



CENTRAL EUROPE Programme Final Implementation Report

*Article 67 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and
Annex XVIII of Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006*

January 2017

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1. IDENTIFICATION

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	Objective concerned: European Territorial Cooperation
	Eligible area concerned: Austria, the Czech Republic, part of Germany, Hungary, part of Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, part of Ukraine
	Programming period: 2007-2013
	Programme number: CCI 2007CB163P0061
	Programme title: CENTRAL EUROPE
FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	Reporting period: 2007-2013
	Date of approval of the Final implementation report by the Monitoring Committee: 20.01.2017

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

2.1 Achievements and analysis of the progress

During its implementation, the CENTRAL EUROPE (CE) Programme managed to **allocate all available funds** to 124 transnational projects well covering the four programme Priority Axes and the 14 programme Areas of Intervention (Aol).

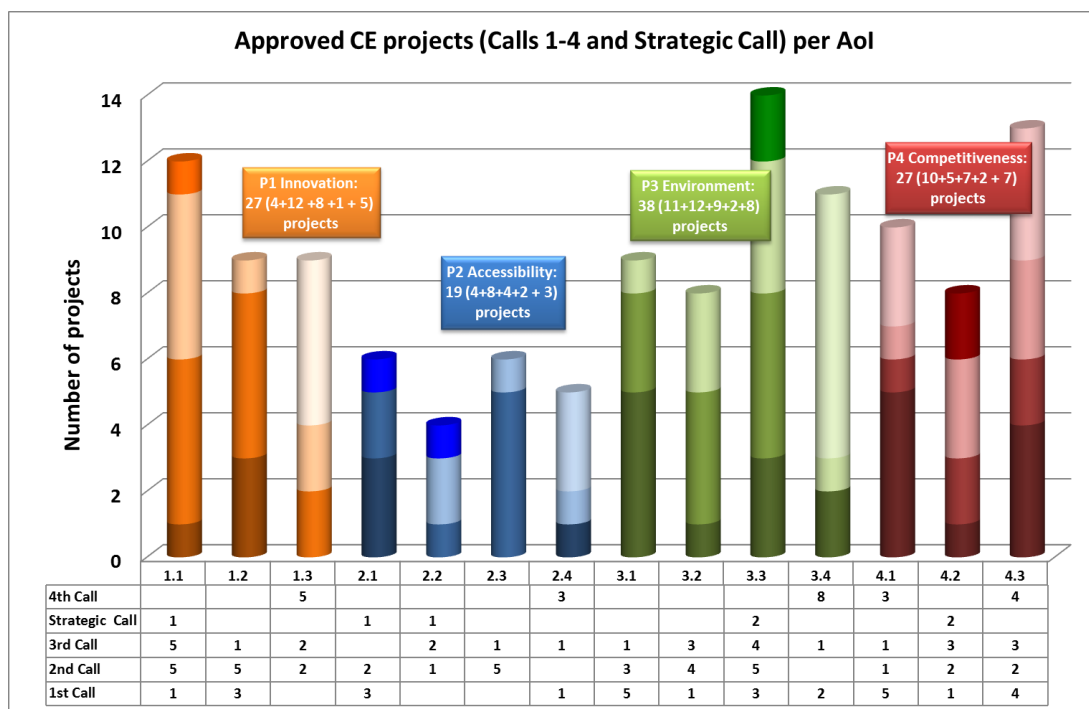


Fig. 1. No. of projects approved in each Programme Priority and Area of Intervention within each call for proposal.

Projects were selected through four open calls for proposals, whereby the fourth call focused on closing existing gaps and a strategic call where a more top down approach in tackling existing regional and transnational challenges has been applied.

A special attention along the programme implementation has been paid to the **mainstreaming and capitalisation of project results**. To ensure durable and long-lasting effects of projects for the benefit of central European regions and their citizens, the programme put great efforts in:

- Directly communicating achievements of projects to programme stakeholders and a European audience;
- Supporting project beneficiaries to improve their capacity to continue their achievements into policies, tools, large investments, etc.

