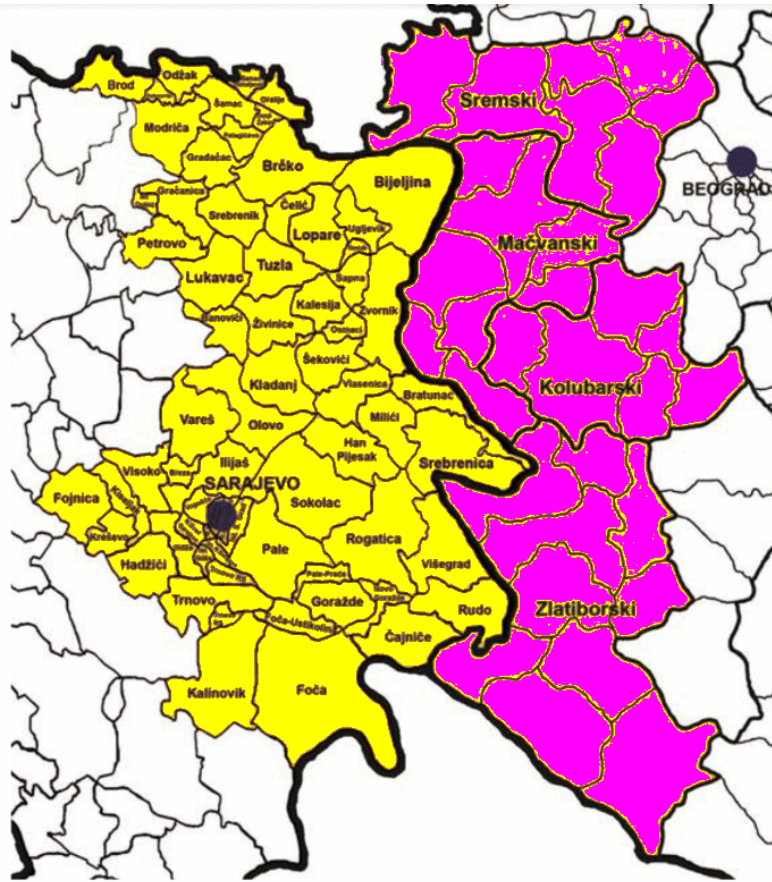


Figure 15 Map of the eligible area in BiH and Serbia (EC, 2014)

Priority Axis	Specific Objectives
<b>Promotion employment, labor mobility, social and cultural inclusion across the border</b>	Improving labor productivity and increasing employment opportunities Encouraging social and economic inclusion
<b>Environmental Protection, Encouraging Adaptation to Climate Change and Mitigation, Risk Prevention and Risk Management</b>	Promoting sustainable environmental planning and promoting biodiversity Improving the management system for emergency intervention
<b>Encouraging tourism, cultural and natural heritage</b>	Increase the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development program area Strengthening the cultural identity of the program area
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	

Table 10 Priorities and objectives within IPA BOSNIA-SERBIA 2014 -2020 (own illustration based on IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 Serbia-Bosnia And Herzegovina, 2019)

### *IPA Cross-border Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro*

The program area<sup>14</sup> covers an area of 87.453 km<sup>2</sup> (of which 40.5% is in the territory of Croatia, 44.9% in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 14.6% in the Montenegrin area) and has 5.587.836 inhabitants. The cooperation program is comprised of NUTS 3 regions, comprising 12 counties on the Croatian side, 110 municipalities on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 10 municipalities on the Montenegrin side.



*Figure 16 Map of the eligible and adjacent area in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (EC, 2014)*

The overall objective of the program is to strengthen the socio-economic development of the program area through interventions in the fields of health and social protection, environment and nature protection, risk prevention, sustainable energy and the development of sustainable tourism and business environment.

The long-term and sustainable development direction should be achieved through predefined thematic goals:

- Employment, labor market, social inclusion, health;
- Environment, Risk Prevention and Energy Production;
- Tourism, cultural and natural heritage;
- Competitiveness and development of small and medium entrepreneurship;
- Youth and education;

<sup>14</sup> Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro 2014-2020, 2014

- Local and regional self-government, planning to strengthen administrative capacity;
- Development of competitiveness and business environment;
- Research, technological development and innovation, ICT.

In addition to the selected thematic units, four priority axes (plus priority 5 is related to technical assistance) have been allocated, which will enable them to implement solutions that will respond to the challenges of the program area.

<b>Priority Axis</b>	<b>Specific Objectives</b>
<b>Strengthening public health and social protection with the aim of improving services in the area of public health and social care across borders</b>	Improving employment measures through the development of skills and abilities in the program area. Improving services in the public health and social care sector.
<b>Environmental protection, improvement of risk prevention and promotion of sustainable energy and energy efficiency with the objectives of: promotion and improvement of nature and environment protection and management of risk prevention systems and promotion of the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency</b>	Promotion and improvement of environmental and nature protection through the protection of natural resources and management systems for risk prevention. Encouraging and improving the use of renewable energy sources and strengthening energy efficiency.
<b>Contribute to the development of tourism and the protection of cultural and natural heritage with the objectives of: strengthening and diversifying the tourist offer through a cross-border approach and enabling better management and self-sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage.</b>	Strengthen and expand the tourist offer.  Enabling better management and sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage.
<b>Strengthening the competitiveness and development of the business environment in the program area with the aim of: strengthening the institutional infrastructure and services in order to improve the competitiveness and development of the business environment in the program area</b>	Improving institutional infrastructure and services to accelerate the development of business environment and competitiveness in the program area.
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	

*Table 11 Priorities and objectives within IPA CROATIA-BOSNIA-MONTENEGRO 2014 -2020 (own illustration based on Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro 2014-*

The overall programming budget is dependent on the allocation of EU-funded financial resources for European territorial cooperation. For the seven-year period from 2014 to 2020, Euro-Mediterranean Territorial Cooperation and Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro Program are foreseen for 67.2 million EUR. By allocating financial resources, the number of potential projects and the potential average project size for each priority axis was estimated.

## 4.5. Croatia and CBC within IPA II 2014 – 2020

### *IPA Cross-border Programme Croatia – Serbia*

The program area<sup>15</sup> covers an area of 25.505 km<sup>2</sup> and has approximately 2.3 million inhabitants. The state border between Croatia and Serbia is 261.7 km and includes eight border crossings that are classified for international traffic. The state border mostly follows the Danube River in the length of 139.9 km.



*Figure 17 Map of the eligible area in Croatia and Serbia (EC, 2014)*

As a general goal of cross-border cooperation program between Croatia and Serbia, the strengthening of the social, economic and territorial development of the cross-border area is highlighted through the implementation of joint projects and activities.

The overall program budget is dependent on the allocation of financial resources at the EU level for ETC. For the seven-year period from 2014 to 2020, 40.3 million EUR was earmarked for ETC and the Croatia-Serbia program, of which 34.3 million EUR comes from the ERDF. With the allocation of funds, the number of potential projects and the potential average size of the project for each priority axis are estimated.

<sup>15</sup> Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020, 2014

Priority Axis	Specific Objectives
<b>Improving the quality of public health and social services in the program area.</b>	Improving the quality of facilities, services and knowledge in the public health and social care sector. Improving services in the public health and social care sector.
<b>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity, Improving Risk Prevention and Promoting Sustainable Management and Energy Efficiency through the Use of Renewable Energy Sources.</b>	Implementation of an integrated cross-border monitoring system for existing key risks and their management, as well as environmental and biodiversity protection. Promoting the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency.
<b>Contributing to the development of tourism and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.</b>	Strengthening, disseminating and integrating cross-border tourism offerings and better management of resources of cultural and natural heritage.
<b>Improving competitiveness and developing a business environment in the program area.</b>	Improving the competitiveness of the program area by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions, clusters, educational and research institutions and entrepreneurs with the aim of developing new products / services / patents / trademarks in the program area.
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	

*Table 12 Priorities and objectives within IPA CROATIA-SERBIA 2014 -2020 (own illustration based on Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020, 2019 )*

### *IPA Cross-border Programme Croatia – Hungary*

The program area covers an area of 31.085 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 54% is in the territory of Croatia and 46% in the territory of Hungary.

The Hungary-Croatia Cooperation Program 2014-2020<sup>16</sup> aims to expand the area of cooperation and networking based on past experience and successfully accomplished tasks. The Program Strategy aims to ensure long-term visions that focuses on sustainable exploitation and the creation of additional value of cultural and natural resources, while continuously enriching cross-border links and activities that contribute to positive and successful cooperation. The long-term and sustainable direction of development should be achieved through five priority axes and a series of investment priorities that serve as a strategic instrument in the development of the region

<sup>16</sup> NTERREG V-5 Operational Cross-Border Programme Croatia-Hungary 2014 -2020, 2014

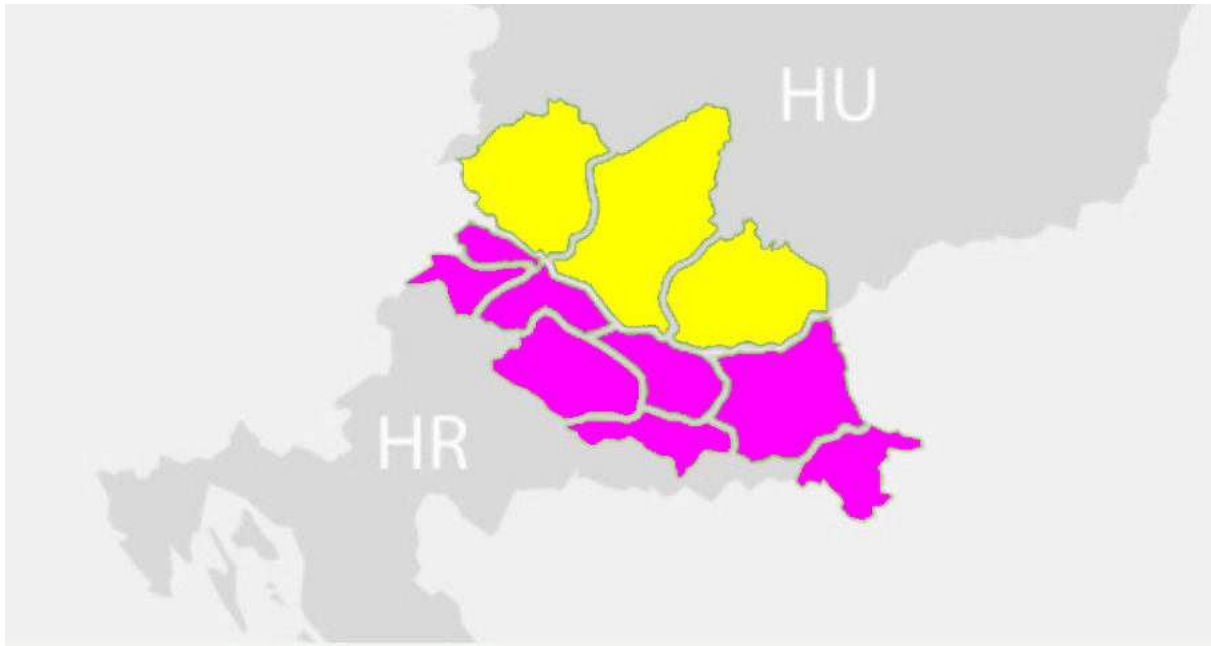


Figure 18 Map of the eligible area in Croatia and Hungary (EC, 2014)

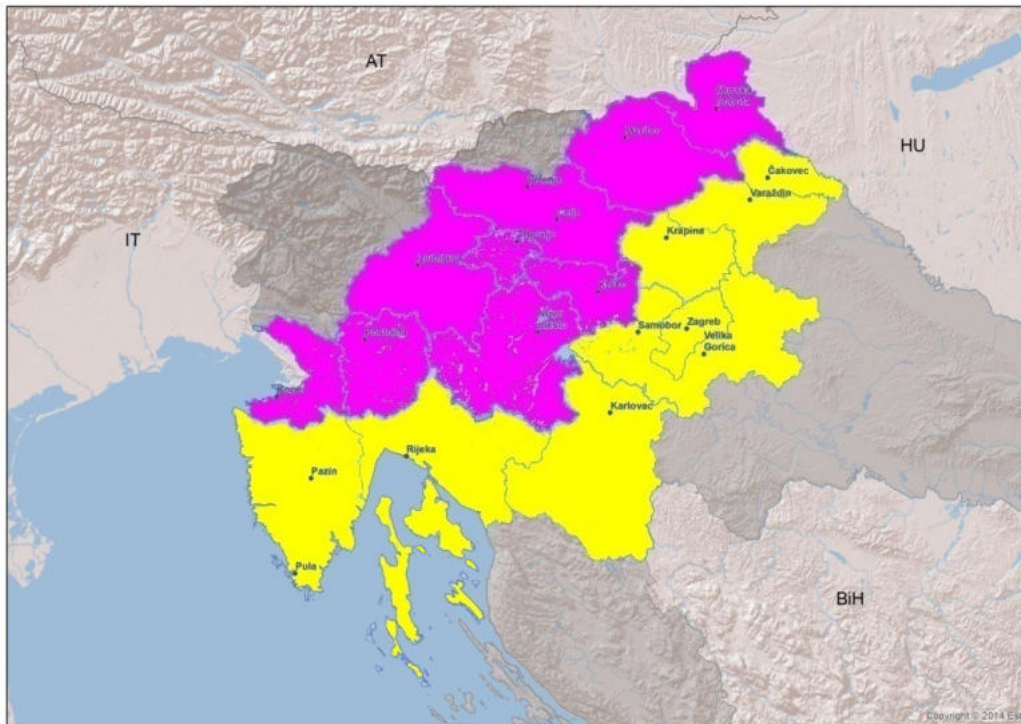
Priority Axis	Investment Priority
<b>Economic development - Raising competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).</b>	Supporting the creation and improvement of advanced capacity to develop products and services.
<b>Sustainable use of natural and cultural values - preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency.</b>	Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage. Investment priority: 6d - Conservation and restoration of biodiversity and soil, promotion of ecosystem services, including through the Natura 2000 system and green infrastructure.
<b>Cooperation - improvement of institutional capacities and efficient public administration.</b>	Improvement of institutional capacities and efficient public administration through promotion of cooperation in legislation and administration between citizens and institutions.
<b>Education - investing in education and training, including vocational training for skills and lifelong learning through the development of education and training infrastructure</b>	Investment in skills and lifelong learning through the development and implementation of joint educational activities, vocational training and training programs
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	

Table 13 Priorities and objectives within IPA CROATIA-HUNGARY 2014 -2020 (own illustration based on INTERREG V-5 Operational Cross-Border Programme Croatia-Hungary 2014 -2020, 2019 )

The overall program budget is dependent on the allocation of financial resources at the European Union level for European Territorial Cooperation. For the seven-year period from 2014 to 2020, 60.8 million EUR from the EFRR and 13 million EUR from national funding were earmarked for the European Territorial Cooperation and the Hungary-Croatia program. With the allocation of funds, the number of potential projects and the potential average size of the project for each priority axis are estimated.

### *IPA Cross-border Programme Croatia – Slovenia*

The program area<sup>17</sup> covers an area of 31.728 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 53,4% are in the territory of Croatia and 46,6% in the territory of Slovenia. In addition to the City of Zagreb and the Central Slovenia region, the area is sparsely populated and the average population density is 120.7 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>. Within the program area, there are 2 main cities, 322 municipalities and 8457 settlements. The whole area has a highly developed network of urban centers, which provides good accessibility to the program area to international traffic routes. The program area includes parts of the Pan-European Highway and Railway Corridor X (Graz - Maribor - Zagreb, Salzburg - Ljubljana - Zagreb) and Corridor V (Rijeka - Zagreb - Budapest, Trieste / Koper - Ljubljana - Budapest).



*Figure 19 Map of the eligible area in Croatia and Slovenia (EC, 2014)*

Cooperation program Slovenia - Croatia aims to ensure a safe and vital area that will ensure the increased capacity of institutional cooperation at all levels. A sustainable direction of development should be achieved through four priority axes and five specific objectives.

The overall program budget is dependent on the allocation of financial resources at the EU level for ETC. For the seven-year period from 2014 to 2020, 55.6 million EUR was earmarked for ETC and the program Slovenia-Croatia, of which 46.1 million EUR comes from the ERDF. With the allocation of funds, the number of potential projects and the potential average size of the project for each priority axis are estimated.

<sup>17</sup> Operational Cross-Border Programme INTERREG V-5 Croatia-Hungary 2014 -2020, 2014

Priority Axis	Specific Objectives
<b>Integrated flood risk management on cross-border river basins.</b>	Reduction of the flood risk in the cross-border river basins of Dragonja, Kolpa / Kupa, Sotla / Sutla, Drava, Mura and Bregana.
<b>Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.</b>	Active protection of heritage by sustainable tourism. Conservation and restoration of biodiversity and promotion of ecosystem services.
<b>Healthy, safe and accessible border areas.</b>	Creating a partnership between public authorities and stakeholders for a healthy, safe and accessible program area.
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	Ensuring effective and smooth implementation of cooperation programs

Table 14 Priorities and objectives within IPA CROATIA-SLOVENIA 2014 -2020 (own illustration based on Operational Cross-Border Programme INTERREG V-5 Croatia-Hungary 2014 -2020, 2014, 2019)

#### 4.6. IPA I and IPA II Comparison

In the second period, it was established in addition to the usual bilateral programs, one trilateral between BiH, Croatia and Serbia, which is also the largest in terms of area.

IPA I	area	population	border length	border crossings	budget	implemented projects
BIH-CRO	81.466	5.821.418	932	27	12,6	44
BIH-SRB	32.982	2.967.023	357	8	8,8	45
BIH-MNE	25.457	1.355.278	249	7	6,8	38
CRO-HU	31.028	2.302.552	356	6	52,4	140
CRO-SI	31.728	3.285.000	668	25	34	165
CRO-MNE	12.829	3.663.234	23	2	2,9	19
CRO-SRB	19.432	874.787	318	8	11,1	40
IPA II	area	population	border length	border crossing	budget	contracted projects
BIH-MNE	30.367	300.176	249	7	8,4	3
BIH-SRB	32.112	2.770.412	357	8	14	5
BIH-HR-MNE	87.453	5.587.836	1060	33	67,2	21
CRO-SRB	25.505	2.300.000	262	8	40,3	24
CRO-HU	31.085	-	356	6	60,8	54
CRO-SI	31.728	3.285.000	668	25	55,7	34

Table 15 IPA I and IPA II in figures (own illustration, based on the findings during research and official documents, 2019)

In the first period, the largest area was also occupied by a program between BiH and Croatia with over 80,000 m<sup>2</sup> and a population of almost 6 million inhabitants. In terms of size, population and border crossings, the two programs are not much different, but the budget for the second period amounts to as



much as € 50 million. In the second period, most programs have more funding available to use than in the first period. Most border crossings are located between BiH and Croatia, and Croatia and Slovenia, where Croatia has a significant transit role, and the need for a large number of border crossings is necessary. The border with Slovenia should be abolished during the current year when Croatia accesses the Schengen zone. The largest border length is between Croatia and BiH, almost 1000 km, representing significant potential and the need for cross-border cooperation. According to official documents, the total number of inhabitants of the cross-border region of BiH-Montenegro amounted to over 1.3 million in the first period, while in the second period that number was reduced by one million, which does not represent a real demographic picture of the region and after the short research came out that the number of inhabitants is approximately the same in both periods with the number around 300,000. The original number is left in the table because it represents overviews of both periods based on official documents of the European Commission.

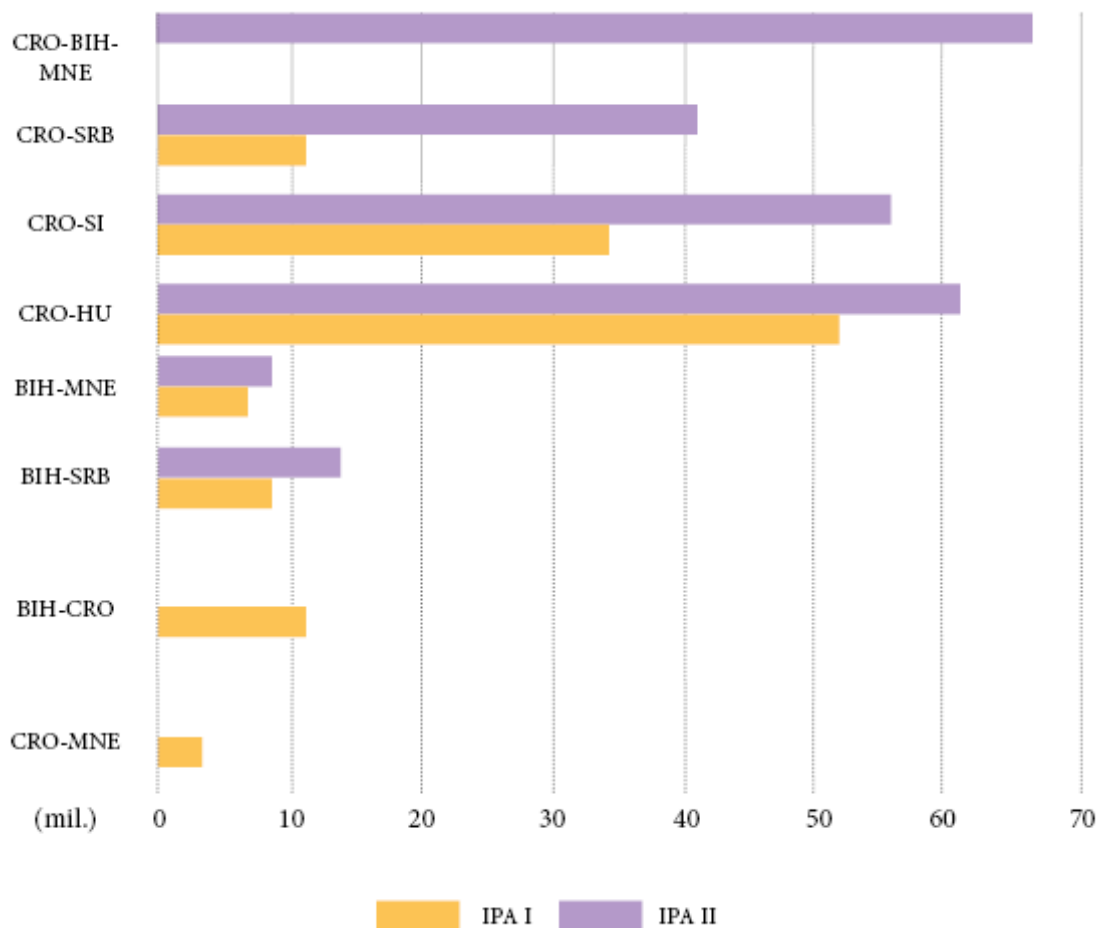


Figure 20 IPA I and IPA II budget comparison (based on official documents, 2019)

As mentioned above, all programs have higher funding in the second period, without the programs between BiH and Croatia and Croatia and Montenegro, which are now integrated into the trilateral program. Croatia and Serbia have a significantly larger budget, as eligible areas have expanded in the new period, and this program now has a larger spatial coverage with a larger population.