Evidence gathered from the implemented projects as well as the follow up of recommendations of the programme on-going evaluation exercise¹, allowed to draw some conclusions on programme overall achievements that became the starting point for setting up the new CENTRAL EUROPE (Interreg CE) Programme for the 2014-2020 period. Indeed, the second half of the programme lifetime (as from 2012) was characterised by intense activities for preparing the Interreg CE Programme.

The following chapters give an overview of the overall programme implementation, providing some insights on the most relevant project achievements towards both the 2007-2013 Cohesion Policy targets and the contribution to EU targets of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the Operational Programme

For each quantified indicator and in particular the core indicators

¹ In compliance with Art. 47-49 of the Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006. The final programme evaluation report has been submitted to the European Commission (EC) together with the Annual Implementation Report for the year 2012, approved by the EC on 31/07/2013 (Ref. Ares(2013)2797889).

Subset of Ex-ante quantified OUTPUT-indicators in the Operational Programme for Priority axes

Indicators			2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Ind. 1	Total No of projects implemented to facilitate innovation across CE (Priority 1)	Achievement	0	4	16	24	25	30	30	30	30	30
		Target	0	4	12	8	1	3	0	0	0	28
		Baseline	0	0	4	16	24	25	30	30	30	0
Ind. 2	Total No of projects implemented to improve the accessibility of and within CE (Priority 2)	Achievement	0	4	12	16	18	21	21	21	21	21
		Target	0	4	8	4	2	3	0	0	0	21
		Baseline	0	0	4	12	16	18	21	21	21	0
Ind. 3	Total No of projects implemented to use CE's environment responsibly (Priority 3)	Achievement	0	11	23	32	34	42	42	42	42	42
		Target	0	11	12	9	2	3	0	0	0	37
		Baseline	0	0	11	23	32	34	42	42	42	0
Ind. 4	Total No of projects implemented to enhance competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions (Priority 4)	Achievement	0	10	15	22	24	31	31	31	31	31
		Target	0	10	5	7	2	5	0	0	0	29
		Baseline	0	0	10	15	22	24	31	31	31	0
Ind. 5	No of projects respecting 2 of the criteria ex art 19.1 of Reg. (EC) No 1080/2006 (joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing)	Achievement	0	29	66	94	101	124	124	124	124	124
		Target	0	29	37	28	7	14	0	0	0	115
		Baseline	0	0	29	66	94	101	124	124	124	0
Ind. 6	No of projects respecting 3 of the criteria ex art 19.1 of Reg. (EC) No 1080/2006 (joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing)	Achievement	0	17	35	75	82	103	103	103	103	103
		Target	0	17	18	40	7	10	0	0	0	92
		Baseline	0	0	17	35	75	82	103	103	103	0
Ind. 7	No of projects respecting 4 of the criteria ex art 19.1 of Reg. (EC) No 1080/2006 (joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing)	Achievement	0	12	43	49	54	67	67	67	67	67
		Target	0	12	31	6	5	15	0	0	0	69
		Baseline	0	0	12	43	49	54	67	67	67	0

Subset of Ex-ante quantified RESULT-indicators in the Operational Programme for Priority axes and Areas of Intervention^{2 3}

Indicators			2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Ind. 8	Total no of contributions to facilitate innovation across Central Europe (Priority 1) ⁴	Achievement	0		25	107	109	126	126	126	126	126
		Target										84
		Baseline	0	0	0	25	107	109	126	126	126	0
Ind. 9	No. of contributions to better innovation governance (Area of intervention 1.1)	Achievement	0		7	35	37	40	40	40	40	40
		Target										36
		Baseline	0	0	0	7	35	37	40	40	40	0
Ind. 10	No. of contributions to even and broader access to R&TD results and innovation system (Area of intervention 1.2)	Achievement	0		10	37	37	41	41	41	41	41
		Target										27
		Baseline			0	10	37	37	41	41	41	0
Ind. 11	No. of contributions to improved framework for knowledge development (Area of intervention 1.3)	Achievement	0		8	35	35	42	42	42	42	42
		Target										21
		Baseline	0		0	8	35	35	42	42	42	0
Ind. 12	Total no of contributions to improved accessibility of and within Central Europe (Priority 2) ⁵	Achievement	0		15	42	49	60	60	60	60	60
		Target										63
		Baseline	0		0	15	42	49	60	60	60	0
Ind. 13	No. of contributions to improved and more sustainable inter-connectivity at urban, regional and transnational level	Achievement	0		3	11	13	15	15	15	15	15
		Target										18
		Baseline	0		0	3	11	13	15	15	15	0
Ind. 14	No. of contribution to better solutions for multimodal logistics	Achievement	0		3	7	9	12	12	12	12	12
		Target										12

² Since each project can generate several definable, recordable and evaluable contributions to one or several operational objectives corresponding to single Areas of Intervention, those contributions have been accumulated as result indicators according to the single Areas of Intervention and Priority Axes. The Ex-ante quantified targets of result indicators, as defined in Chapter 4.6 of the CENTRAL EUROPE Operational Programme, are based on the assumption of in average 3 contributions per project.

³ The "Target" figure is aggregated for the whole programming period.

⁴ Sum of indicators 9 to 11.

⁵ Sum of indicators 13 to 16.

Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total	
		Baseline	0		0	3	7	9	12	12	12	0
Ind. 15	No. of contributions to the promotion of sustainable mobility	Achievement	0		5	15	16	19	19	19	19	19
		Target										18
		Baseline	0		0	5	15	16	19	19	19	0
Ind. 16	No. of contributions: to improved access to ICT information and services	Achievement	0		4	9	11	14	14	14	14	14
		Target										15
		Baseline	0		0	4	9	11	14	14	14	0
Ind. 17	Total no of contributions to use Central Europe’s Environment more responsibly (Priority 3) ⁶	Achievement	0		30	97	103	125	125	125	125	125
		Target										111
		Baseline	0		0	30	97	103	125	125	125	0
Ind. 18	No. of contributions to improved quality and better protection of the environment	Achievement	0		11	25	26	29	29	29	29	29
		Target										27
		Baseline	0		0	11	25	26	29	29	29	0
Ind. 19	No. of contributions to more effective risk prevention and impact reduction	Achievement	0		7	18	19	21	21	21	21	21
		Target										24
		Baseline	0		0	7	18	19	21	21	21	0
Ind. 20	No. of contributions to better utilisation of renewable energy and higher level of energy efficiency	Achievement	0		4	18	21	27	27	27	27	27
		Target										26
		Baseline	0		0	4	18	21	27	27	27	0
Ind. 21	No. of contributions to ensuring eco-efficient production processes	Achievement	0		8	36	37	48	48	48	48	48
		Target										18
		Baseline	0		0	8	36	37	48	48	48	0

⁶ Sum of indicators 18 to 21.

Indicators			2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Ind. 22	Total no of contributions to enhanced competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions (Priority 4) ⁷	Achievement	0		19	52	55	70	70	70	70	70
		Target										87
		Baseline	0		0	19	52	55	70	70	70	0
Ind. 23	No. of contributions to more strategic and sustainable economic and social development of cities and regions	Achievement	0		9	21	22	26	26	26	26	26
		Target										30
		Baseline	0		0	9	21	22	26	26	26	0
Ind. 24	No. of contributions to reduced negative effects of social and demographic change and improved social integration and quality of life	Achievement	0		6	18	20	26	26	26	26	26
		Target										24
		Baseline	0		0	6	18	20	26	26	26	0
Ind. 25	No. of contributions to fostered sustainable use of cultural resources and heritage	Achievement	0		4	13	13	18	18	18	18	18
		Target										33
		Baseline	0		0	4	13	13	18	18	18	0
Ind. 26	Total no. of contributions (Priorities 1 to 4)	Achievement	0		89	298	316	381	381	381	381	381
		Target										345
		Baseline	0		0	89	298	316	381	381	381	0

⁷ Sum of indicators 23 to 25.