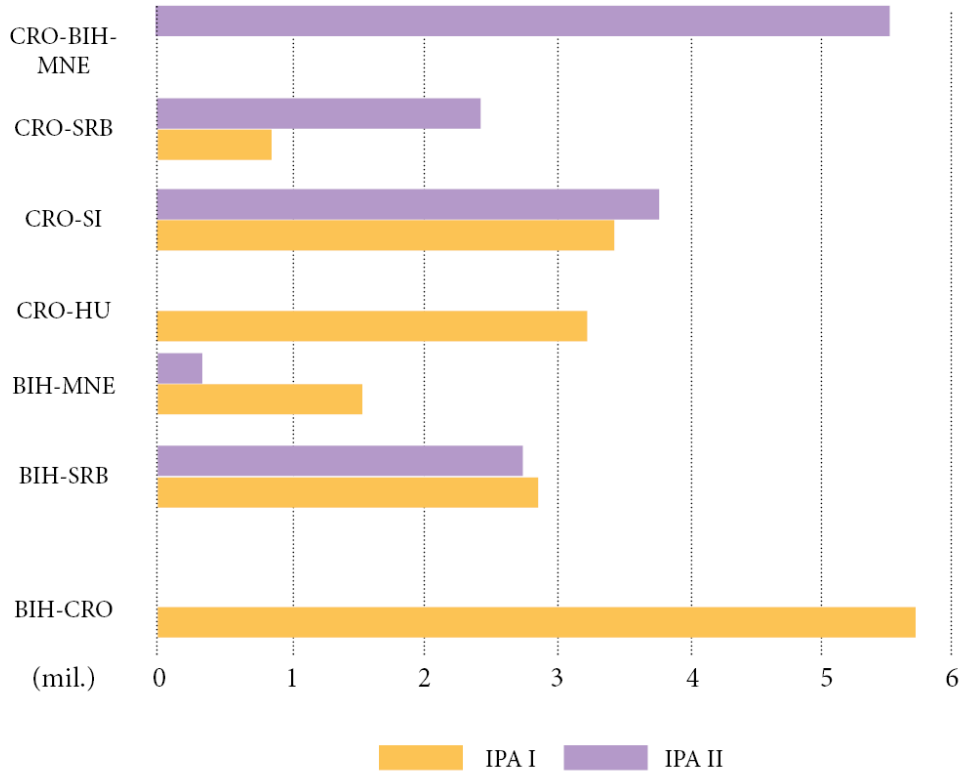


Figure 21 IPA I and IPA II population comparison (based on official documents, 2019)

Based on official documents from the European Commission, the largest number of population covered the BiH-HR program area from IPA's first programming period. The current trilateral CRO-BIH-MNE programming area is inhabited by a slightly smaller population, although the spatial coverage is larger. But as has been emphasized in the previous chapters, cross-border area, and in general both countries, are undergoing constant depopulation processes, which could be the cause of this change. The CRO-SRB program area has increased in the current period, and therefore the population is significantly larger than in the first programming period. In general, all programs have an increase in population, with the exception of the BIH-MNE program, whose unclear development has already been written.

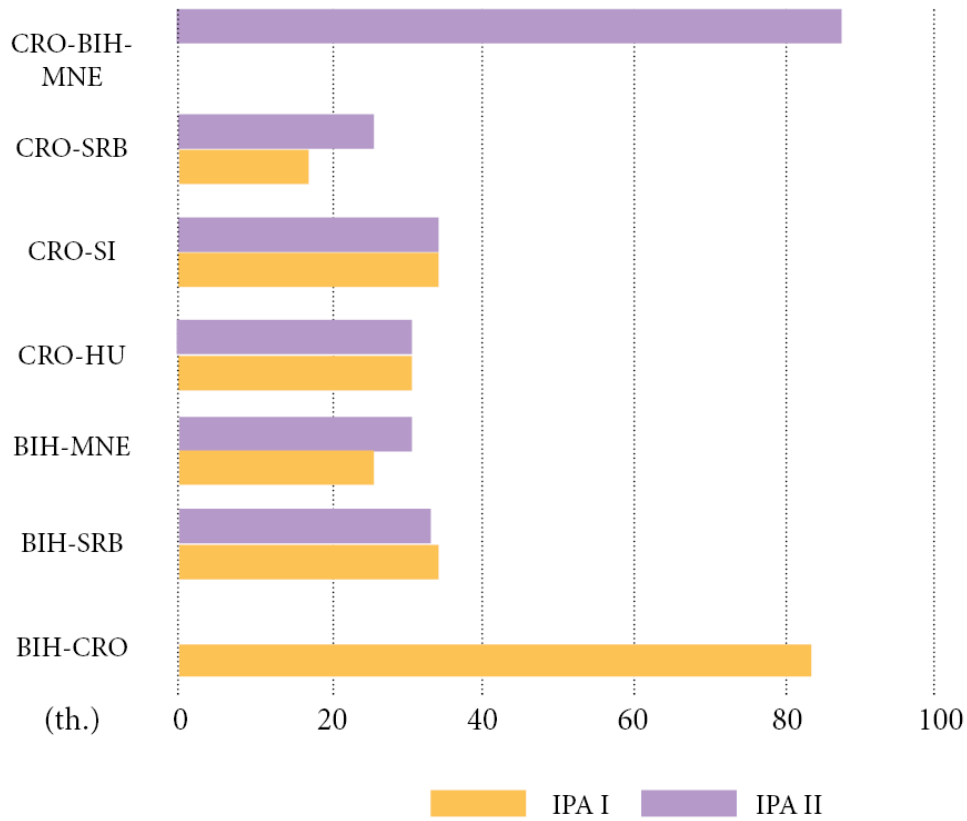


Figure 22 IPA I and IPA II area comparison (based on official documents, 2019)

As stated above, the BIH-HR program was replaced by the trilateral CRO-BIH-MNE program, thus increasing the program area slightly. Other cross-border programs have retained more or less the same surface area. Also, a significant difference in area is within the CRO-SRB program, which is significantly expanded, compared to the first programming period. Like the previous indicators, the surface area also indicates a significant dominance of the BIH-CRO cross-border program within IPA.

## IPA II

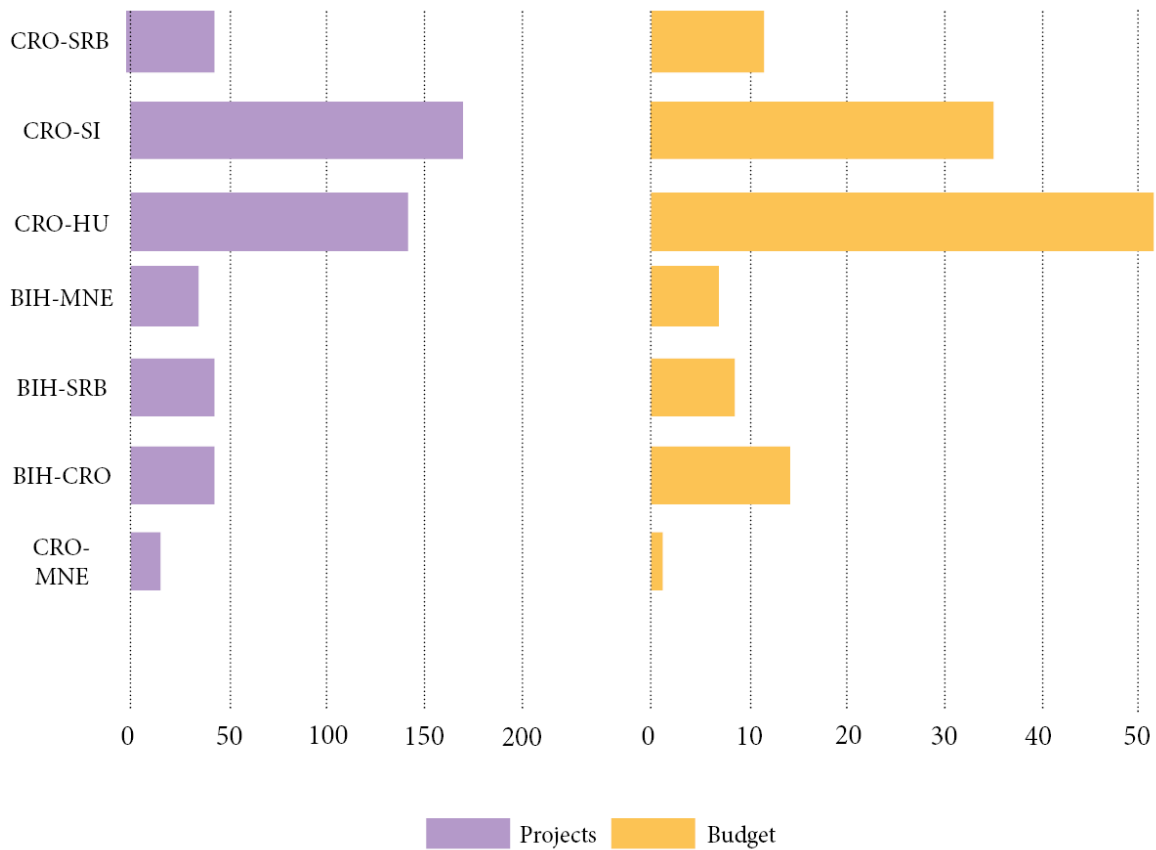


Figure 23 IPA I - budget and implemented projects comparison (based on official documents, 2019)

Although the largest budget in the first programming period had the CRO-HU cross-border program, the largest number of implemented projects were implemented within the CRO-SI program, i.e. more than 160 projects. The lowest number of implemented projects, and consequently the smallest budget, had the CRO-MNE program. Although a much larger budget than BIH-SRB, programs BIH-CRO and BIH-SRB have implemented the same number of projects. The reason behind this is that much larger-scale projects were implemented within the BIH-CRO program with significantly higher budgets and territorial proportions than BIH-SRB.



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# 05

## analysis of the implemented projects in the cross-border region

## 5.1. Projects Overview

In this chapter, eight different projects carried out within the frame of the IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013 will be introduced. The first four projects were implemented within the 1st priority 'Creation of joint economic space' under the measure 'Joint development of tourism offer': Lake to Lake Green Tourism, Sustainable tourist development From Herzegovina trails to Dubrovnik Elafiti islands, Cycling Through the History - Revitalization of the Old Narrow Gauge Railway 'ĆIRO' and Bicycle for Tourism Without Frontiers - BIKE 4 TWF. The second four projects were implemented within the 2nd priority 'Improved quality of life and social cohesion' under the measure 'Protection of nature and environment': PEM - Public Energy Management, Green Islands, PROGRES - Protection of Nature and Globalization of Renewable Energy Sources and ForestEye - Protection of nature and environment from forest fires. In the analysis of the use of IPA funds in these two countries, the research focuses on those areas that have the most pronounced spatial impact. In addition, tourism is also one of the most significant branches of the economy in both countries.

The selected examples on the following projects show, in addition to the key data, the background of the projects with their budgets and goals. Furthermore, the concrete project contents are outlined and project partners got an opportunity through the interview to share their experiences and give a recommendation for cross-border projects in the future. The interview provided a better overview of these eight projects of the CBC program HR-BiH, both in terms of data and facts, as well as the personal assessment of those involved in the work. Despite the use of an interview guide, the conversation was relatively open and the content was the same for all interviewed persons. Since the individual experts have their own opinions and experiences and are specialized in different fields of expertise, these interviews made a significant contribution in order to gain knowledge and provide information and, above all, connections and explanatory approaches that may not emerge from the literature.

Respondents were selected based on their leadership roles in each of the above-mentioned projects. Since the projects have been implemented for a long period of time, many project managers have changed jobs and were unable to interview, but some of their associates responded and contributed.

The interview guide, which was used in the master's thesis, is divided into the following four topics:

- Project initialization and idea identification
- Project planning
- Project implementation
- Final phase
- Post-project phase

For each topic block again several individual questions were asked. The complete interview guide can be found in appendix II. The interviews were conducted between November 2018 and March 2019 personally, and in some cases over the telephone or Skype.

### 5.1.1. Lake2Lake Green Tourism

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 702,161.05, of which the EU has financed 85%. The project was implemented for 20 months in the areas of Municipality of City of Vrlika (LP/CRO) and Prozor-Rama (BiH). The other partners were: Tourist organization Vrlika and Sport and Fishing association Rama.

The local authorities of the municipality of Vrlika and the Municipality of Prozor-Rama have decided to unite their efforts and jointly launch projects for the revitalization of the wider area with an emphasis on Lake Peruca and Rama as important natural resources for creating and improving the tourist offer. Educating local actors, building tourist infrastructure and a strong promotional campaign enabled interested private entrepreneurs and rural households to rely on tourism infrastructure and enrich the tourist offer, thus achieving this additional income. In order to improve the competitiveness of the joint cross-border tourist offer on the basis of complementary natural and cultural attractions and create a positive economic climate for inclusion of the wider area in tourist flows, this project focused on creating a joint offer for sports and recreational tourism through the establishment and equipping of the center for sports and recreation tourism on these two border locations.

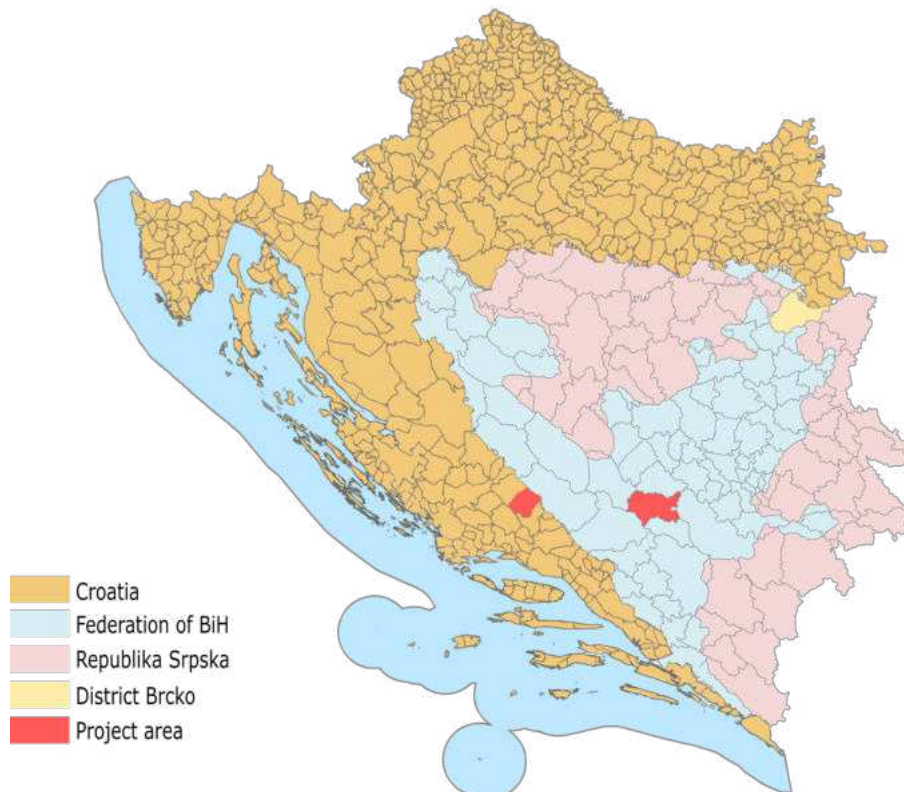


Figure 24 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and Lake2Lake project area (own illustration, 2019)



Through the project, the Center for Sport and Recreation Tourism in Ramsko Lake in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and the same such facility at Lake Peruć in Croatia) were established and equipped. The Ramsey Center now has a hangar that serves as a rowing booth, to which an access road has been built. In order to enable the center to organize sports and recreational activities, sports competitions and adequate storage of equipment, except warehouses and access roads, the project provided equipment that includes 3 pontoons, 2 regatta marking systems, 2 catamarans for trainers, 2 catamarans for judges, and suitable and necessary infrastructure is also provided for Lake Peruća in Croatia. In addition to improving infrastructure, the Municipality of Prozor-Rama founded its Rowing Club in August 2012, which, to a large extent, used the knowledge and experience of its cross-border partners, Vrlika Club from Croatia.

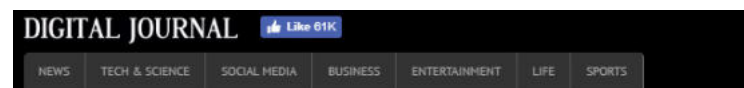
In order to increase the visibility and attractiveness of the area, 48 tourist signs in the Municipality of Prozor-Rama were set up, and the same number in the Municipality of Vrlika. Joint promotional activities include the design of the website: [www.cbclake2lake.com](http://www.cbclake2lake.com), and the production of various promotional materials. A promotional campaign for new and improved sports contents and tourist offer was highlighted in June 2013 at the final conference and rowing regatta organized by these two centers.

### Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

The interview questions were structured through the project management cycle combining five different phases: project initialization and identification, planning, implementation, the final phase, and post-project phase. The five phases are including summarized answers of the project partners.

#### *Project initialization and identification*

Partners didn't have difficulties to find the project partners because both partners had common goals and ideas that were of interest to them. The partners knew each other from before, but they did not cooperate together. They came to the idea of the project by talking about the realization of the idea among themselves, and the idea was partly derived from the development strategy of the municipality. Adequate project partners were assembled in the first phase, and both partners would not change anything regarding their composition. The problem with determining the timeframe was that they did not know in which month the project would start because the project involved construction works, eventually postponed due to weather conditions. As for the determination of costs, the difficulty was to estimate the works and the purchase of pontoons, but everything was remedied during the implementation of the project.



## An EU success story in Croatia: Lake2Lake at Vrlika, Lake Peruca

BY PAUL BRADBURY JUN 26, 2013 IN TRAVEL

[LISTEN](#) | [PRINT](#)

**Vrlika** - A pioneering EU project in Croatia offers possibilities to develop adventure tourism in one of Europe's most interesting and undiscovered regions.



Figure 25 Article about Lake2Lake in Digital Journey Magazine (DJ, 2013)

Both partners believe that cooperation was good, but as the key point, they mentioned the insufficient experience in the implementation of EU projects of both partners, causing multiple delays during the project. A useful experience was that both sides shared many ideas and solved some common problems, which later significantly contributed to the development of a team for the preparation and implementation of EU-funded projects involving both partners.

### *Project planning*

The project was clear and structured so there were no additional complications. There was a risk of purchasing materials and carrying out construction works, but the project team decided to have a reserve fund. The activities were in significant delay on BiH side and slightly delayed on HR side. Due to the fact that the majority of activities include the development of complex tender documentation for the procurement of equipment and works on sides, this risk and delays are anticipated.

### *Project implementation*

The project controlling was led by the planned activities and the procurement plan that was elaborated in detail. A total of two reports were produced. The project lasted 12 months so that one progress report and one final report were to be made. There was no problem with communication between project partners. If technical problems occurred, contracting authorities contacted their advisors and economic problems were solved in agreement with the mayors of the municipality.

During the Action, some activities were delayed. Due to unforeseen weather conditions, the activities of regulation access roads and installation of the ramp were delayed. Caused by the lack of capacities in project management, preparation and publication of tender documentation for raft – pontoon supply was delayed. Installation of tourist board and signpost signalization was waiting for approval for installation from roads Direction of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ministry of Transport and Communications. Success can be seen in the further development of various projects that were realized after the completion of the project, as well as during the project - visiting cultural societies from Rama in Vrlika and vice versa, and organization of the football tournament of the clubs of these two municipalities. The locals were involved in the joint manifestation of the organization of the rowing regatta. There was no problem with the delivery of the necessary reports and required documentation.

### *Final phase*

As a lesson, it is particularly important to pay attention to better organization and distribution of jobs and financial allocations. In implementation, both parties should develop an internal activity plan to make the project easier to follow. As a recommendation, the BiH partner mentions the importance of the clear planning of financial resources, the provision of reserve funds, engaging building consultants for any infrastructure investment, modernizing visibility, and making the project attractive to the end-user. As the three most important factors, BiH partner points out: shared interests among all partners, active partners who are sufficiently motivated to implement the project, and a clearly designed project application that aims at equally developing all project partners. As the three biggest obstacles, he states

cultural barriers, administrative barriers, economic inequalities, but also believes that projects should be implemented precisely with the aim of alleviating these obstacles. In comparison with the BiH partners, HR partner finds reliability of partner (preferably already worked on some joint projects) and historical or geographical connectivity between partners as main factors of success.

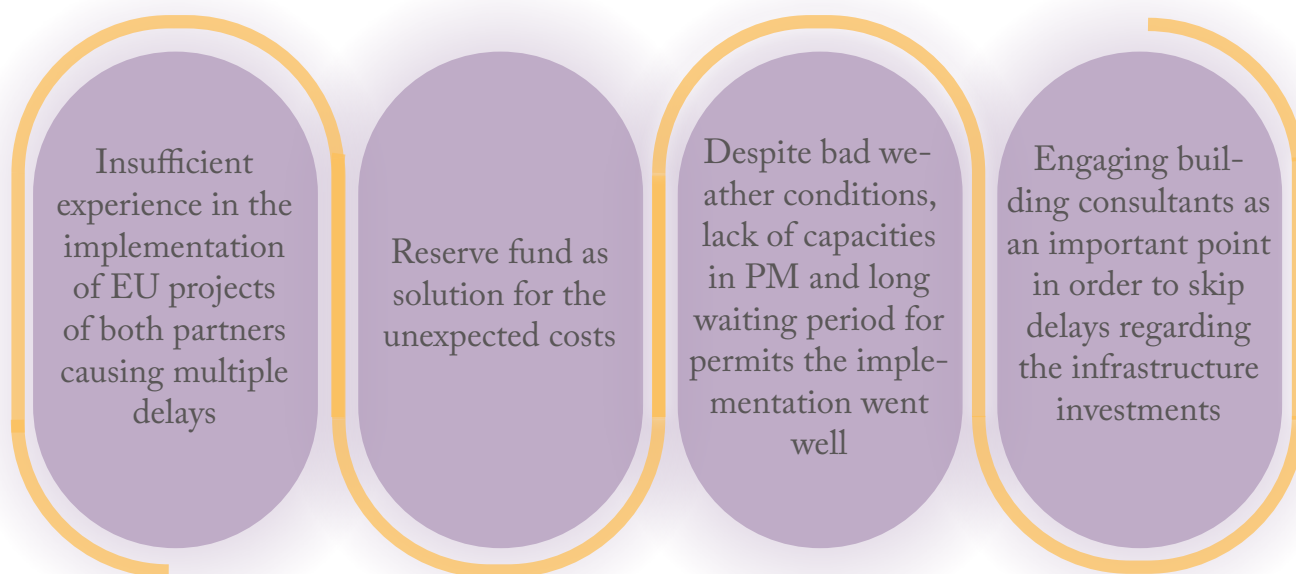
The project was extended for six months because it was impossible to complete all project activities in a short period of time (12 months). The both sides agree that project planning is the toughest because each project has its own course and its unique activities that are specific to the areas in which they are taking place, and it is difficult to predict some elements until they occur in the implementation phase.

### *Post-project phase*

The project was completed in 2013 and a project extension has been planned by the existing project partners but has not been implemented. All the materials purchased were left to the use of both municipalities, and continued to organize racing regattas in the border area. The project still lives through the 'Česma' Recreational Center and the Rowing Club Vrlika, which gained the transfer of the ownership of equipment and is preparing a joint tourist offer that will improve the existing tourist offer and is now based on using the new infrastructure of the Centre.

The main goal has been achieved. Other successes are mostly related to the impact on the local community, the improvement of communication between these two municipalities and the improvement of tourist offers.

### **Conclusions**



*Figure 26 Main messages emerged from the Lake2Lake project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020)*

### 5.1.2. Sustainable tourist development From Herzegovina trails to Dubrovnik Elafiti islands

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 505,930.37, of which the EU has financed 83.63%. The project was implemented for 24 months in the areas of Ravno, Neum, Ljubinje and Trebinje (BiH), and the city of Dubrovnik and Elafiti islands (HR). The lead partner was Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK (BiH). The other partners were Dubrovnik Tourist Board (Croatia), City of Dubrovnik Development Agency (Croatia), Ravno Municipality (BiH), Adventure Tourism Association (BiH), Association of Croatian Travel Agencies Oxfam NGO, Kallipolis (IT).recreation tourism on these two border locations.

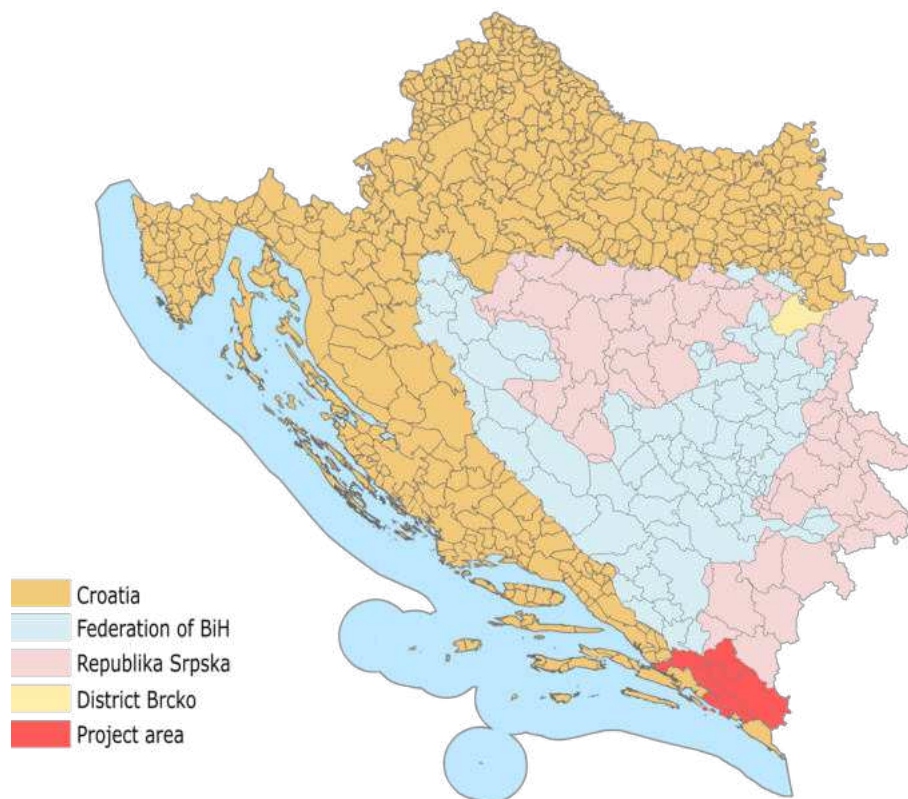


Figure 27 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and Elafiti Islands project area (own illustration, 2019)

The main aim of the project was to expand the existing coastal tourist offer on the continental and island border regions in the surroundings of Dubrovnik and Mostar, and increase the exchange and cooperation between Croatian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian tourism operators, while improving cross-border ties. In particular, the project worked on the development and promotion of the Blue section of Via Dinarica, promoting innovative community-based services and valorization of natural resources in Popovo polje and the Elaphite Islands.

About 268 households, hotels, motels, restaurants, producers of traditional products, cultural and historical monuments, adventure activities such as hiking, hiking, speleology, kayaking, paragliding, hunting, natural sights in this area are now mapped, representing a complete tourist offer for visitors and guests.

The project's goal is also to fully promote local resources and paths by creating a website [www.viadinarica-bluetrail.com](http://www.viadinarica-bluetrail.com) that contains a database of local tourist resources with search engines, path maps, and multimedia content.



Figure 28 The map of the Via Dinarica Blue Trail (Kallipolis, 2018)

## Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

### *Project initialization and identification*

The lead partner states that it was not difficult to find partners because they are well promoted in the country and partly in the region, but for the sake of easier identification of partners in the future, they suggest that the leading organization, which has a project idea, should make the project fiche (short project proposal with the scope of implementation, goal, beneficiaries, activities, and results), send it to potential partners and invite a working meeting to jointly formulate project ideas with others. The partners already had joint projects earlier, so they knew each other well. The idea is developed together with one partner who has a very good experience in the field of tourism that supports this program. It was useful to have partners with experience in similar projects, so technical information from their side was very useful for defining activities and costs.

### *Project planning*

The assumptions and external risks are defined within the Logical Framework through the following categories:

- Political and socio-economic stability in both countries
- Stable political relations between BiH and Croatia risks
- BiH image (in the international tourism market) still bond to war and insecurity
- The scarce interest of tourists in Mostar and Dubrovnik to visit other areas
- Low involvement rate of key stakeholders in the development of tourism-related activities

### *Project implementation*

The project control was organized in such a way that at the beginning a Steering Committee was formed which consisted of one representative of each project partner. A total of 5 steering group meetings were held. Steering groups disrupted action plans for a given period and controlled the state of implementation of the activity. In addition to these meetings, project coordinators from the two countries met several times to coordinate activities and address delays, etc. As a rule of this program, a total of three progress reports, one interim report and one final report were made.

All project activities were implemented within the time frame of the project. No extension of the project was required. Nonetheless, some project activities delayed implementation largely due to insufficient dedication of some partners, as well as due to weather conditions (flooding in the area of the project area).

The both project partners believe that it is necessary to analyze the needs of residents of certain areas in order to develop ideas for this specific area.

As useful they see engaging the people or service providers from the project area, strengthening the capacities of mountaineers, cyclists, tour operators, civil society organizations, to establish synergies between this project and the CIRO project in order to exchange experiences, spread visibility, share knowledge, etc.

### *Final phase*

The goal is achieved, and the other goal besides the main one is certainly promotion on more events, in BiH, HR and EU (Brussels). Recommendation for similar projects in the future: it is important to estimate real-time required for the implementation of complex activities that require different approvals/permits by the competent authorities. For example, the development of the route in the region involved a series of interconnected activities in which certain activities could not be carried out without proper permits, and since all the procedures lasted much longer than expected (which is a practice in public institutions), this resulted in additional load for the project team and a longer implementation period.

The partners did not have the problems with project payments, but the final report was extremely demanding. They plan to continue cooperating with each other, or part of them. For the time being, they have not planned anything, but it depends on open calls for projects.

“

*I think that it is necessary to do an analysis of the needs of the inhabitants of certain areas that we want to develop because this would plan the space precisely for its users, which is a point of cross-border cooperation, but unfortunately we often do not have time or fund for such an analysis.”*

*Project manager, Anon*

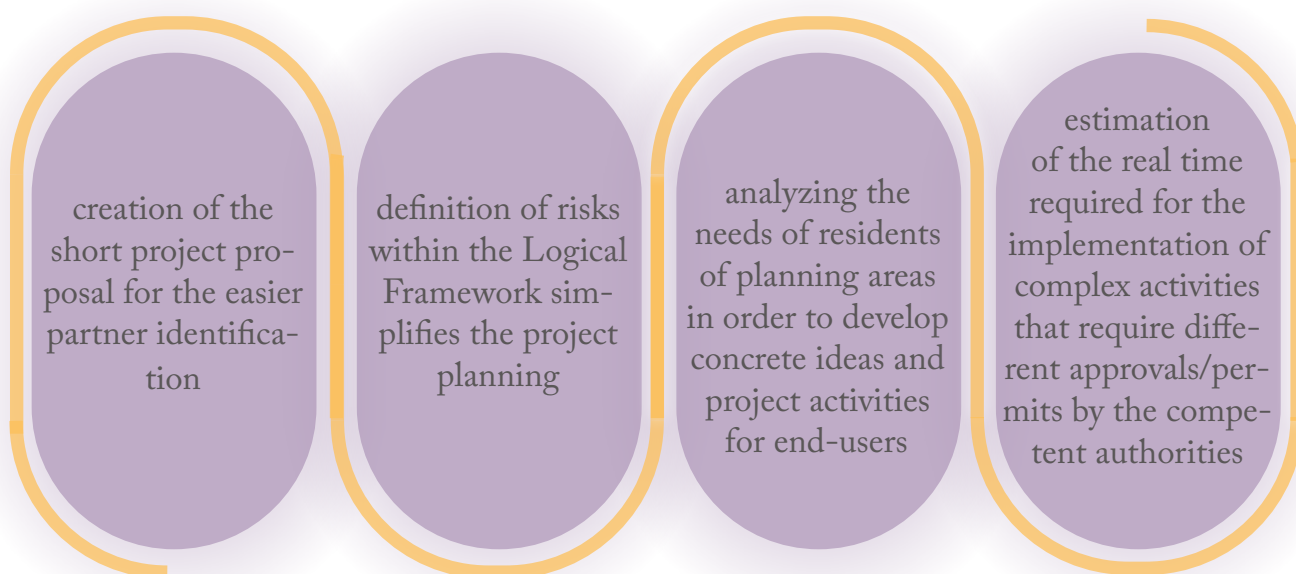
Both partners cite similar most important factors for the successful cooperation in their opinion: partnership quality, dedication to achieving project goals, the involvement of public institutions and population in projects, positive socio-political relations between countries. As the three biggest obstacles: problems in ensuring coherence in joint operations, problems of co-financing and pre-financing of cross-border cooperation projects. The most difficult phase is the phase of the project implementation, especially when there are more partners (in this case more than 4).

### *Post-project phase*

Both partners listed several post-project achievements:

- Created website with points of interest (over 250) taken over by the partner, thus promotion continues;
- Promotional material was taken over by tourist communities in partner municipalities and used at fairs outside BiH;
- after completion of the project, the results of the project were presented on several events, and thus encouraged to be continued

### Conclusions



*Figure 29 Main messages emerged from Elafiti Islands project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020) (own illustration, 2020)*

### 5.1.3. Cycling Through the History - Revitalization of the Old Narrow Gauge Railway 'ĆIRO'

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 643,266.42, of which the EU has financed 85%. The project was implemented for 24 months by main partners: Public company Vjetrenica/Popovo polje (LP/BiH) and Municipality of Konavle (CRO). Other partners were: Association for economic development REDAH Mostar (BiH), Municipality Čapljina (BiH), Municipality Neum (BiH), Association "Hercegovina Bicikl" (BiH), Tourist board of city Trebinje (BiH), Municipality Ravno (BiH), Regional Development Agency Dubrovnik (CRO), Neretva County – DUNEA (CRO), Tourist board Konavle (CRO) recreation tourism on these two border locations.

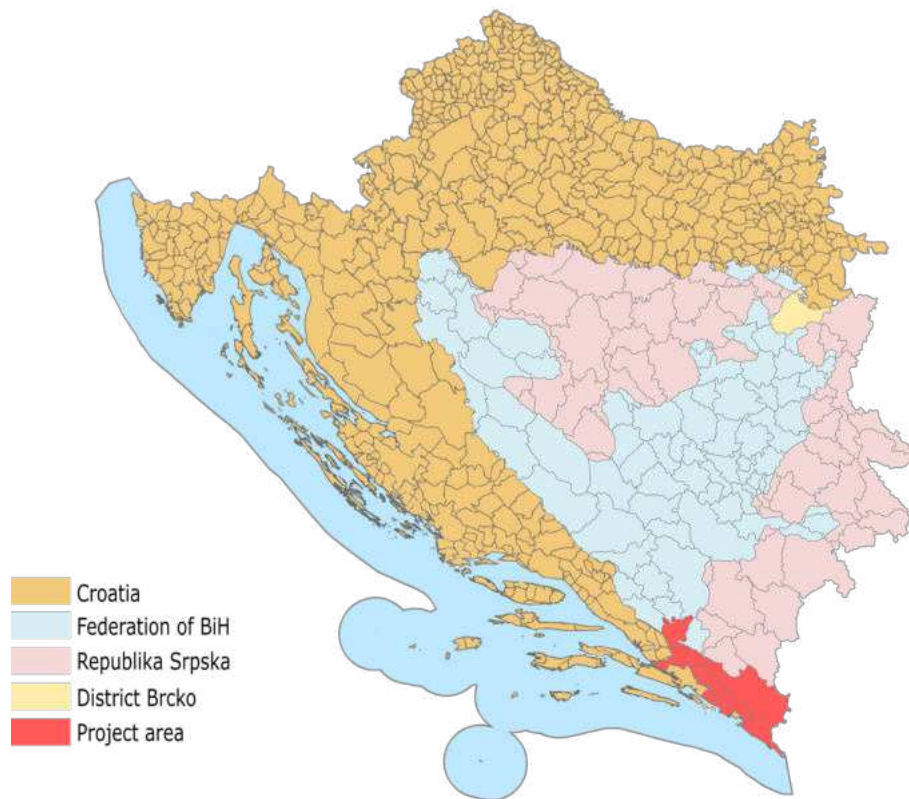


Figure 30 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and CIRO project area (own illustration, 2019)

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the integration of the economy in the border regions of Dubrovnik-Neretva County and Herzegovina through the development of a new joint tourist offer.

The results of the project included: new tourist product (cycling route) with a clear cross-border identity, small scale tourism infrastructure, which especially refers to cleaning and equipping new bicycle tracks on the routes of the old narrow-gauge railway, launching a new tourist offer in the Adriatic hinterland and the rural area, training people to offer rural tourism based on the concept of community-based development. In addition to other results, the project developed recommendations for tourist development along the old railway line 'Ćiro', documentary material on the railway line, 38 km long cross-border bicycle path completed, mapping and signaling QR codes, and more.



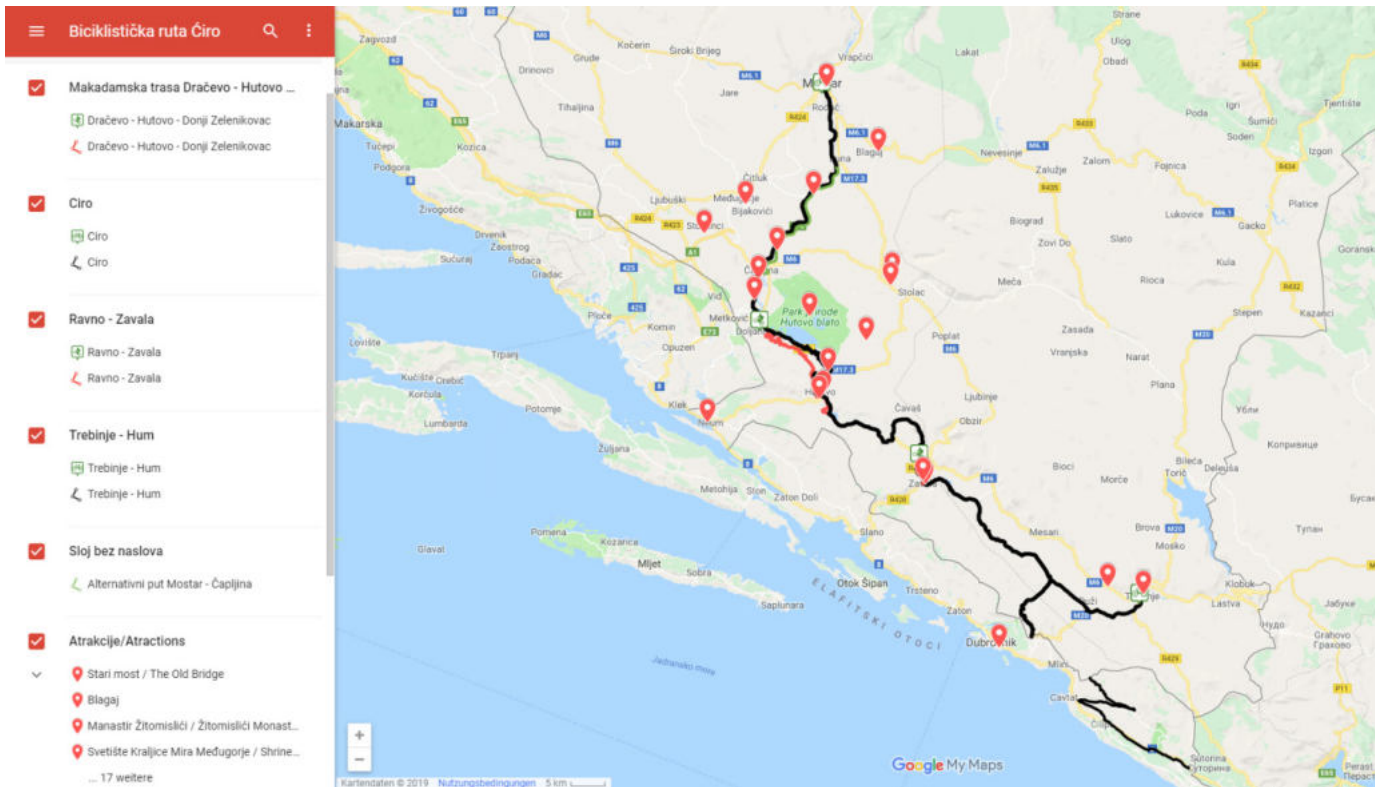


Figure 31 The map of the CIRO route (Hercegovina Bike, 2018)

## Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

### *Project initialization and identification*

Finding the project partner wasn't demanding since they knew each other from previous projects and were planning to implement this project for several years. When applying for the project, most project partners in that period were not even aware of the amount of work that the project itself was carrying, and in that sense, there were some difficulties later. As a recommendation in terms of the easier way of finding project partners, it should definitely be included in the project only people who have the primary benefit, as well as a high knowledge of the area.

### *Project planning*

All costs were planned in accordance with current market prices and in agreement with experts in specific areas. Cost planning was simple because all partners were public bodies that had secured funding to finance their activities. One of BiH partners had a problem with financing certain activities and they had to relocate budget from other projects. HR partners did not have a problem because they had secured funding from their founders.

### *Project implementation*

Project management was in some areas difficult due to the inexperience of certain partners in the implementation of EU projects. Two partners, one from the BiH and one from the HR side, were carrying out unofficially the whole project. HR partners had some problems with obtaining building permits. As an EU member, they had to take care of the environmental protection guidelines within NATURA 2000.

“

*Most of the projects under IPA BiH-HR had a problem with delays due to the lack of certain permits. The reason for this is the generally lengthy procedures within the state bodies, but also the lack of preparedness of the project partners who do not take such risks sufficiently seriously in the project planning process.”*

Bruno Bebic, Project manager

One of the project activities was the cleaning of tunnels that were devastated and in which bats were settled, and since they are a protected species some additional measurements needed to be done. For this reason, the work in Croatia was longer than expected. In Herzegovina, a tender for works has fallen twice, and the project is halted for half a year. Since certain promotional activities were related to the completion of infrastructural works, they were late as well. Also, during the division of activities and responsibilities between the partners, some inconsistencies occurred in the implementation phase (BiH partners designed promotional material, and according to the project, the same material should have been printed in Croatia, however, the design was not adapted to the printing companies with which HR partners had a contract).

The project was accompanied by the media and there was interest on the part of the population, but the citizens did not directly participate. The writing of the report was complex, therefore the HR partner advised that the preparation for the writing of the report should be approached at the beginning of the project in terms by systematizing the documentation in order to have a better overview when it comes to writing the report.

### *Final phase*

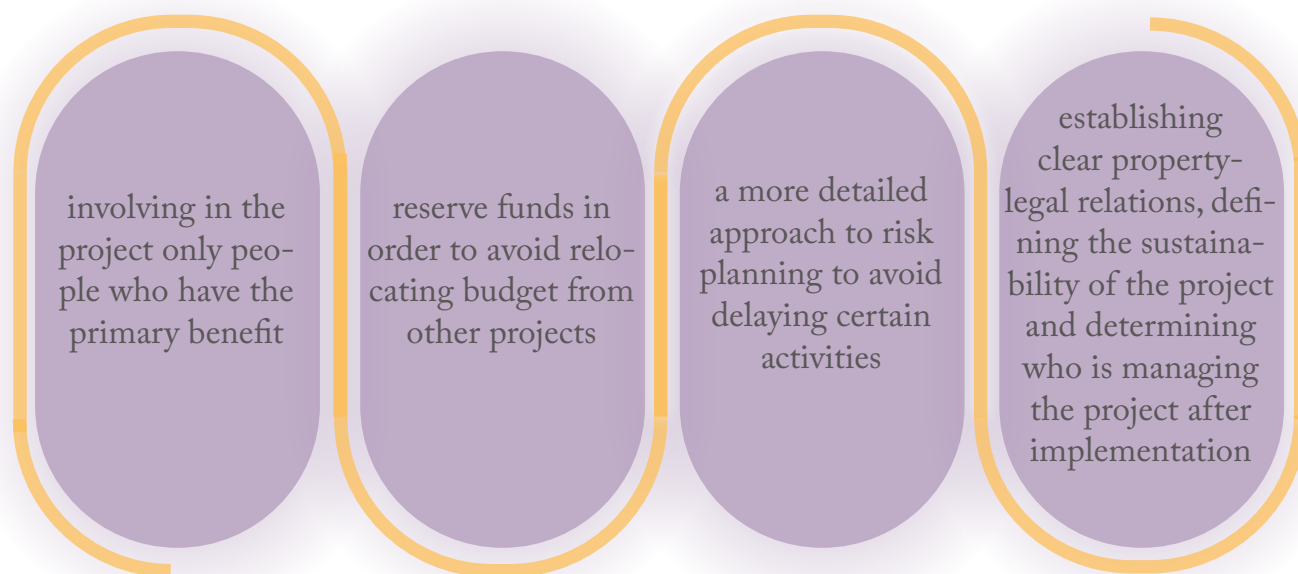
The goal of the project is achieved and all indicators are fulfilled. The HR partner to the similar projects would certainly recommend that before the beginning of the project-writing, partners should establish clear property-legal relations, define in detail sustainability of the project, be informed in advance about the process of obtaining permits for specific areas, clearly define who is managing the project for the time duration and after implementation, the liquidity of the partners and who will carry out the main part of the project. Although at first glance not that important, but establishing property-legal relationships is of utmost importance because if certain inconsistencies occur during the implementation of a project, such delays can significantly extend all project activities.

Three most important factors: quality and committed partners and sustainability of the project. The difficulties of cross-border cooperation could be seen in the diversity of legislative frameworks. According to the opinion of both partners, the most difficult project phase was the initialization of the project.

### *Post-project phase*

The project was reported again but was not approved for funding.

## Conclusions



*Figure 32 Main messages emerged from the CIRO project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020) (own illustration, 2020)*

#### 5.1.4. Bicycle for Tourism Without Frontiers - BIKE 4 TWF

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 192.689,45, of which the EU has financed 85%. The project was implemented for 24 months in the areas of Sisak-Moslavina County (LP/CRO) and Municipality of Prijedor (BiH). Other partners were: Development Agency of Sisak- Moslavina County (CRO), Lonjsko polje Nature Park, Tourist Association of Sisak-Moslavina County, Town of Hrvatska Kostajnica, Municipality of Jasenovac, Agency for economic development of municipality of Prijedor (BiH), National park Kozara, Tourist organization of Prijedor, Tourist organization of Kozarska Dubica.

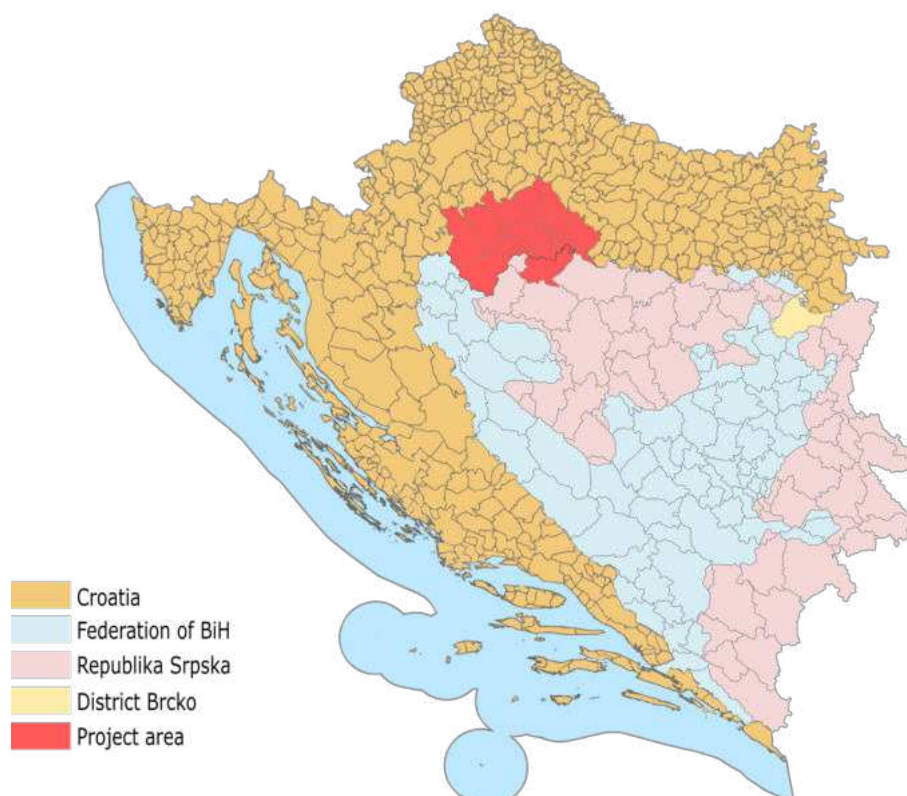


Figure 33 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and BIKE 4 TWF project area (own illustration, 2019)

The overall objective of the project was to contribute to the integration and revitalization of the cross-border region's economy with a view to fostering sustainable development. Specific objectives of the project included: improving the competitiveness of local tourism in the cross-border area by improving the attractiveness of the tourist offer in the region, improving the capacity of interest groups in the tourism sector and promoting cross-border areas. The project contributed to the networking of stakeholders in both areas of tourism and the transfer of knowledge and experience. Established partnerships between cross-border stakeholders are the basis for cooperation already realized between the Lonjsko polje Nature Park and the hotel in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Concrete results of the project are as follows:

- Enhanced cycling infrastructure within the cross-border area (partial road renovation, resting points, drinking water supply arrangements, rent-a-bike stations)
- Enhanced knowledge of tourism workers and cooperation in the cross-border area for the development of selective tourism (study trip, final conference)
- Increased public awareness of the common tourist potentials of the cross-border area (installation of internet kiosks, organization of demo cycling tours, promotion of EU funding)

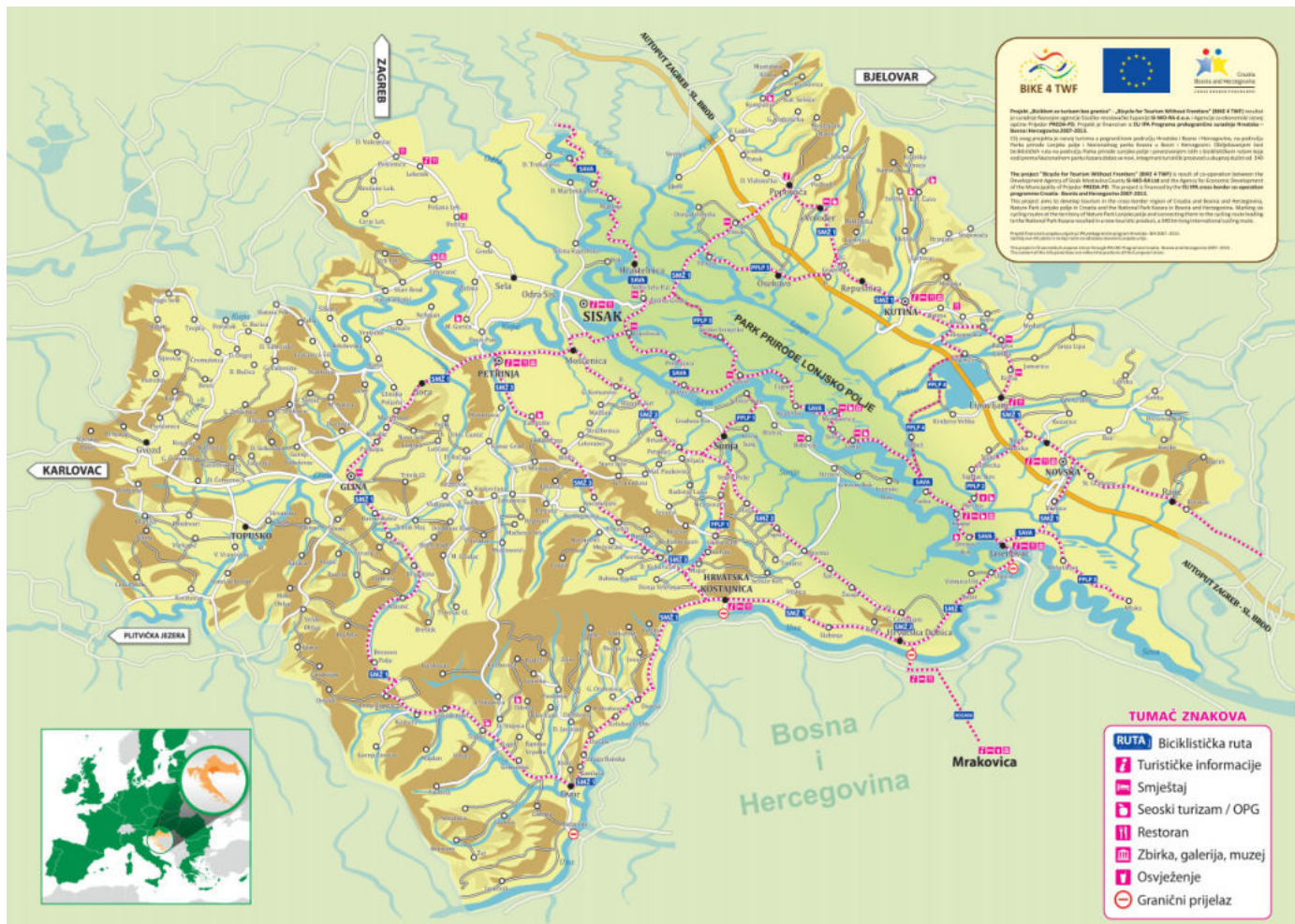


Figure 34 Map of the BIKE 4 TWF route (Lonjsko Polje, 2019)

## Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

### *Project initialization and identification*

The lead partner states that there was no problem to find a project partner. They knew most of them from before, also over some personal contacts. The idea was created within the Development Agency and relevant stakeholders in the County. Although project partners were relatively easy to find, working with them was not easy. HR partner says that some partners did not show too much interest in carrying out activities, organizing meetings, etc. The both sides would definitely change the number of partners and concentrate only on those most important. There were no major issues with time frames and costs.

### *Project planning*

Regarding the identification of work packages, it was necessary to decide who would carry or execute which work package, which required good negotiating abilities and an analysis of who was financially and operationally capable of providing certain activities.

The partner states, if the responsibilities of all participants are not clearly defined during project planning, problems will certainly arise over a period of time. The division of certain responsibilities should be, first and foremost, in line with the experience of certain partners so far.

There were some difficulties in obtaining the necessary permissions for signaling on the county and state roads, which caused less delay in activities. During project planning and preparation, project team members were well aware of the basic goal and regularly exchanged experience and working methods.

### *Project implementation*

From the beginning, it was very clear who is the project manager and who has which role. The number of reports is envisaged at the project proposal stage and five quarterly reports, one annual report and final report have been prepared. Different costs were considered such as the cost of human resources, the cost of equipment for the project team, the costs of marking bicycle paths and the marking design, the cost of planning the track (on BiH side), the cost of equipment for cycling routes and cyclists, the costs of education, study travel, visibility. All the costs were well defined, and with regard to some cost savings, more equipment was purchased than planned. Both partners often encountered bureaucratic procedures in obtaining permits and had to involve more levels of authority in the area to solve this problem. The population was involved through education, organization of study tours, promotion and visibility activities.

### *Final phase*

The goal has been achieved, and as a second success is also a basis for further project continuation. Both partners believe that the procedure for implementing cross-border projects may sometimes be over bureaucratic and over-complicated and need to be simplified, especially when it comes to writing the reports.

Partner states that the procedures accompanying EU projects are quite often too complex, but the controls of governing bodies make the whole process even more difficult.

As the three most important factors of successful cross-border cooperation HR partners sees: a good project team, partners with good financial and operational capacity, strong political support, and as the three biggest difficulties are considered: not enough funding, lack of citizen interest and politics for projects in general, rarely publication of the call for projects.

The changes that took place in relation to the planning and implementation phase are changes in bureaucratic procedures, changes in the market - price changes, people's fluctuations. The most demanding phase in their opinion was the implementation phase.

### *Post-project phase*

The second phase of the project was applied as the next IPA CBC project, but it was not accepted. Specific measures have been taken to ensure the practical benefits of the project in a given area such as education of the local population, training of tourist staff, purchase of equipment and arrangement of cycling routes.

### **Conclusions**

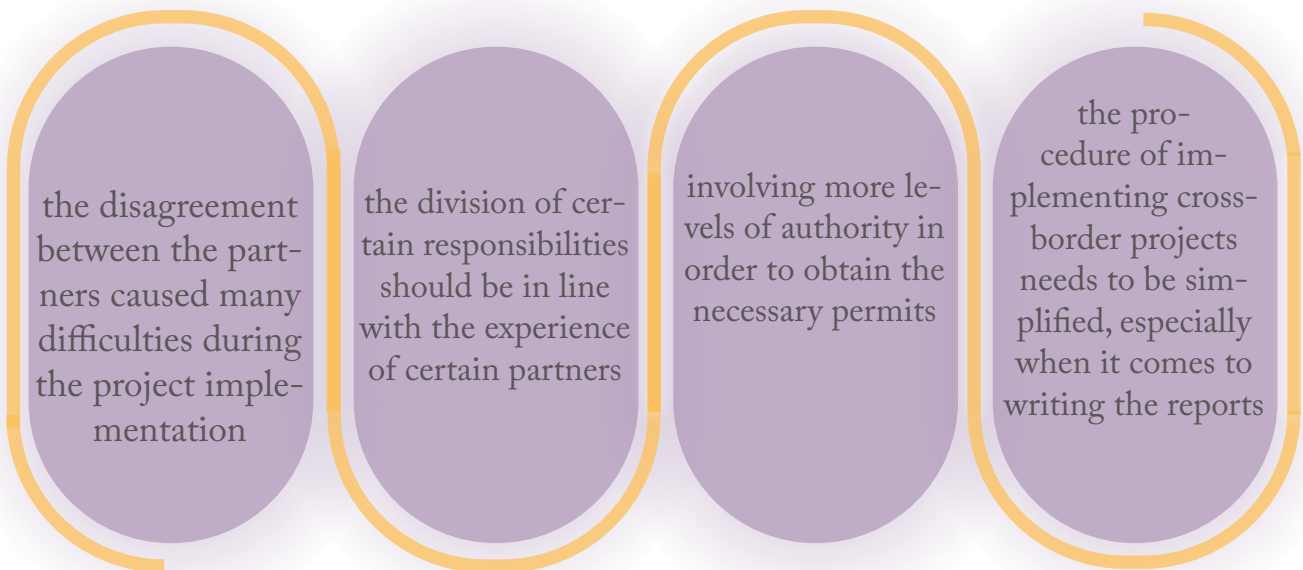


Figure 35 Main messages emerged from the BIKE 4 TWF project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020)

“

*Political support is an important segment of any project, and as the political scene of these two countries is complex in itself, it is often difficult to get political attention within the project.”*

Project manager, Anon

### 5.1.5. PEM - Public Energy Management

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 162,384.43, of which the EU has financed 85%. The project was implemented for 18 months in the areas of Karlovac County (LP/CRO) and City of Banja Luka (BiH).

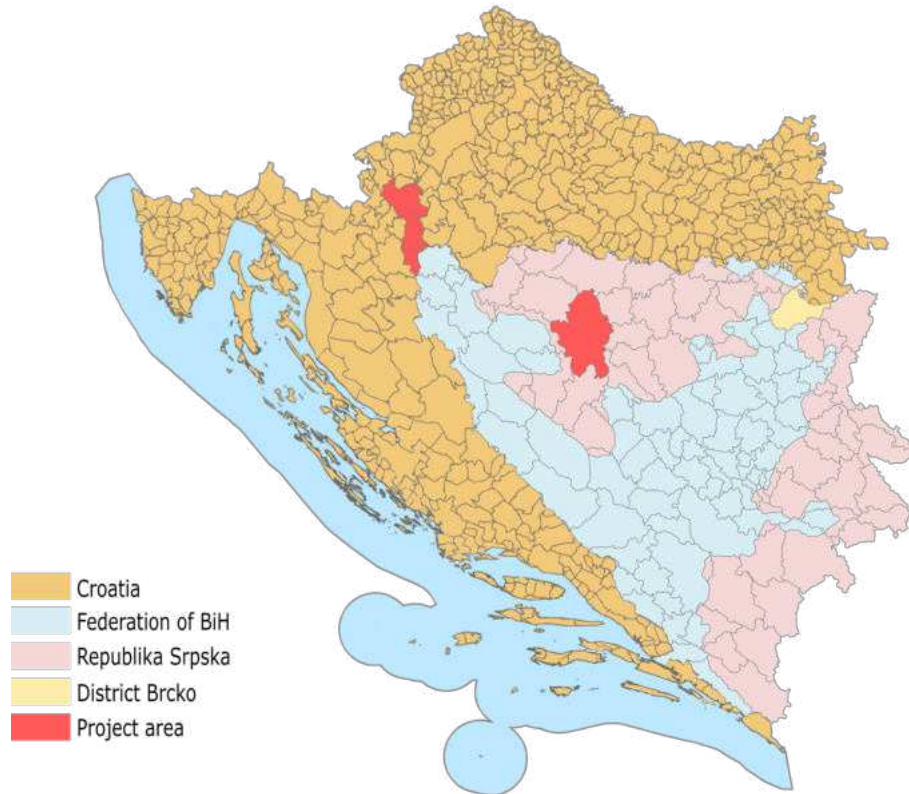


Figure 36 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and PEM project area (own illustration, 2019)

The main objective of this project was to stimulate and promote the sustainable use of natural resources through the implementation of energy efficiency (EE) activities and achieving energy savings in the target area. The purpose of the project activity was to increase the knowledge and awareness of the energy efficiency in the targeted area and to implement and improve the procedures and the energy management system in public buildings in the targeted area. During the implementation of the project, 10 educational workshops on energy efficiency were held for 159 employees in public buildings and 1 joint workshop for cross-border partners and representatives of public buildings.

Concrete results of the project included: five educational workshops in BiH, one joint workshop with project partners and employees of public buildings from the Karlovac County and the city of Banja Luka, joint strategy and action plan for increasing energy efficiency in the border region of the Karlovac County and the city of Banja Luka, energy management/monitoring systems implemented in 19 public institutions in BiH, participation in the EU public display campaign and five more public facilities in Banja Luka included and registered in the EU display campaign.



## Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

### *Project initialization and identification*

The finding of the partner was quite difficult and the partners would suggest for the purpose of a better finding of the partner in the future: participation in partner forums, inter-municipal cooperation and exchange of examples of good practices and previous experience.

The partners did not know each other before, but they had efficiently implemented similar projects earlier. The project was identified through a sectorial development document. BiH partners state that cooperation at this stage greatly eased the previous experience of partners from Croatia.

### *Project planning*

There were no significant problems at the planning phase, and everything went well. Also at this stage, the HR partner contributed to the development and their experience helped a lot.

### *Project implementation*

The control of the project was very clear and defined by the project application. Project management was run by a project team made by members of all involved partners, but within their hierarchical and internal procedures within each organization. Reporting was done in accordance with the contract with the donor and the prescribed deadlines (according to the EU Delegation), but also at the project level (between the partners at the monthly level). Mostly everything is completed within the deadline. The most important task was delegating and precisely defining the bearer of the activity.

Several different costs were planned, such as staff costs, equipment procurement, travel (joint meetings), promotional and educational materials. Costs mostly corresponded to planned activities.

Often bureaucratic problems such as matching work with donor requirements have arisen, but the agreement with the partner and the contracting authority resolved it. As a great success at this stage, the BiH partner emphasizes the exchange of good practices and methods of work.

### *Final phase*

BIH partner from this project emphasizes the importance of the acquired knowledge and experience in the implementation of externally funded projects, knowledge of project management and technical guidance and documentation of project activities. Also states that it is important to take into account the detailed preparation and elaboration of projects. Finally, projects similar to this should be more committed in the phase of preparation of the project proposal, especially in the preparation of the logical framework.

“

*Finding a partner can sometimes be a complex process, and I believe that administrative staff of municipalities and higher institutions, as well as employees of certain agencies, should invest more in networking with other institutions, thus acquiring contacts and meeting potential partners.”*

Sanja Rajcevic, Project manager

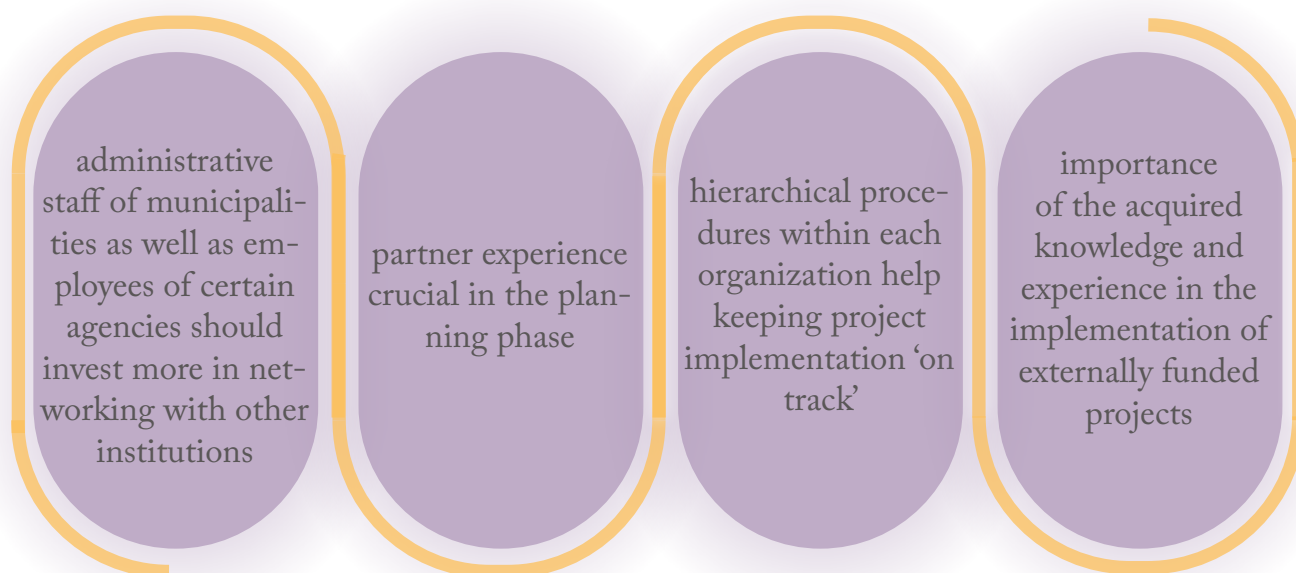
The preparation of final reports was complex, especially for BiH partners because of insufficient previous experience in preparing similar documents.

As the three most important factors of cross-border cooperation, both partners point out: acquaintance of partners, the similarity of project goals and activities and experienced project teams. The most demanding phase in their opinion was the implementation.

### *Post-project phase*

The sustainability of individual project activities was ensured through the implementation of legal solutions that were subsequently adopted. In order to ensure the practical benefit of the project, it was aimed at improving knowledge and awareness of the need for cross-border cooperation and the exchange of good practices with the EU Member States.

### Conclusions



*Figure 37 Main messages emerged from the PEM project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020)*

### 5.1.6. Green Islands

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 520.956, 54, of which the EU has financed 85%. The project was implemented for 24 months in the areas of Zadar County (CRO) and Municipality of Bosanska Krupa (BiH). The main partners were the Public Institution for Management of Protected Areas in Zadar County (LP/HR) and Municipality of Bosanska Krupa. Other partners were: Zadar County (HR), City of Zadar (HR), Centre for Promotion of Local Development PLOD Bihać (BiH) and Municipality of Bihać (BIH).

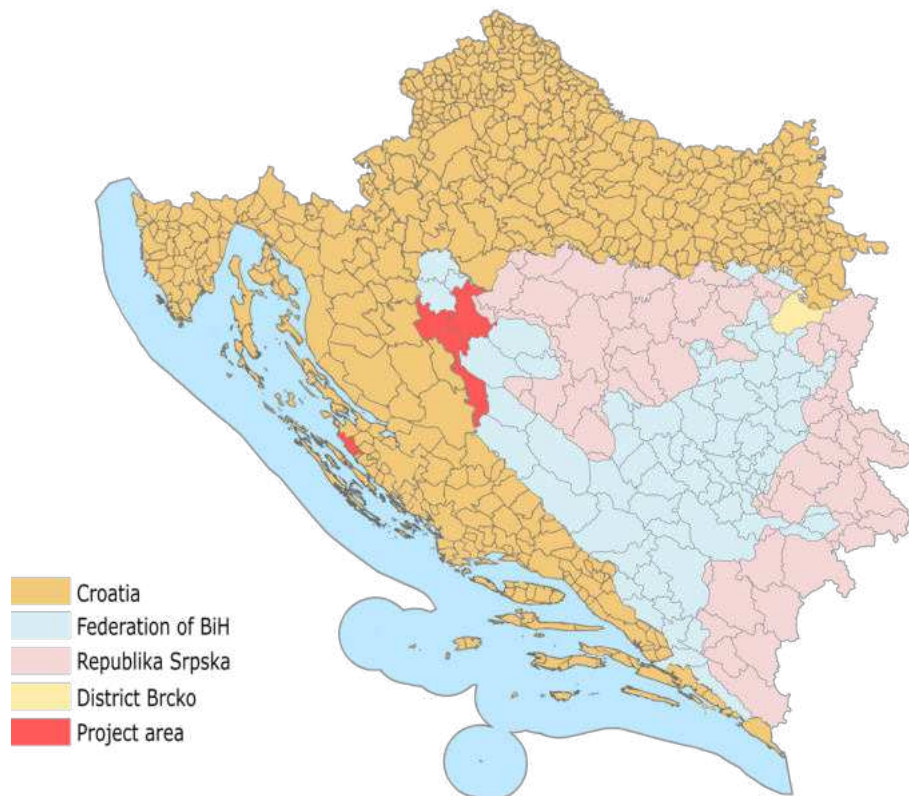


Figure 38 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and Green Islands project area (own illustration, 2019)

The objectives of this project, co-financed by the European Union, were to improve the quality of life through the promotion of the environment, through cooperation and conservation activities of the two regions in Croatia and BiH. The specific goal was to preserve, revitalize and promote selected urban green areas in the area of the Municipality of Bosanska Krupa, Bihać Municipality and Zadar County, and through the defined activities to strengthen and strengthen the cross-border dialogue.

Horticultural and construction works were carried out in the Vladimir Nazor Park in Zadar, the Mali Ade Park in the municipality of Bosanska Krupa, and for urban park in Bihać an urban project was created. Capacity building activities and the development of common environmental management standards in green urban areas have contributed to the enhancement of cross-border dialogue between local stakeholders involved in creating environmental policy.



Figure 39 Recovered urban green areas (Zeleni otoci, 2014)

## Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

### *Project initialization and identification*

Partners agree that finding project partners was not demanding, since they have already implemented together the project "Una - Spring of Life", funded also by the CBC HR-BiH. The idea was based on the need, and in line with development strategies, and after talking with partners, project activities were elaborated.

### *Project planning*

Certain problems have arisen in risk planning. The weather conditions in BiH have been subjected to construction work, although the risk was somewhat anticipated. Everything was completed until the completion of the project. Useful at this stage was certainly a strengthened partnership.

### *Project implementation*

In total, one interim and one final report was produced. As far as the costs are concerned, the reallocation of funds was made in order to make the consumption-optimized.

There were also certain problems that were not planned. One of the experts gave the incomplete bid that had been difficult to implement in the preparation phase of the project, and he broke the deadlines due to which the activity was late and ultimately was not managed to do enough educational workshops for the number of people who were planned by the project. The provision of incomplete bids within projects financed in this way not only creates certain financial difficulties but also slows or hinders the realization of project activities. In addition to the project team, the smart selection of experts is also key to every project.

The success in this phase is certainly a good cooperation between the partners. However, the HR partner is very disappointed that the control body is complicating and slowing down the implementation, so that unnecessary and additional evidence of the costs incurred was often required.

During the implementation of the project, residents were involved in educational workshops and as end-users of provided infrastructure.

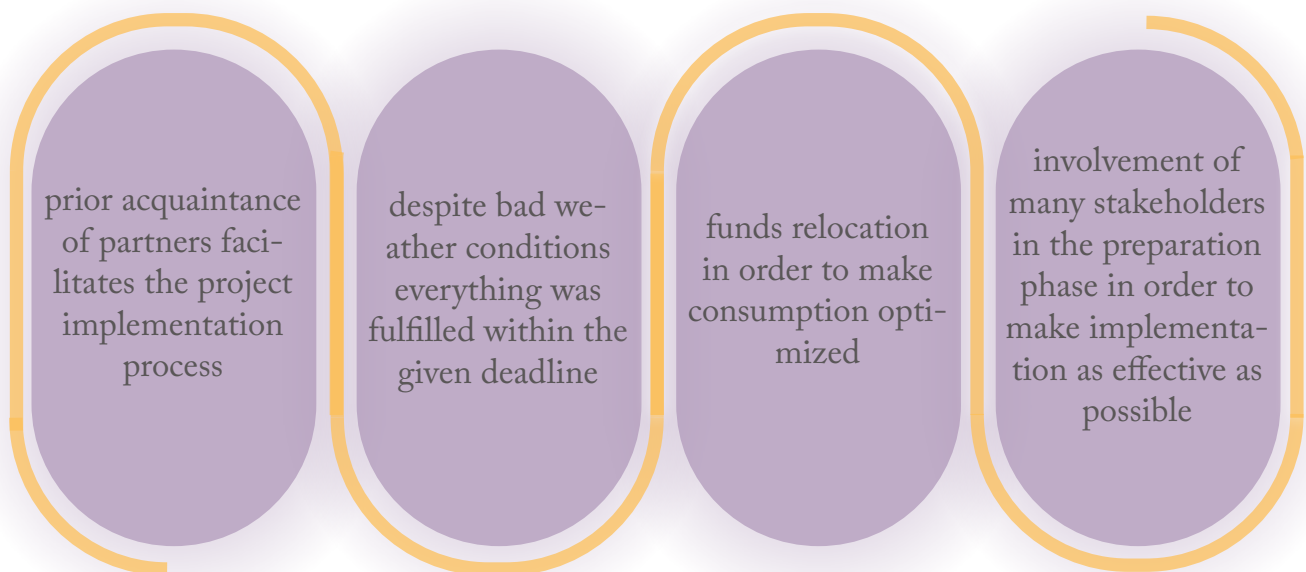
### *Final phase*

The goal has been achieved, and besides the main goal, one of the successes is certainly the strengthening of the capacity of partner institutions. Partners believe that such projects require the involvement of as many stakeholders as possible in the preparation phase so that implementation is as effective as possible. The project to continue cooperation has been applied, the results are expected in the summer of 2019, and the project is similar to previous projects with the same partnership. As the three most important factors for successful cooperation, HR partners see trust, sincerity and political support, while three factors that underlie development are contrary to the above mentioned. The HR partner thinks that the most difficult phase of the project is the application phase, while BiH partners say that the implementation phase is the most complex.

### *Post-project phase*

The continuation of the project was applied at the 2 call for proposals of cross-border cooperation IPA HR-BiH-MNE. The project is applied to provide the means to meet a particular need. Consequently, the benefit of the project was secured.

## Conclusions



*Figure 40 Main messages emerged from the Green Islands project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020)*

### 5.1.7. PROGRES - Protection of Nature and Globalisation of Renewable Energy Sources

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 486,880,28, of which the EU has financed 85%. The project was implemented for 18 months in the areas of Municipality of Nijemci (HR) and Municipality of Gračanica and Kalesija (BiH). The main beneficiaries were the Municipality of Nijemci (HR) and Development Association Nerda (BIH). Other partners were: Croatia: Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar (HR), Vukovar-Srijem County Development Agency "Hrast"(HR), EKO sustav d.o.o. (HR), Municipality of Gračanica (BiH) and Municipality of Kalesija (BiH).

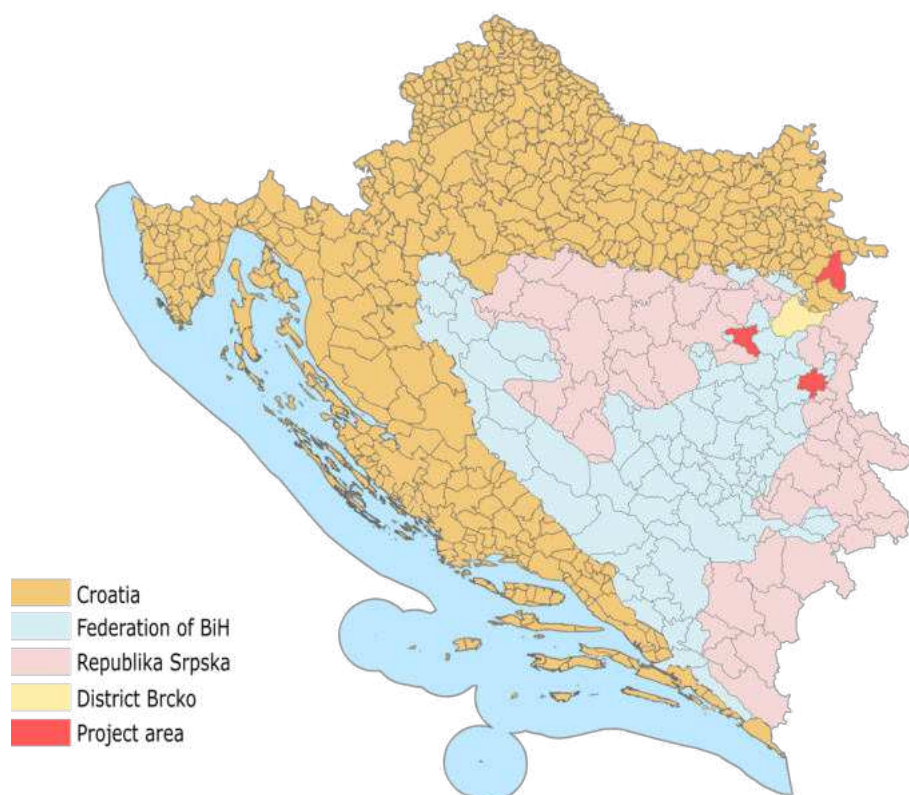


Figure 41 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and PROGRES project area (own illustration, 2019)

The main project activity was to equip the demonstration facilities with solar collectors and photovoltaic panels for the use of renewable energy sources in the beneficiary municipalities.

The project aimed to raise public awareness on the importance of using renewable energy sources in rural cross-border areas, through education of representatives of local governments, businesses and farmers in these areas, and also to encourage energy independence of local governments.

By fostering greater use of renewable energy sources (RES) in rural communities in the cross-border regions of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project contributed to the preservation of natural values of the environment, biodiversity and nature conservation and enhancement of life conditions in the targeted area. In order to encourage energy independence of local self-governments in cross-border

areas by promoting the principles of energy efficiency, production of energy in RES power plants and cogeneration. Two Studies on the potentials for the use of RES in both cross-border areas were produced and disseminated to local self-governments, economic entities and farmers in rural cross-border areas that can serve as basis for further development and investments in this sector.

## Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

### *Project initialization and identification*

The both sides state that it was not difficult to find the project partners. For BiH partners, it was very important to find partners with experience and capacity for quality implementation. Prior to this project, partners did not cooperate on joint projects, but the BiH partner was familiar with the work of the Development Agency through which they came to the Municipality of Nijemci, which was the leading partner in the project. The partners in BiH have known each other from before and have implemented common projects in the past. The idea was the result of the thoughts of all partners, and it was also aligned with local development strategies. Regarding the promotion of the use of renewable energy sources, which is applicable to several sectors, they decided to use renewable energy sources on public buildings. As useful at this stage, both partners emphasize the involvement of all partners and also the consulting of professionals with specific technical knowledge related to the project's theme.

### *Project planning*

Costs are well planned, but from the planning and writing of the project application to the very implementation of the project has passed a lot of time and on the market, some prices have changed. Some events could not be foreseen in the matter of risks and overcoming measures. For example, at the early stage of project implementation, the BiH project manager died, which certainly led to a deadlock in the project, which is not something you can predict in risk planning. The project timetable was continuously updated and adapted to the circumstances in which partners were at a given moment, all in close communication with the Contracting Authority. Continuous communication was maintained through several different channels of communication. Useful at this stage was certainly honest and open communication between all partners and the equal involvement of all. Cooperation also eased the willingness of all partners to engage them outside the given framework. The biggest difficulties that occurred at this stage were incomplete information on certain procedures of the relevant institutions concerning the issue of consent/approval/permits

### *Project implementation*

The management of the project was clearly defined, the project team was appointed by the partner institution's decisions with a clear division of tasks and obligations, with regular communication and meetings, and internal monitoring. The costs are planned under the terms of the IPA CBC Program. Citizens' participation in the project was not envisaged to such an extent, except that citizens were invited to public events (promotions, etc.). Constant monitoring of implementation, careful allocation of resources, constant communication and information sharing were useful.

### *Final phase*

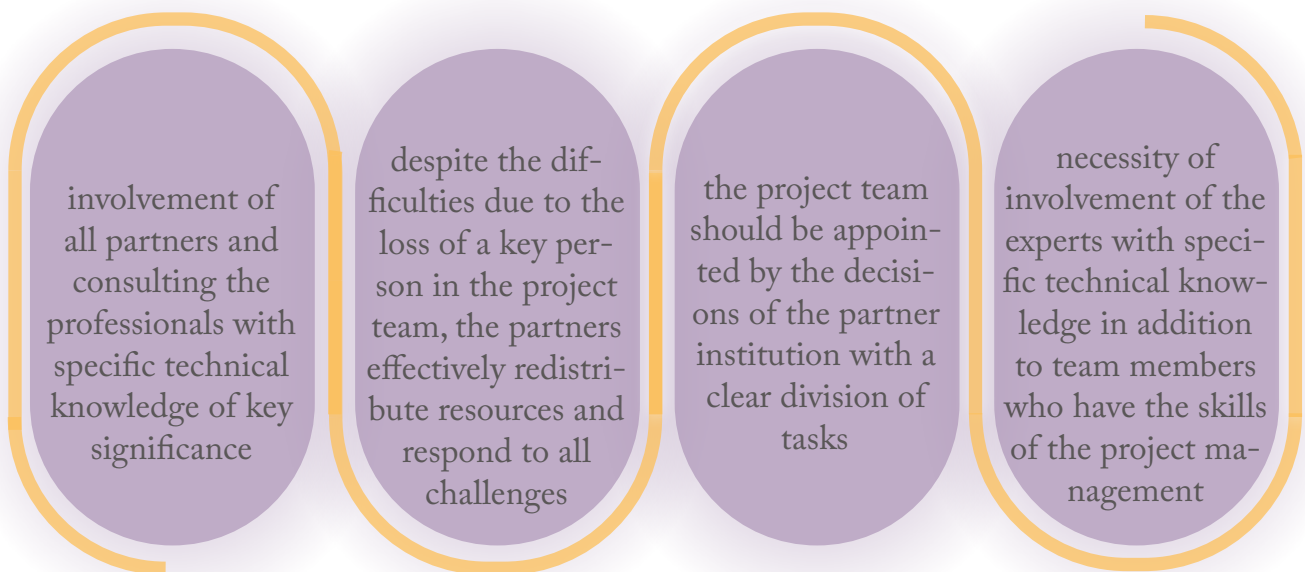
The goal of the project has been achieved, as well as all other goals. Particular attention should be paid to the choice of partners and the feasibility of the project idea (realistic definition of goals). To the projects similar to these partners advise that the team should always be experts with specific technical knowledge, in addition to team members who have the skills of the project management.

Cooperation between partners has continued on other projects. As the most important factors of successful cooperation, partners indicate willingness and openness to cooperation and joint definition of solutions for identified problems, and as a limiting factor, they state finding partners with appropriate capacities.

### *Post-project phase*

These projects have opened up opportunities for further implementation of energy efficiency measures in local communities where it has been implemented, but also wider. Municipalities that were involved in the project and public facilities with installed equipment for the use of RES have provided maintenance of the mentioned equipment, which is not only for the mentioned facilities in terms of reducing the cost of electricity and reducing the CO2 emissions, but it is benefiting the wider community since the objects that were the subject of the project are public buildings used by citizens.

### **Conclusions**



“

*“Success at this stage is certainly an open approach for all involved partners and willingness to cooperate honestly, especially when we lost our dear and important person on the team. In the end, human openness and honesty won over this project.”*

Amra Jaganjac, Project manager

Figure 42 Main messages emerged from the PROGRES project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020)



### 5.1.8. ForestEye - Protection of nature and environment from forest fires

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, and the total value of the project is EUR 651,524.40, of which the EU has financed 85%. The project was implemented for 24 months in the areas of Split-Dalmatia County (LP/CRO) and Northwest Kanton (BiH). The main beneficiaries were Croatian Forests/Forest Directorate Split (HR) and Hercegbosnian Forests (BiH). Other partners were: Institute for Development and International Relations (HR) and Ministry of Science, Education, Culture and Sport of Canton 10 (BiH).

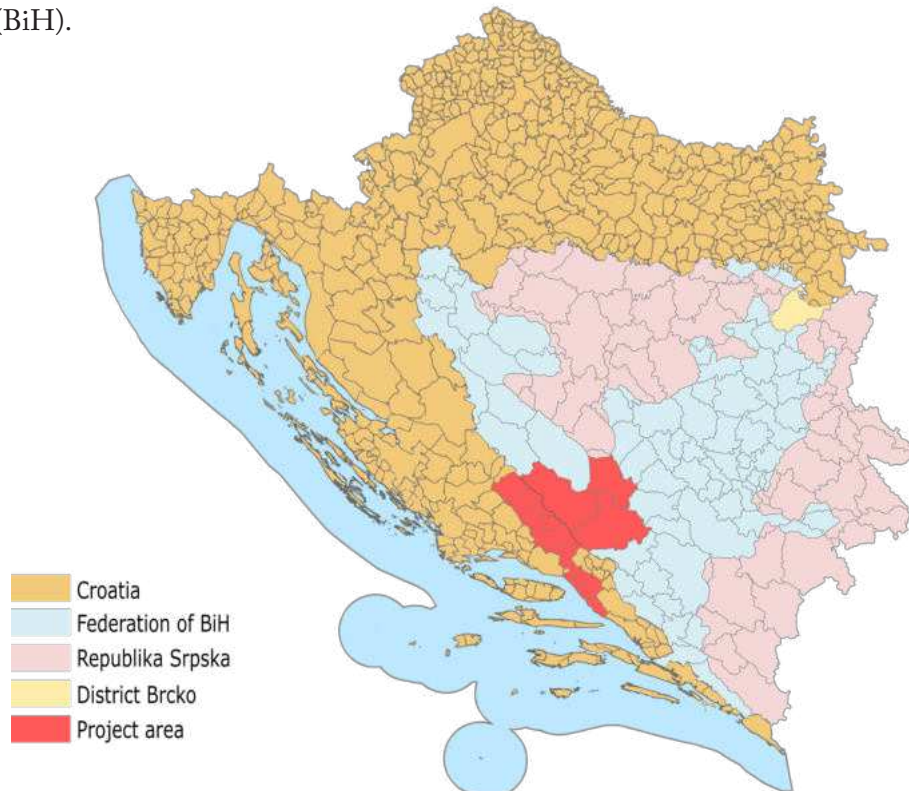


Figure 43 Map of the Croatia and BiH with entities and ForestEye project area (own illustration, 2019)

ForestEye project aims at protecting the nature and environment in Croatia in the Split-Dalmatia County and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Herzegovina and the Northwest region / Kanton 10, where there is a high risk of forest fires as a major threat to the environment and nature, in particular to forest ecosystems. In particular, the goal of the project is to ensure the preservation of forests of high natural and cultural value through a joint action to detect and extinguish forest fires - partners will launch and support the establishment of a joint Cross-Border Interventional Fire Fighting Team (Team CBC FFI) and the creation of an action plan. Through activities involving low-volume infrastructure, the project will enable faster access to forest fire by intervention teams and vehicles, thus ensuring effective intervention and rescue activities - access to intervention firefighting teams will be improved in the Biokovo Nature Park (SD County) and intact forests of Kupres and Tomislavgrad (Canton 10). In the end, let's not forget the prevention, the project will educate, raise awareness and promote behavior that leads to the prevention of natural risks, in particular, fire caused by human factor.

## Evaluation of the project on the basis of project partner interviews

### *Project initialization and identification*

The both partners agree that it was not hard to find the partners. The applicants of the Croatian forests cooperated already with all partners in the HR and one partner in BiH, and Hercegbosnian forests contacted their partners in BiH for the needs of the project.

The project manager had good knowledge about the implementation possibilities, had a lot of information from the field estimated costs based on extensive experience in the field of the project application, knew all partners/associates and communicated with them exquisitely.

Also at this stage, it was useful that the project manager of the application process has just completed the education for EU project leaders and managers and has perfectly managed the application process. An expert from the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) has continuously given instructions on how to elaborate on the project idea, plan project activities and write the application.

### *Project planning*

The distribution of tasks was simple on both sides, for each task a person was willing to accept the task voluntarily. When the costs could not be estimated from the experience, the partners asked for bids and got an insight into real costs. One of the partners wanted to plan risky activities because of the excessive number of users they wanted to involve in project activities, but due to experts' experience, the risk was minimized. The planning of the project was on the highest level because the expert was directing the production (IRMO), and the Croatian forests were well aware of the topic (sustainable forest management, fire protection, education). All partners were experts in their field of activity.

### *Project implementation*

Project management was well defined in advance and applied in the implementation. The project organization had clearly described the roles and responsibilities of each partner. They had regular meetings for monitoring results and progress.

As for the time frame, there were fewer deviations in procurement, and construction work was delayed due to snow, but very little or without consequences on the expected results of the project.

The costs were well planned. There were savings and then they were redirected to additional works that increased the quality of the project. As a special success, it is certainly considered that both partners had excellent communication. They all appreciated each other, the leader was excellent in leadership and communication, and there were no tense and stressful situations.

The participation of citizens was reflected in the high response of schools, teachers, and students.

There were no conflicts throughout the implementation period. When the co-workers were not able to finish something due to other obligations, the project manager took over on himself, and nothing was delayed. There were enough meetings, one every three months in another country, so the partners could discuss all the concerns about project activities and come up with common ideas about possible solutions. Live meetings meant a lot to the community on the project.

The most demanding part of the project was the production of documentation. Although it was not a problem to collect and deliver all the key information, the contracting authority demanded changes in the way how data was presented, although this did not increase the quality of the project or the report, but required a lot of time.

### *Final phase*

All project goals have been achieved. The HR partner advises that should be paid attention to the detailed planning because when each activity is well designed when specific measurable and realistic goals (SMART indicators) are set, then the implementation is clear and favorable.

The partners continued their cooperation and submitted a new cross-border cooperation project. A new idea, jointly elaborated. The process was again pleasing and full of trust. Partners believe that the socio-political situation does not affect cooperative projects in the border area and that they are linked to the expertise and goals they want to achieve, and do not look at the socio-political situation.

As the three most important success factors of cross-border cooperation, partners see good leadership, experience in EU projects and commitment to goals, while the difficulties are related to the reporting process. Reporting should be simpler and contracting authorities should have more confidence in the implementers, because we are experts in the field of project implementation, the one who have more knowledge, experience and expertise.

### *Post-project phase*

Partners maintain infrastructure from their own resources, schools use purchased equipment and programs. Cooperation continues. During the project, excellent promotion was done; users were included, provided everything needed to continue using the results.

## Conclusions

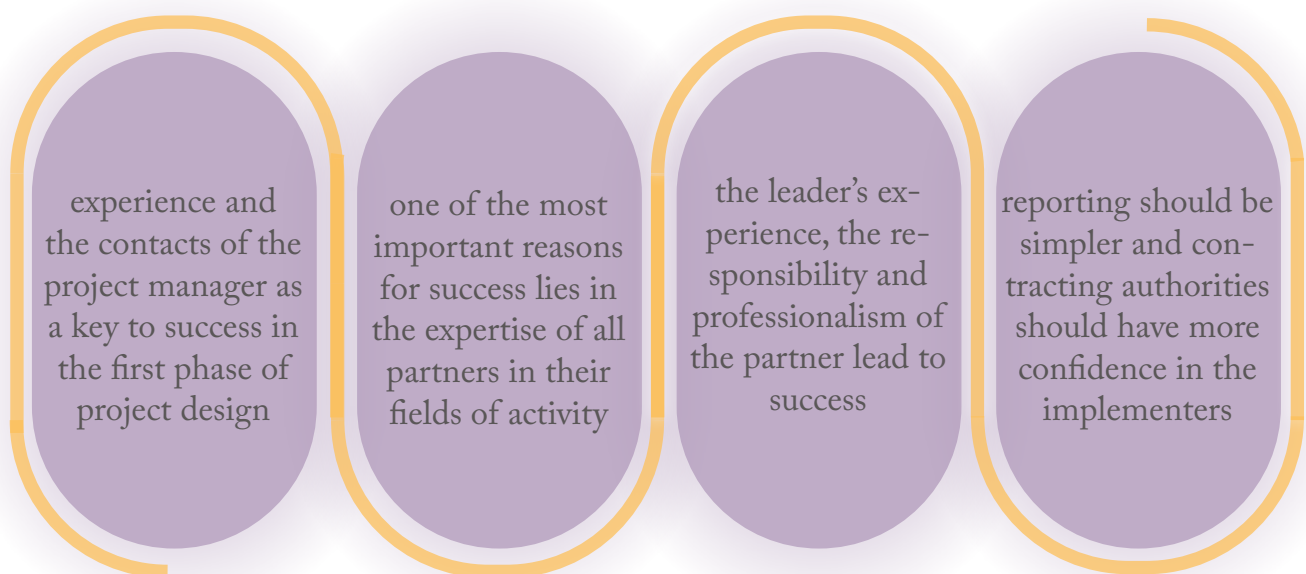


Figure 44 Main messages emerged from the ForestEye project based on partner interviews (own illustration, 2020)

## 5.2. Overall Project Analyses

After a detailed analysis of all eight projects individually, the projects were analyzed together through project phases, including their common characteristics and problems.

### 5.2.1. Project initialization and idea identification

The identification of project partners was not a problem for most respondents. Some previously cooperated with the same project partners, and after successful cooperation, they decided to continue with other projects, while some found partners based on personal contacts and a good reputation. The process of developing ideas was individual for each project, but most of the ideas came from the development strategy of a city or municipality, or as an identified long-term need. As a useful experience at this stage, the respondents state the possibility of exchanging ideas and working on common goals. Also, most consider useful the previous experience of partners in similar projects and the inclusion of certain experts at the very beginning of the project. In addition, partners with rich experiences and good connections, both with experts and politicians, are certainly beneficial in this project phase.

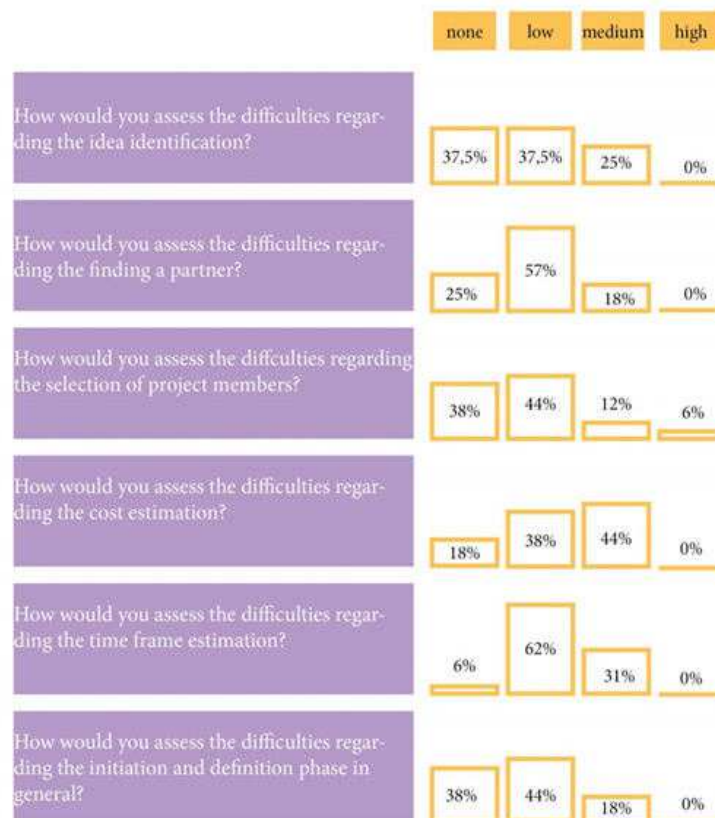


Figure 45 Results of quantitative analysis in the initialization phase of the projects based on interviews with partners (own interpretation, 2019)

Most of the respondents, both HR and BiH partners, did not have significant problems in the project's initialization phase. However, BiH partners had more difficulties than HR partners. Problems arisen at this stage were mostly attributed to the inexperience of the project team in the projects of the European integration, compared with HR partners who are already members of the EU and who have greater experience in the implementation of such a project. Also, HR partners on one project had difficulties with the inadequate choice of partners, which later caused a number of problems in implementing project activities, etc.

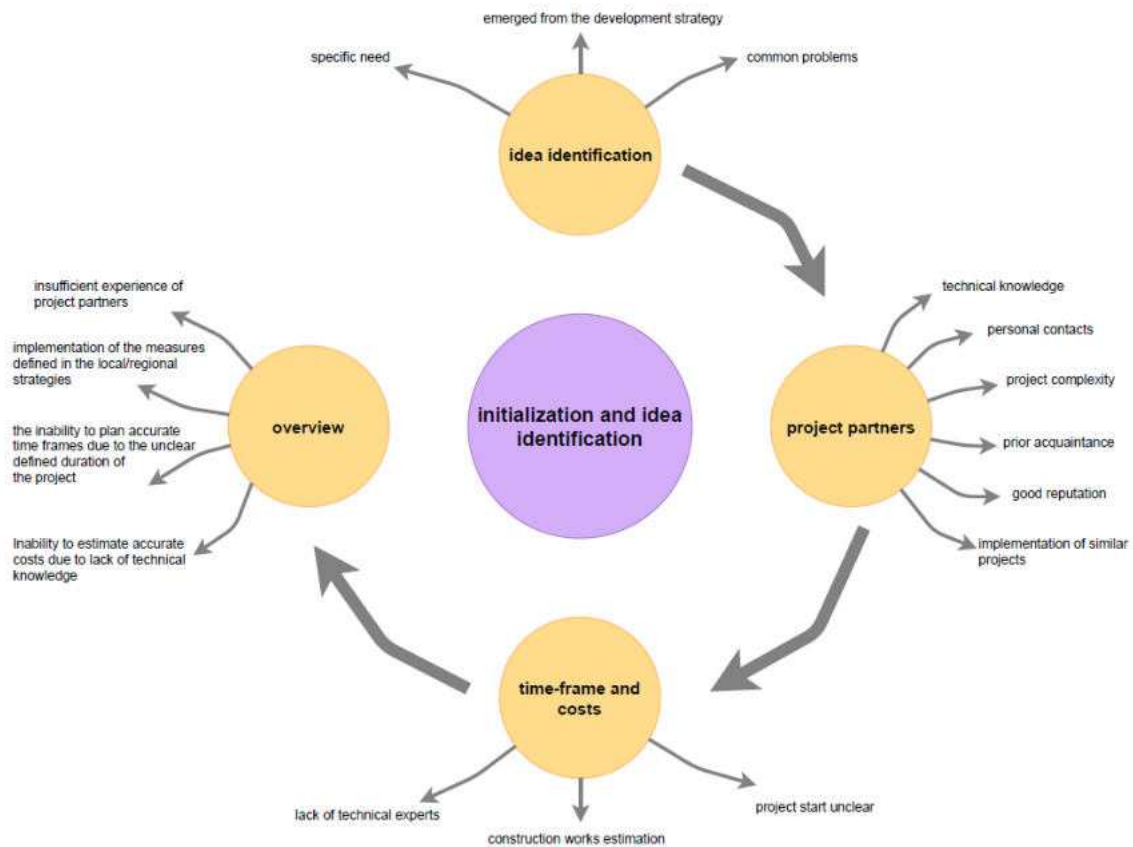


Figure 46 The most frequently encountered problems and advantages cited by the interviewees during the initialization and project idea identification phase (own illustration, 2019)

### 5.2.3. Planning phase

There were no significant problems with work package identification, resource planning and communication, as this was already defined earlier in the program. Cost planning, as well as the financing of certain activities, has proven to be much easier with partners who are public authorities and have provided budget.

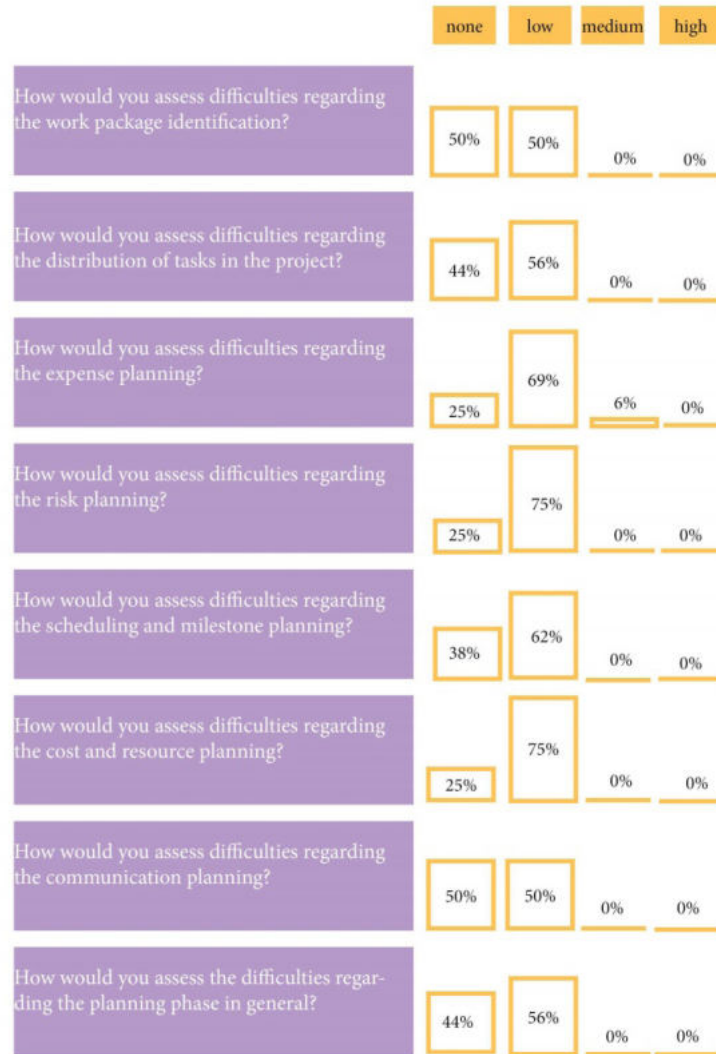


Figure 47 Results of quantitative analysis in the planning phase of the projects based on interviews with partners (own interpretation, 2019)

A significant problem for most respondents was risk planning. Almost all of them had a common problem when obtaining certain building permits because these procedures in public inquiries lasted much longer than anticipated at the planning stage. Also, many partners stated that the weather conditions had been subject to certain obstacles that could not have been included in the planning phase. Planning of milestones generally went smoothly, except in cases where the deadlines were broken due to the long waiting period of the permits.

Generally, at this stage, most of the partners did not have significant problems. BiH partners had more difficulties with the reporting process on one project.

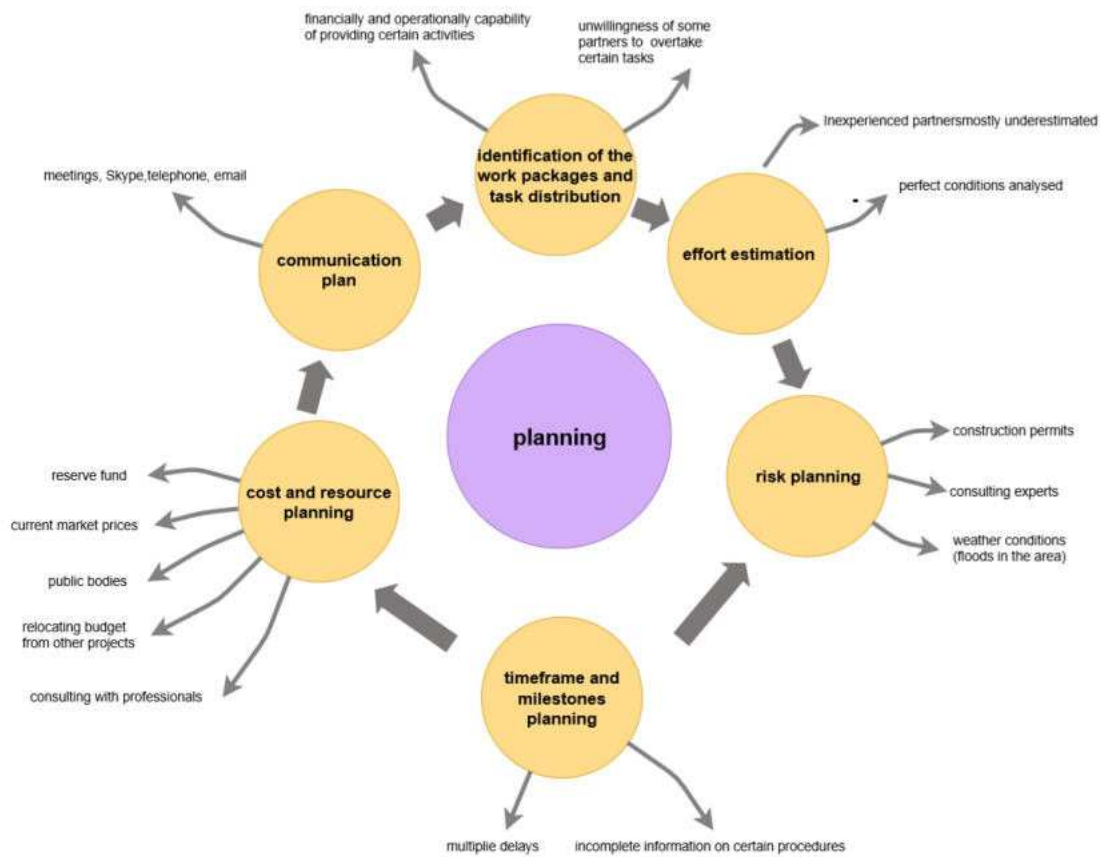


Figure 48 The most frequently encountered problems and advantages cited by the interviewees during the project planning phase (own illustration, 2019)

### 5.2.1. Implementation phase

Project management and control with all project partners was mostly clearly defined, and the project team had clear tasks and responsibilities. The number of reports depended on the length of the project duration but defined by the program. Mostly all of them had interim reports and final reports. The communication was regular through several different forms of communication with mandatory meetings identified by the project. In rare cases, project management was impeded due to the inexperience of certain partners, but in those cases, most of the responsibilities were taken by experienced partners. In general, the costs were well planned, but if sometimes happened that certain activities required more resources than anticipated, then the partners relocated the money and in that way provided effective implementation. Almost all projects had a problem with delaying certain project activities due to the long procedure for obtaining permits for construction works, which caused the project to be stopped for a longer or shorter period. Also, delays were often due to unfavorable weather conditions and insufficient involvement of certain partners. Most of the partners highlighted dissatisfaction with the complexity of the reporting. As successfully at this stage, the partners emphasize good communication, exchange of working methods and experiences. As for the participation of citizens, they were mainly passive participants being just informed about specific planning activities that will be implemented in the planned area, but they rarely participated by giving concrete ideas and suggestions.



Figure 49 Results of quantitative analysis in the implementation phase of the project based on interviews with partners (own interpretation, 2019)

From the previous table, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents did not have significant problems during the implementation phase, although in the interview they often emphasized this phase as one of the most demanding one and stated the difficulties they encountered. HR partners put emphasis on the complex reporting procedure and too long waiting for permits that have slowed down or stopped the implementation of the project for a certain period.



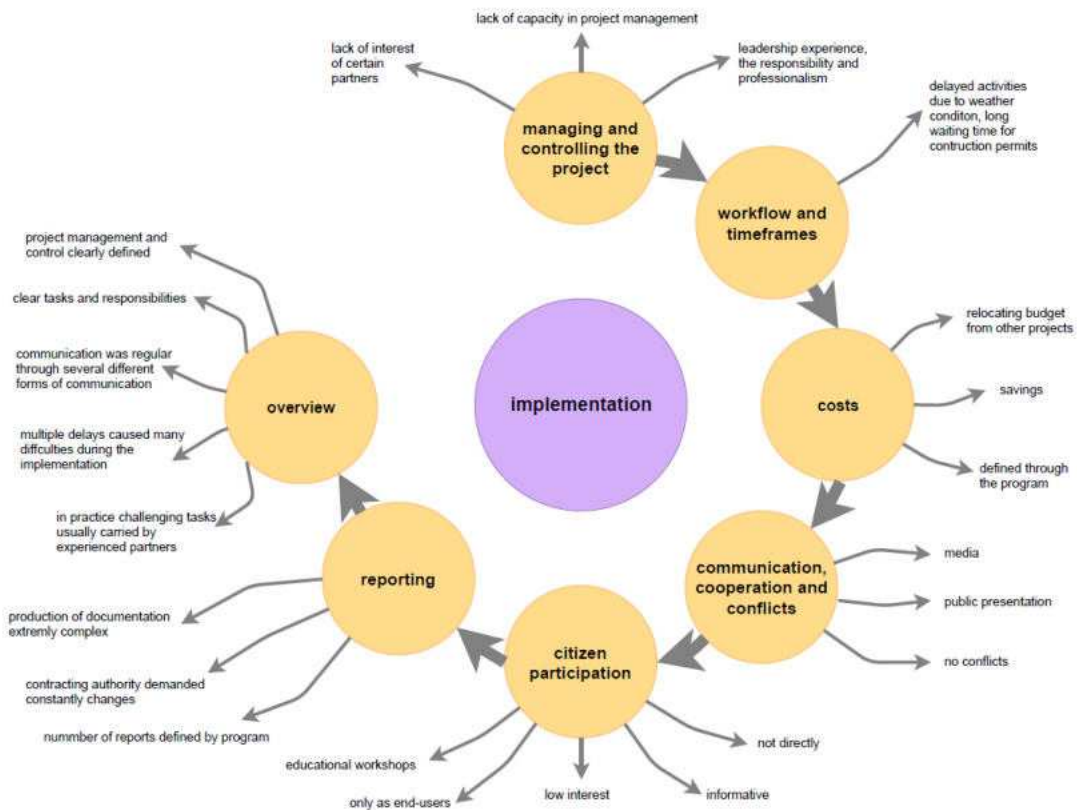


Figure 50 The most frequently encountered problems and advantages cited by the interviewees during the implementation phase (own illustration, 2019)

#### 5.2.4. Final phase

All partners have stated that they achieved the main goals of the project, while some of them had other successes besides achieving the main goal such as: promoting the project at the international level, setting up bases for further development, additional experience and knowledge were gained and upgraded, the strengthened capacity of institutions, etc. The most common success factors for cross-border cooperation that the respondent indicated were: the common interest of all partners, active and motivated partners, well-developed project applications, the involvement of public institutions and the population in the project, good socio-political relations of the two countries, strong political support, historical and geographical connection, honesty and openness between the partners, the experience of the project team, and good leadership. In addition to the success factors, the partners highlighted certain factors that hinder cross-border cooperation: administrative and cultural barriers, economic differences between the country and the regions, problems of pre-financing and co-financing, different legislative frameworks, insufficient funds, lack of interest of citizens and politicians for the project, inexperienced and unmotivated project team, and complex reporting process. Respondents agreed that the most demanding phase was the implementation phase of the project, while a lot of them included the initial phase of writing the application and defining the idea as well.

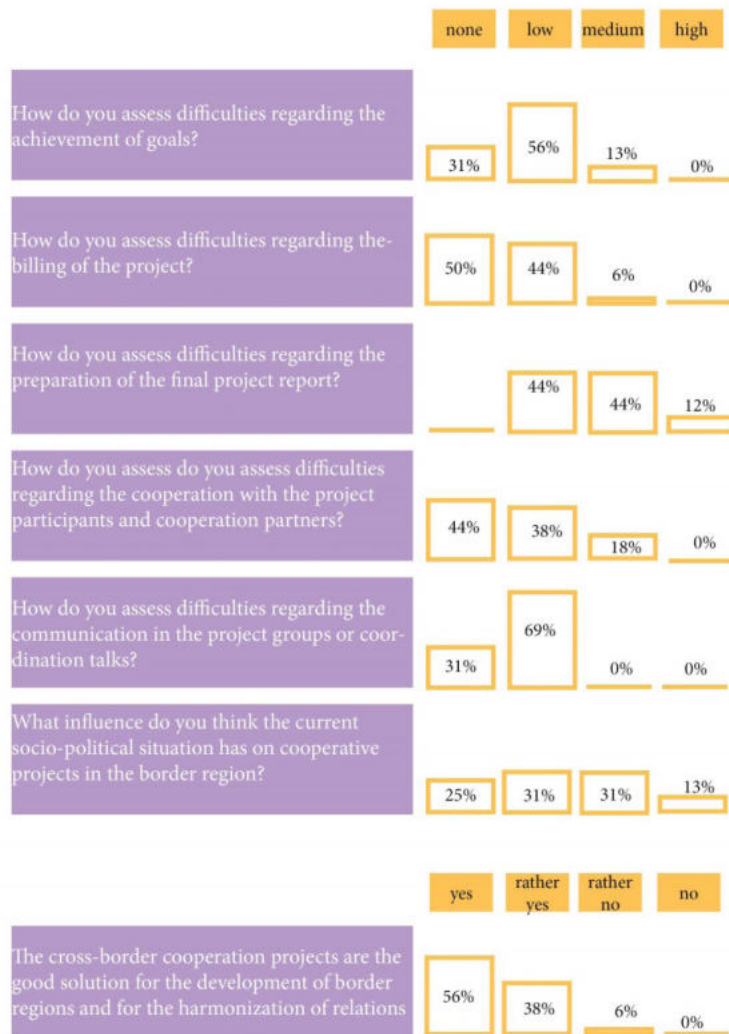


Figure 51 Results of quantitative analysis in the final phase of the project based on interviews with partners (own interpretation, 2019)

The most common problem related to this phase was caused by difficulties during the production of final reports. Most of the respondents strongly criticized the governing bodies that were constantly seeking updates, although this did not contribute to the higher quality of the report and the project in general. Furthermore, both parties consider that the cost planning should have been in line with risk planning, avoiding the necessary relocation of funds that later also posed a problem in documenting.

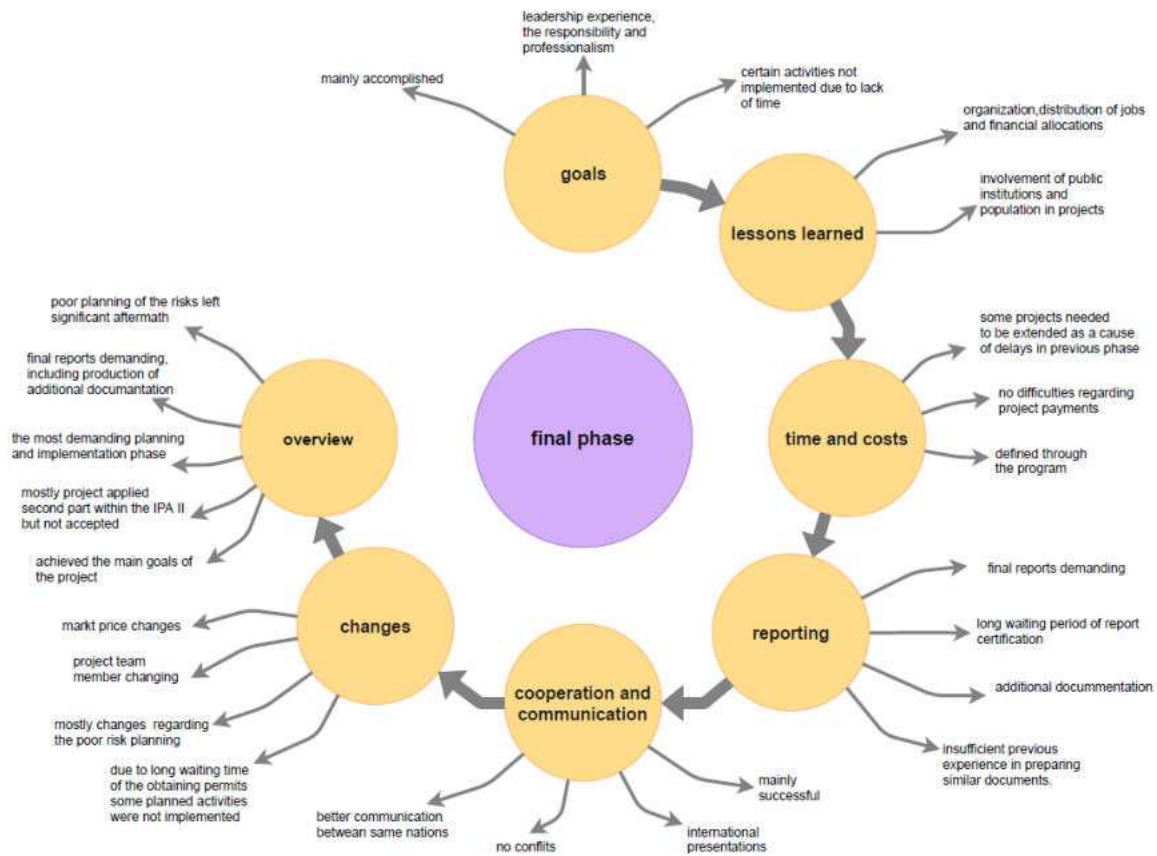


Figure 52 The most frequently encountered problems and advantages cited by the interviewees during the final phase (own illustration, 2019)

### 5.2.5. Post-project phase

Many project partners reported the continuation of the project within the new programming period; however, no project has been approved so far. Most of the respondents consider that the project application was inadequately prepared, there was the interest of only certain partners who were not able to carry out the extension of the project on their own, but they had the willingness and interest. All the infrastructure and equipment purchased within each project has remained for users. Most believe that the project has laid a good foundation for further development, but it is further in municipalities, cities and end-users to maintain and improve it. If there is no interest and resources available on their part, the sustainability of the project is called into question and the implied activities soon become only part of a past project.

projects	the most important factors for successful cross-border cooperation	the biggest difficulties for successful cross-border cooperation
Lake to Lake Green Tourism	<b>reliable partners</b> , preferably already worked on joint projects, historical or geographical links between partners	high share of <b>pre-financing</b> funds that partners have to allocate
Sustainable tourist development From Herzegovina trails to Dubrovnik Elafiti islands	<b>quality partnership</b> , commitment to achieving goals, involvement of public institutions and population, positive socio-political relations	problems in ensuring coherence in joint action and co-financing and <b>pre-financing</b> cross-border cooperation projects
Cycling Through the History - Revitalization of the Old Narrow Gauge Railway 'ČIRO'	<b>quality and committed partners</b> and sustainability of the project	the diversity of legislative frameworks
BIKE 4 TWE - Bicycle for Tourism Without Frontiers	good project team, partners with good financial and operational capacity, strong <b>political support</b>	tenders with too little funding, lack of citizens' interest and politics for projects in general, rare announcement of tenders
Green Islands	trust, honesty and <b>political support</b>	<b>lack of confidence</b> , insincerity and lack of political support.
ForestEye - Protection of nature and environment from forest fires	good leader, <b>experience</b> in EU projects, commitment to goals.	<b>reporting</b> should be simplified and contracting authorities should have more <b>confidence</b> in the implementers
PROGRES - Protection of Nature and Globalisation of Renewable Energy Sources	willingness and openness to cooperate and jointly define solutions to identified problems.	finding partners with the right capacities
PEM - Public Energy Management	<b>partner acquaintance</b> , similarity of project goals and activities, <b>experienced</b> project team	<b>reporting</b> , lack of experience and knowledge of project partners

Figure 53 Overview of the key success factors and difficulties for the CBC (own interpretation based on the experts' interview, 2019)

### 5.3. Recommendations

Based on their personal experience in analyzed and other projects, the respondents made certain recommendations in order to successfully implement cross-border cooperation projects.

#### *Project initialization and identification phase*

- For the sake of easier identification of partners in the future, the leading organization, which has a project idea, should make the project fiche (short project proposal with the scope of implementation, goal, beneficiaries, activities and results) and send it to potential partners and invite a working meeting to jointly formulate project ideas
- In the project should be included only people who have the primary benefit, as well as knowledge of the area
- For the better identification of the partners important is the participation in partner forums, inter-municipal cooperation and exchange of examples of good practices and previous experience
- Involvement of all partners and also the consulting of professionals with specific technical knowledge related to the project's topic
- Finding the project leader who is aware of the possibilities of implementation, having a lot of information from the field, knowing the partners, estimating costs based on a rich experience

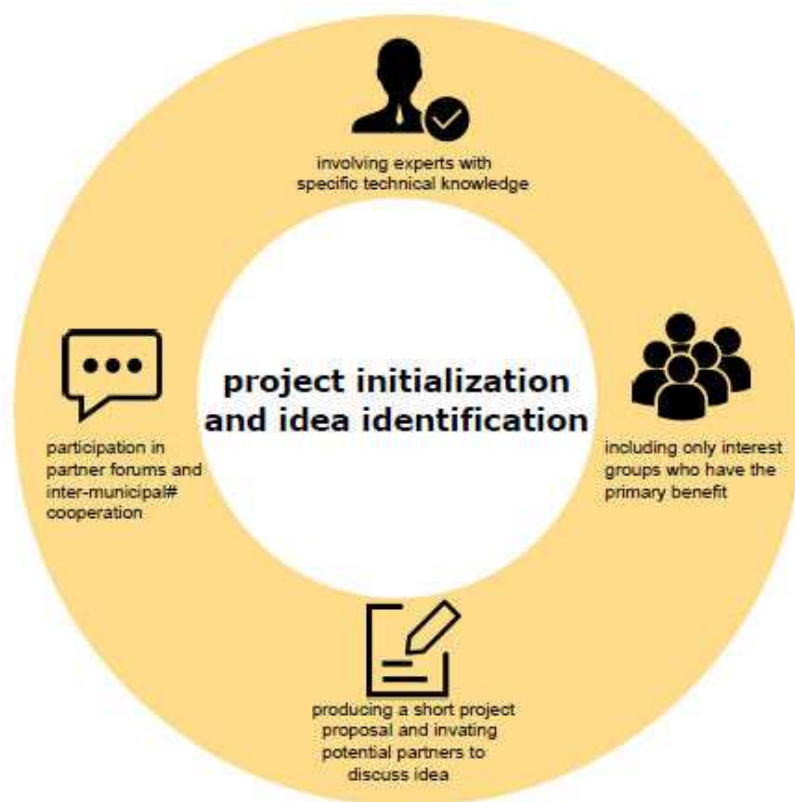


Figure 54 The most common recommendations of experts within the initialization phase (own illustration, 2019)

### Planning phase

- When identifying work packages and assigning tasks, special attention should be paid to the capacities of individual project partners and accordingly distribute tasks within the project team
- A detailed analysis of all segments that could endanger the project later should be done during risk planning; it is clear that certain risks cannot be influenced and difficult to assess, but some risks would be avoided if they were preceded by a detailed analysis
- The planning of the milestones and the timeframe generally depends largely on the action plan, the division of tasks to appropriate partners and risk planning, and these two activities must be integrated and jointly planned at the level of all partners
- Costs and resources should be planned in consultation with experts in the given areas; if it is some kind of infrastructure work, it is important to include experts with technical expertise who can estimate real costs in line with current and future market prices



Figure 55 The most common recommendations of experts within the planning phase (own illustration, 2019)

### Implementation phase

- Detailed risk planning at the planning stage is crucial in order to avoid stagnation in implementation due to poor estimates in the previous phase, specifically in most cases the problem with the long waiting period of certain building permits
- The state authorities responsible for obtaining certain types of permits should be included in the planning phase itself or provide legally valid information on the duration of a particular procedure. In that case, unplanned resource allocation and the impossibility of fulfilling certain planned activities will be eliminated
- The writing of the report should be accessed at the very beginning of the project in terms of systematization of all documentation in order to have a better overview when it comes to writing the report
- An analysis of the needs of the population of the planned area should be an integral part of any development strategy and in this way, citizens should be directly involved, not just municipal authorities that define specific needs

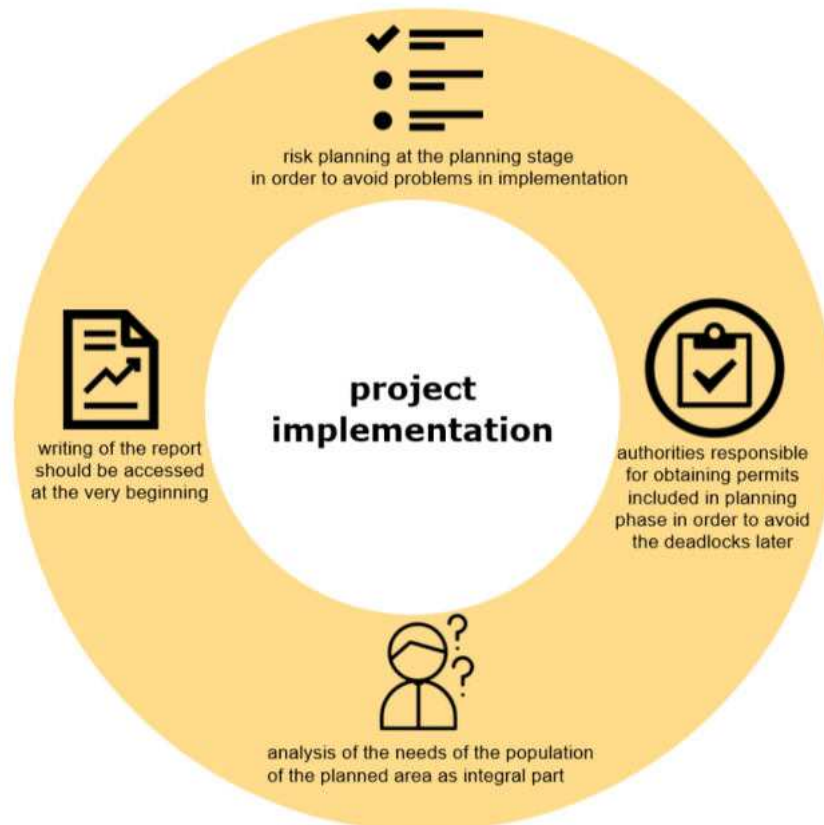


Figure 56 The most common recommendations of experts within the implementation phase (own illustration, 2019)

### *Final phase*

- It should be paid attention to better organization and distribution of tasks and financial allocations
- In implementation, both parties should develop the internal activity plan to make the project easier to follow
- Importance of the clear planning of financial resources, provision of reserve funds, engaging building consultants for any infrastructure investment, modernizing visibility, and making the project attractive to the end-user
- Estimation of real-time required for the implementation of complex activities that require different approvals/permits by the competent authorities
- Careful and qualitative examination in the preparation phase of the project proposal, and on the basis of experience and competent information, preparing the proposal of the activity, the timeframe, etc.
- Before the beginning of the project writing, establishing clear property-legal relations, defining in detail sustainability of the project, informing about the process of obtaining permits for specific areas, defining who is managing the project for the time duration and after implementation, the liquidity of the partner who will present the main part of the project
- Over-bureaucratic and over-complicated procedures, especially when it comes to writing the reports, need to be simplified by writing regularly an internal evaluation report and sending them to the Managing Authorities, in order to give them an overview of the difficulties that these procedures are causing to the project. Contracting authorities should have more confidence in the implementers because they are experts in the field of project implementation, precisely those who have more knowledge, experience, and expertise
- Projects should be analyzed in more detail at the stage of preparation of the project proposal, especially in the preparation of the logical framework
- Involvement of as many stakeholders as possible in the preparation phase so that implementation is as effective as possible
- Paying attention to the choice of partners and the feasibility of the project idea (realistic definition of goals)
- Detailed planning because when each activity is well designed when specific measurable and realistic goals (SMART indicators) are set, then the implementation is clear and favorable





Figure 57 The most common recommendations of experts within the final phase (own illustration, 2019)

### *Post-project phase*

- The project should continue if its benefits are recognized even after its completion, and if all project partners have an interest in the implementation a similar project
- During project planning, greater attention should be paid to the sustainability of the project in terms of a clear definition of who is responsible and how post-project activities will be managed



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# 06

## general conclusions

The countries of the Western Balkans have special treatment by the EU because specificity in the relations of the countries of the region has led to the adoption of special agreements that should pave the way for these countries to join the European integration flows. The EU starts from the need to repair interstate relations within the region disturbed by war.

### *Administrative capacity as a key role*

Pre-accession funds provide grants to candidate countries on the way in preparation for full membership and continued use of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. However, the application procedure for their exploitation is very complex and requires highly educated, professional staff. The experiences of many candidates and potential candidate countries highlight the key role of administrative capacity. Also, according to experience, recruiting and retaining highly qualified personnel as civil servants is a common problem, which negatively affects the percentage of utilization of available resources.

Research shows that all EU Member States have encountered the problem of training and retaining highly qualified staff as civil servants. Problems also arise due to the untimely establishment of teams of experts (Ukmar, 2008). It is evident that due to the extensive and demanding nature of project management, administrative capacities are crucial for the successful withdrawal of EU funds. Changing staff too often results in insufficient knowledge and experience, impairs the continuity and quality of project management and causes incomplete utilization of funds.

### *Meeting the requirements of the EU in order to obtain funding*

For years, there are various opinions, interpretations and attitudes about whether or not both countries, primary BiH has progressed through EU integration, at the speed of the countries in the region. The question arises as to whether the process has proceeded with adequate utilization of the available financial instruments, and whether the slow progress made by the long-term absence of political consensus has resulted in an insufficient level of utilization of EU funds. By 2014, BiH used only 30% percent of the EU funds through the IPA program. The reason was the impossibility of reaching an agreement among BiH politicians, which has resulted in the fact that in recent years BiH has been left without more than a million Euros of non-refundable money intended for development projects. In 2013, BiH lost huge amounts of EU money for development projects, because it did not meet the Sejdic-Finci agreement.<sup>18</sup> They also lost a certain amount of money for the development of agriculture because they did not create a rural development strategy at the state level.

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<sup>18</sup> Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the name of a court case brought in front of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, following the lawsuit of Dervo Sejdić and Jakob Finci (Roma and Jewish ethnicity) who were prevented from being elected to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On December 22, 2009, the European Court of Human Rights issued a judgment in the European Court building in Strasbourg, which made ten decisions on unification of lawsuits, defined the lawsuit as correct, rendered a judgment, and resolved the award of the requested compensation to prosecutors. After ten years, BiH has not implemented the Sejdić-Finci verdict ([http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ured\\_zastupnika/novosti/default.aspx?id=1008&langTag=bs-BA](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ured_zastupnika/novosti/default.aspx?id=1008&langTag=bs-BA))

### *The complexity of the application procedure as the main problem due to insufficient capacity of state institutions*

According to the information obtained during the research, the main problem encountered in Croatia and BiH in the application of projects is the complexity of the application procedure, the extensive documentation required, as well as the still relatively high level of lack of information of Croatian and Bosnian citizens as well as the legal entities about the possibility of utilizing funds, and about participating in the projects themselves. It is further aggravated by the general lack of staff trained in project cycle management, stemming from the insufficient capacity of state institutions to take over the education and training of civil servants. Although entrepreneurial training for project preparation and development exists, they cannot be considered as an adequate substitute for the training of civil servants, who, because of the difference in earnings compared to private consultants, rarely remain employed by government agencies.

When asked how to build a project, the experiences of those who worked did say that it was laborious and not very cheap work. Without further education, you can hardly make it yourself without anyone's help and thus comply with strict EU rules. But it is not impracticable. If these funds are counted, then one must study, attend seminars and consultations, or if it is a company or institution, educate the managers who will do the job. A network of consulting firms developing projects has already been developed in Croatia. But even when certified consultants do a project, this is no guarantee that it will be approved, so investing in own education is profitable.

### *Removal of unnecessary bureaucratic procedures should be the focus*

While using EU pre-accession funds, the average duration of the project selection and the contracting process was around 12 months. Most project applicants had to wait more than a year to find out if the project was accepted. This slowed down the whole process and called into question the meaning of the project.

Governments and professional services in ministries and agencies in charge of the use of individual EU funds have not yet offered a quality solution to potential beneficiaries in how to obtain the required documentation for applying for EU funds faster and cheaper. When applying for a project, it is still necessary to obtain a certain amount of documentation that civil services can provide themselves by accessing their databases (trade or court registers, tax filing or debt to the state, land registers, cadastre, farm register, sanitary permits, occupational safety, etc.). It is necessary to reduce the number of documentation required to apply for a project to the lowest possible level, and to eliminate the documentation that the public services themselves can provide through the database - to exclude from the list of documentation required for project application.

In order to use IPA funds more efficiently, a professional and efficient public administration should be formed, attracting and hiring quality staff in the civil service, and then ensuring the necessary continuity in this context. Improving the working climate should be accelerated at all levels of government which

means the removal of unnecessary bureaucratic procedures should be the focus of those who create such a development environment. On the other hand, the domestic institutions dealing with the management of IPA funds should make information on EU projects more accessible. The basic recommendation addressed to the European institutions regarding the management of pre-accession funds relates to their stronger orientation towards the private sector - Croatia's experience shows that in the case of BiH, financing of the private sector should be enabled already through pre-accession funds, and not only after joining the EU.

### *Developing skills and competencies to ensure the preservation of tradition as a tourist offer*

Natural resources, climate diversity, rich historical heritage based on multicultural, multinational and multi-religious elements are a solid basis for tourism development in the Croatian-Bosnian border region. Tourism, as one of the most important drivers of the Croatian and BiH (especially Croatian) economy, can significantly assist in the sustainability of economic growth and development and is much more important than the revenues that fill the state budget.

Civil servants in local self-government aim to strengthen the tourism sector by the regional implementation of activities and establishing an infrastructure, as well as increasing knowledge and skills to promote and organize events for tourists. The region is identified as a potential tourist attraction because of its history and cultural significance on both sides of the border. However, local authorities do not have the necessary infrastructure and knowledge to ensure that the potential is recognized as a tourist attraction. Tourism service providers aim at raising their competitiveness in the market by providing quality services and products. They lack the skills and abilities in key areas such as ICT, event management, marketing, and customer service. Members of tourist non-governmental organizations aim to inform the public about the importance of certain locations and events on the local identity of the region. In order to ensure the preservation of tradition as a tourist offer, skills and competencies are needed in areas such as event management, ICT, marketing, etc.

### *Cross-border tourism hampered by many obstacles*

The importance of tourism as a driver of the cross-border region is also recognized in the analyzed program of cross-border cooperation between Croatia and BiH. Tourism is relatively well developed in the coastal areas, but in the central and continental parts it is quite lagging behind, but the potential is obvious.

However, many problems are slowing down this sector in development processes, some of which are as follows:

- poor tourism infrastructure
- unclear and fragmented national tourism development strategy in BiH,
- lack of a strong development policy for the tourism sector within the local government,
- insufficient development and inadequate management of numerous tourist sites,

- lack of international standards and certification in the tourism sector,
- waste management and maintenance of urban and rural areas,
- weak institutional and business ties with international markets,
- very low level of marketing as well as insufficient exchange of information between tourism operators and other sectors of the economy

### *Main focus on the development of a joint tourism offer*

In the cross-border cooperation program of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina related to tourism, the emphasis is on the development of a joint tourism offer that includes the development of new tourism products and services, the inclusion of cultural heritage and natural values in the tourism offer, the certification of local tourism products and services, the development of small tourism infrastructure, joint promotion of the tourist offer and marketing of these products, creation and implementation of joint tourism development strategies, application of modern technology and information systems in order to better inform tourists, planning and marketing of tourist destinations, additional training of employees in tourism, etc.

### *Involving the private sector in the application process in order to provide additional institutional and infrastructural support*

Despite some of the natural heritage and advantages of tourism mentioned above, additional institutional and infrastructural support needs to be provided. Inadequate public administration at all levels has emerged as a key problem in the pre-accession process. From the lowest, operational level, characterized by a lack of skills and knowledge, as well as lack of motivation and poor employee mobility, to the highest, political level, at which individuals without the necessary managerial competencies and knowledge are located. In order to avoid the issues mentioned above within the state institutions, the private sector should have access to information and the application process in general.

### *Shaping regional policy in addressing key issues of regional competitiveness*

Due to differences in regional development and specificity of individual regions, sustainable and competitive regional development cannot be achieved solely by policies and programs developed at the central state level, but it requires the strengthening of the role of local self-government in creating regional policy in addressing main problems of regional competitiveness. This also includes cross-border regional cooperation, which should be fostered with a view to integrating the region into European economic flows. Some of the main disadvantages that determine the growth dynamics of the tourism sector are poor tourism infrastructure (primarily in continental areas), low level of marketing, insufficient branding of tourist destinations, and low level of networking of tourism operators and other sectors. The institutional challenge remains how to integrate new content into the spatial plans, meet the building standards while respecting the environment and achieving high natural preservation to reduce those disadvantages in the tourism sector.



### *Extending the tourist season by introducing the special measures*

Given the short season in characterized by mass tourism in summer, the state should encourage specific investments by special measures, especially those that could extend the season to several months, even year-round. An example would be investments in golf courses, water parks, spas, congress tourism, sports tourism, and even nautical tourism through the construction of new or renovation of existing marinas and the repair of boats and yachts. Many resources (thermal waters, salt lakes, healing mud, etc.) represent an opportunity to open various forms of health and wellness tourism.

### *Regional specificities as a major opportunity for the joint tourist offer*

With the cooperation of local cultural societies, there is an unquestionable possibility of reviving cross-border cooperation and the implementation of cultural and historical heritage in the existing tourist offer. Religious tourism, especially in the southern part of Croatia and BiH, can be a good basis for creating a common tourism product. The continental and central parts also have certain comparative advantages and are suitable for hiking, horseback riding and cycling. Underexploited is certainly the tourism potential and opportunities for eco and rural tourism. There are great opportunities for developing a recognizable tourism offering based on a common ecological and cultural heritage and improving the competitiveness of the local tourism economy. Organizing sports and cultural events, then organizing fairs (e.g. gastronomy) with a regional border character, is an additional challenge, and in addition to contributing to the marketing of the product, it would open up the possibility of expanded placement, as it would create more interest through introducing and presenting to a wider range of consumers for region-specific products.

### *Promotion of (self) employment through developing the SME sector in tourism*

Financial assistance for tourism development should consist of a range of cross-border co-financing opportunities aimed at developing its own capacities, developing regions and ensuring the development of small and medium-sized enterprises with the aim of increasing employment and sustainability of projects. It is important to emphasize that cross-border tourism development should be based on the development of EU regions and regional centers, which should help regional development and integrate their specificities with the overall tourism potential.

### *Protecting and developing natural resources as an important challenge in the coming years*

Both countries are one of Europe's richest countries in terms of biodiversity and nature, and this will be an important challenge in the coming years to protect and develop these resources, as well as to ensure their sustainable use. The most serious threat in the border area is the destruction and loss of habitat as a result of agriculture since the area is mostly rural. Water availability is sufficient, but its spatial and annual distribution is unfavorable. Changes in the environment caused by the natural phenomenon, but also by the impact of human activity, endanger the quality of the water.

### *Sustainable management of renewable energy sources*

Renewable energy sources do not have an adequate share of the energy structure yet. Investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency are hampered by complex and lengthy administrative procedures that discourage potential investors, individual households, as well as public sector investments. Two of the analyzed projects (PEM and PROGRES) dealt with this topic and they present good examples of successful usage of European funds in the field of environmental protection and renewable energy resources within the cross-border cooperation. In BiH, renewable energy (hydro) is used more than in most other countries. BiH has some potential for energy efficiency and energy savings, as well as a high potential for renewable energy sources (mainly hydropower and biomass). However, it should be kept in mind that further introduction of certain renewable sources could conflict with some segments (air in the case of biomass, water in the case of hydropower and nature in the case of wind). Energy consumption is the main source of emissions in the cross-border region and countries in general. Sectors such as transport, agriculture, households, and waste also contribute to emissions.

### *Reducing the risks of climate changes through the implementation of funded projects and best practice examples*

Agriculture and forestry are at risk of adverse impacts related to warmer climate change, such as droughts and fires. One of the analyzed projects (ForestEye) had a focus on the protection of fires in the border area and can be used for the future projects of this type since it was evaluated for one of the most successful projects of the IPA I. In general, Croatia's and Bosnia's urban areas and villages are not sufficiently resilient to climate change and disasters. Forests cover about 50% of the cross-border area in, so forest fires are a major threat. Also, flood prevention measures are not sufficiently developed.

### *Introducing the EU legislation to address environmental problems already in the pre-accession period*

The governments have enacted a number of legislation to address environmental problems and are meeting the obligations and requirements arising from the accession negotiations. In Croatia the legislation has also been improved in all environmental components, covering air, climate change, water, waste management, sea and coastal areas, nature protection, industrial pollution and risk management, and soil, chemicals and noise, but in BiH there were not many improvements since BiH it is not the part of EU and the environmental protection is in jurisdiction of the entities and cantons of BiH.

### *Very complex administrative system of BiH reduces the environmental protection and development*

Addressing fragmentation will continue to be a major challenge for a federal state such as BiH. Environmental management and regulatory and control systems are very complex and in many cases overlap, especially considering that as many as four administrative levels (state, entities, cantons, municipalities) have to work together. Indeed, the lack of a state-level environmental agency, a vague division of responsibilities between different levels of government, insufficient capacity, and low levels of political will and public awareness all hinder further progress in environmental protection. Environmental management

in BiH is burdened by the lack of a state agency with strong legal authority and a very complex administrative system, which is further complicated by the poor division of responsibilities between the state and the entities. However, BiH needs to improve environmental protection in order to continue receiving EU assistance.

#### *Introducing environmental management system to ensure sustainable development*

Implementing an environmental management system in cross-border region can bring many benefits, not only for the companies themselves but for the whole environment. Pollution prevention, which is the idea underlying the concept of an environmental management system, creates mechanisms aimed at reducing resources, materials and energy consumption and other benefits to the environment and to businesses. ISO certificates are nowadays increasingly being integrated into business systems, which is why efforts are being made to promote environmental certificates that show intense growth in both countries as well as in the world. In this way, sustainable development, cleaner production, eco-technology and eco-products are also promoted.

#### *Promotion of environmental awareness and concerns among society, economic and public actors*

Improving and harmonizing environmental laws alone is not enough. Croatian and Bosnian companies still have plenty of room for development in an ecological direction, which needs to be encouraged by various mechanisms such as incentives and co-financing of eco-projects. Also, small and medium-sized enterprises should direct their business towards sustainable development and should be encouraged by the national, regional and local levels. However, there is still a need for better information, public relations and the benefits of environmental management.



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## Appendix I - List of interview partners<sup>19</sup>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>Mag. Tihana Jurisic</b>	Natura Jadera, Public institution for the management of the protected parts of nature in the Zadar County	<b>November 2018</b>
<b>Karolina Horvatincic</b>	IRMO, Department of Resource Economics, Environmental Protection and Regional Development	<b>December 2018</b>
<b>Amra Jaganjac</b>	NERDA, Regional Development Agency of Northeast BiH	<b>December 2018</b>
<b>Niksa Vuletic</b>	JP Vjetrenica, Management of state-owned tourist values in the municipality of Ravno	<b>January 2019</b>
<b>Duska Sasa</b>	Department of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection	<b>January 2019</b>
<b>Sanja Rajcevic</b>	Department of Development, European Integration and Investment of Banja Luka	<b>January 2019</b>
<b>Ivana Antisic</b>	CEDRA, Project manager for Local Partnership for Employment	<b>January 2019</b>
<b>Bruno Bebic</b>	Regional development agency Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Project manager	<b>February 2019</b>
<b>Amela Becirovic</b>	LiNK, Entrepreneurship and Business Association	<b>February 2019</b>
<b>Andreja Separac</b>	SIMORA, Deputy Director/Head of EU Projects Department	<b>February 2019</b>
<b>Zdenko Spajic</b>	Head of Development Department, Grude Municipality	<b>March 2019</b>
<b>Nikola Uzun</b>	Deputy Major of City Vrlika	<b>March 2019</b>

<sup>19</sup> Some of the experts required to remain anonymous during the interviews, but they made their contribution.



## Appendix II - Interview Guide

### INTERVIEWLEITFADEN

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#### Projektinitialisierung und Projektfindung

##### *Ideenfindung und Partnersuche*

1. War es schwer den Projektpartner zu finden? Wenn ja, was würden Sie vorschlagen, um den Projektpartner in Zukunft besser/leichter zu identifizieren?
2. Haben Sie Ihren Projektpartner schon gekannt? Haben Sie schon früher kooperiert?
3. Wie sind Sie auf diese Idee gekommen? Haben Sie es vorher mit Ihrem Partner besprochen oder war die Idee schon in die Entwicklungsstrategie der Gemeinde integriert?

Wie würden Sie die Schwierigkeiten bei der Ideenfindung und der Partnersuche beurteilen?	Keine	Eher gering	Mittel	Eher hoch
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

##### *Projektpartner*

4. Denken Sie, dass die richtigen Projektpartner in der Vorbereitungsphase (Projektmitarbeit, -kontrolle, -planung, steuerung, team) zusammengestellt wurden? Gibt es etwas, dass Sie ändern würden? Wenn ja, was?

Wie würden Sie die Auswahl der Projektmitglieder beurteilen?	Leicht	Eher leicht	Mittel	Eher schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

##### *Zeitplan und Kosten*

5. Haben Sie Probleme mit der groben Festlegung des Zeitrahmens und der Kostenschätzung gehabt? Wenn ja, welche Probleme?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Kostenschätzung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schlecht
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wie beurteilen Sie die Zeitrahmen?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schlecht
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

##### *Evaluierung*

6. Was hat die Kooperation in dieser Phase erschwert bzw. verhindert?
7. Wie haben die Konflikte in dieser Phase ausgesehen? Gab es welche?
8. Was wäre hilfreich gewesen?
9. Welche positiven Erfahrungen fallen Ihnen zur Initiierungsphase- und Findungsphase ein?

10. Was hat die Kooperation in dieser Phase erleichtert bzw. unterstützt?

11. Was hat die Kooperation produktiv / effektiv gemacht?

Wie ist Ihrer Meinung nach die Initiierungs- und Definitionsphase des Projekts gelaufen?	Einfach	Eher einfach	Eher kompliziert	Sehr kompliziert
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Worin sehen Sie die größten Schwierigkeiten in der Initiierungs- und Definitionsphase?	Umgang mit Unklarheiten und Unsicherheiten	Motivation	Umgang mit der Anderen	Klärung von Anforderungen und Projektzielen	Abschätzen von Chancen und Risiken	Projektidee in erste Projektvorschlag
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Planungsphase

### Identifikation der Arbeitspakete und Aufgabenverteilung im Projekt

12. Wie schwer war es, die Arbeitspakete und die Aufgabenverteilung zu identifizieren?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Arbeitspaketeidentifizierung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wie beurteilen Sie die Aufgabenverteilung im Projekt?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Haben Sie Probleme bei der Aufwandplanung gehabt? Wenn ja, welche?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Aufwandplanung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Haben Sie Probleme bei der Risikoplanung gehabt? Wenn ja, welche?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Risikoplanung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Haben Sie Probleme bei der Termin- und Meilensteinplanung gehabt? Wenn ja, welche?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Termin- und Meilensteinplanung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Haben Sie Probleme bei der Kosten- und Ressourcenplanung gehabt? Wenn ja, welche?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Kosten- und Ressourcenplanung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Haben Sie Probleme bei der Kommunikationsplanung gehabt? Wenn ja, welche?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Kommunikationsplanung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schwer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluierung

18. Wie zufrieden waren Sie mit der ersten Ansprache, Beschreibung der Aufgabenstellung sowie der Zielfindung durch das Projektteam?
19. Was hat die Kooperation in dieser Phase erschwert bzw. verhindert?
20. Wie haben Sie die Machtkämpfe, Intrigen und Konflikte in dieser Phase ausgesehen?
21. Was wäre hilfreich gewesen?
22. Welche positiven Beispiele fallen Ihnen zur Planungsphase ein?
23. Was hat die Kooperation in dieser Phase erleichtert bzw. unterstützt?
24. Was hat die Kooperation produktiv / effektiv gemacht?

Wie ist Ihrer Meinung nach die Planungsphase des Projekts gelaufen?	Einfach	Eher einfach	Eher kompliziert	Sehr kompliziert
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Worin sehen Sie die größten Schwierigkeiten in der Planungsphase?	detaillierte Planung trotz unvollständiger Informationen	Einplanung vielfältiger Ressourcen ohne direkten Zugriff	Entscheidung treffen müssen ohne ausreichende Entscheidungskompetenz	Motivation des Teams
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Projektdurchführungsphase

### Projektsteuerung und -controlling

25. Wie war die Projektsteuerung organisiert? War es eine klare Projektsteuerung gegeben oder ist diese nach Bedarf erfolgt?
26. Wie viele Berichte hatten Sie, um den „Projekterfolg“ zu messen (Kosten, Kommunikation, Ablauf)? Wurden die Kontrollpunkte bereits in der Planungsphase definiert?

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit dem Projektcontrolling?	Sehr	Eher zufrieden	Eher nicht zufrieden	Nicht zufrieden
	1	2	3	4

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit dem Projektmanagement?	Sehr	Eher zufrieden	Eher nicht zufrieden	Nicht zufrieden
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Projekttablauf und Zeitplan**

27. Ist alles innerhalb eines bestimmten Zeitrahmens erfüllt? Wenn nicht, was ist nicht? Wie füllt man die Zeitrahmen Ihrer Meinung nach?

Es wurde...	Vollständig erfüllt	Eher erfüllt	Eher nicht erfüllt	Gar nicht erfüllt
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Kostenplan**

28. Welche unterschiedlichen Kosten haben Sie geplant? Denken Sie, dass Sie weitere Kostengruppen einbeziehen sollten oder dass die geplanten Kosten für das Projekt geeignet waren?

**Kommunikation, Kooperation und Konfliktbewältigung**

29. Sind Sie auf spezifische Probleme gestoßen, die Sie zuvor bei der Projektplanung nicht als potenziell erkannt haben?

30. Welche Art von folgenden Problemen hatten Sie:

	Ja	Nein	Wenn ja, welche?
Technische Problemen (Fehler in der Entwicklung)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wirtschaftliche Problemen (Finanzierung des Projektes, eigene Liquidität, Zahlungsunfähigkeit des Auftraggebers, Wechselkursveränderungen, Inflation, Verfügbarkeit qualifizierter Arbeitskräfte)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Politische Problemen (Benachteiligung durch besondere gesetzliche Verpflichtungen)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Juristische Problemen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bürokratische Probleme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Verständnisschwierigkeiten (interkulturelle Schwierigkeiten)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

- 31. Wie haben Sie versucht auf diese Probleme zu reagieren?
- 32. Wenn Sie daran zurückdenken, wie die beteiligten Interessengruppen für dieses Projekt miteinander gearbeitet haben: Wie haben Sie den Arbeitsstil und das Klima in der gemeinsamen Arbeit erlebt?
- 33. Was sehen Sie für sich als Erfolg? Was hat Ihnen besonders gut gefallen?
- 34. Welche Enttäuschungen haben Sie erlebt? Was ist nicht so gut gelaufen?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Kommunikation in der Durchführungsphase?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schlecht
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Bürgerbeteiligung

35. Waren die am Projekt beteiligten Stakeholder die Bevölkerung der geplanten Region? Inwieweit? Würden Sie einige Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung der Bürgerbeteiligung vorschlagen? Wenn ja, welcher?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Bürgerbeteiligung am Projekt?	Sehr hoch	Eher hoch	Eher gering	Gering
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Dokumentation

36. Hatten Sie Schwierigkeiten, die erforderlichen Berichte bereitzustellen? Wenn ja, welche?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Schwierigkeiten bei der Dokumentationserstellung?	Keine	Eher gering	Mittel	Eher hoch
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluierung

37. Wie zufrieden waren Sie mit der ersten Ansprache, Beschreibung der Aufgabenstellung sowie der Zielfindung durch das Projektteam?
38. Was hat die Kooperation in dieser Phase erschwert bzw. verhindert?
39. Wie haben Sie die Machtkämpfe, Intrigen und Konflikte in dieser Phase ausgesehen?
40. Was wäre hilfreich gewesen?
41. Welche positiven Beispiele fallen Ihnen zur Durchführungsphase ein?
42. Was hat die Kooperation in dieser Phase erleichtert bzw. unterstützt?
43. Was hat die Kooperation produktiv / effektiv gemacht?

Wie ist Ihrer Meinung nach die Durchführungsphase des Projekts gelaufen?	Problemlos	Eher einfach	Einige Schwierigkeiten	Eher kompliziert
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Abschlussphase

#### Ziele

44. Wurde das Ziel des Projektes erreicht? Falls nicht, welches sind die Gründe dafür?
45. Gibt es noch andere Erfolge über das Projektziel hinaus?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Zielerreichung?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schlecht
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	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Lessons learned und Empfehlungen**

46. Was haben Sie selbst bei diesem Projekt gelernt? Was sollte aus Ihrer Sicht in Zukunft bei ähnlichen Projekten besonders beachtet werden? Welche Verbesserungen sollten bei der Realisierung weiterer Projekte berücksichtigt werden?
47. Welche Empfehlungen würden Sie anderen Projekten dieser Art mit auf den Weg geben?

### **Zeit und Kosten**

48. Gibt es Probleme bei der Abrechnung des Projekts?
49. Wie schätzen Sie den Zeit- und Kostenaufwand gegenüber dem erreichten Ergebnis ein?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Abrechnung des Projekts?	Einfach	Eher einfach	Eher kompliziert	Sehr kompliziert
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Dokumentation**

50. Wie anspruchsvoll war die Erstellung des Projektabschlussberichts? Haben Sie bestimmte Schwierigkeiten gehabt? Wenn ja, welche?

Wie anspruchsvoll war die Erstellung des Projektabschlussberichts?	Einfach	Eher einfach	Eher kompliziert	Sehr kompliziert
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Kooperation und Kommunikation**

51. Wie beurteilen Sie die Zusammenarbeit mit den Projektteilnehmern und Kooperationspartnern? Planen Sie in Zukunft eine weitere Zusammenarbeit mit denselben Partnern? Haben Sie schon etwas geplant? Wenn ja, welche Art von Projekten?

Wie beurteilen Sie die Zusammenarbeit mit den Projektteilnehmern und Kooperationspartnern?	Sehr gut	Eher gut	Eher schlecht	Sehr schlecht
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

52. Wie zufrieden waren Sie mit der Kommunikation in den Projektgruppen bzw. Koordinationsgesprächen?

Wie zufrieden waren Sie mit der Kommunikation in den Projektgruppen bzw. Koordinationsgesprächen?	Sehr zufrieden	Eher zufrieden	Eher nicht zufrieden	Gar nicht zufrieden
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

53. Welchen Einfluss hat Ihrer Meinung der aktuellen gesellschaftspolitischen Situation auf kooperative Projekte in der Grenzregion? Welche Lösungswege sehen Sie?

Welchen Einfluss hat Ihrer Meinung der aktuellen gesellschaftspolitischen Situation auf kooperative Projekte in der Grenzregion?	Geriner	Eher geringer	Eher großer	Sehr großer
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

54. Was sind aus Ihrer Sicht die drei wichtigsten Erfolgsfaktoren für eine erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit?

55. Wo liegen aus Ihrer Sicht bei Kooperationen die drei größten Schwierigkeiten?

56. Halten Sie grenzübergreifende Kooperationsprojekte für eine gute Lösung für die Entwicklung von Grenzregionen und für die Harmonisierung der Beziehungen? Wenn nein, warum nicht?

Die grenzübergreifenden Kooperationsprojekte für eine gute Lösung für die Entwicklung von Grenzregionen und für die Harmonisierung der Beziehungen...	Trifft vollständig zu	Trifft eher schon zu	Trifft eher nicht zu	Trifft gar nicht zu
	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Allgemeine Fragen zur Evaluierung und Reflexion**

57. Welche Änderungen gegenüber der Planung traten im Projektverlauf auf und wodurch waren diese bedingt?

58. Welche Projektphase ist Ihrer Meinung nach besonders schwierig?

### **Nachprojektphase**

#### **Perspektiven**

59. Was erwarten Sie für den weiteren Verlauf des Projekts? Wird das Projekt fortgeführt werden? Wenn ja, wie wird es langfristig finanziell und organisatorisch gesichert?

60. Welche Maßnahmen wurden durchgeführt, um den Nutzen des Projekts für die Praxis des betreffenden Gebietes zu sichern?