2.1.2 Financial information

Throughout the programme lifetime, the Certifying Authority (CA) submitted twenty applications for interim payments to the European Commission (EC). The said applications included the expenditure claimed by the project beneficiaries. In addition, the applications for interim payments included also the Technical Assistance (TA) budget related to expenditure for the programme Core Management as well as that of the Contact Points. Further details on TA are provided in chapter 6.

The total amount of declared and certified expenditure requested in the mentioned twenty applications for interim payment was of € 281.184.389,03. The EC reimbursed € 233.710.520,30 ERDF which is 95 % of the claimed amount (including the advanced payment).

Following the provision by the Audit Authority of the final audit reports related to audits on expenditure declared to the EC in 2015 and 2016, the CA prepared the final payment request to the EC which will be submitted with the closure package via SFC. As a result of the withdrawals/recoveries mainly resulting from the audits carried out by the AA, the final payment request only included negative amounts, reducing the amount certified to the EC in the last application for interim payment.

The Programme financial status is summarised in the following table. The table includes the information also taking into account the final payment request of the CA. Further information on the Programme performance is provided in chapter 2.1.6.

	Total funding of the operational programme (Union and national)	Basis for calculating Union contribution (Public or Total cost)	Total amount of certified eligible expenditure paid by beneficiaries*	Corresponding public contribution*	Implementation rate In %
	a	b	c	d	e = c/a if T or e = d/a if P
Priority axis 1	63.074.958	Total cost	57.315.405	54.584.076	90,9%
Priority axis 2	56.557.686	Total cost	51.045.520	49.674.005	90,3%
Priority axis 3	91.967.324	Total cost	91.018.647	88.610.538	99,0%
Priority axis 4	67.014.984	Total cost	62.196.115	60.751.284	92,8%
Priority axis 5	19.680.885	Total cost	19.558.344	19.558.344	99,4%
Grand total	298.295.837		281.134.031	273.178.247	94,2%

* Figures expressed in cumulative terms.

Approved by the MC in May 2015, the MA decided to use interest generated by the ERDF pre-financing in the amount of € 670.588,62 in the form of national public contribution for the Core Management Technical Assistance in order to support closure activities.

2.1.3 Information about the breakdown of use of the Funds

Commission reference No: CCI 2007CB163PO061
 Name of the programme: Central Europe 2007-2013
 Date of the last Commission decision for the operational programme concerned: 20.11.2012

Combination of codes of dimensions 1 to 5					
Code * Dimension 1 <i>Priority theme</i>	Code * Dimension 2 <i>Form of finance</i>	Code * Dimension 3 <i>Territory</i>	Code * Dimension 4 <i>Economic activity</i>	Code * Dimension 5 <i>Location</i>	Amount (€) **
1	01	09	00	Transnational	2.368.076,84
3	01	09	00	Transnational	7.045.147,27
5	01	09	00	Transnational	14.909.377,64
6	01	09	00	Transnational	1.854.783,73
7	01	09	00	Transnational	1.293.676,76
9	01	09	00	Transnational	10.304.817,03
11	01	09	00	Transnational	1.530.759,54
13	01	09	00	Transnational	1.579.998,78
14	01	09	00	Transnational	1.149.001,72
15	01	09	00	Transnational	3.626.836,19
17	01	09	00	Transnational	6.450.142,69
25	01	09	00	Transnational	10.590.800,21
26	01	09	00	Transnational	1.466.621,93
27	01	09	00	Transnational	10.495.280,84
28	01	09	00	Transnational	1.502.191,77
29	01	09	00	Transnational	1.196.535,62
32	01	09	00	Transnational	2.779.612,66
40	01	09	00	Transnational	1.748.776,22
41	01	09	00	Transnational	9.549.829,33
42	01	09	00	Transnational	2.187.191,22
43	01	09	00	Transnational	18.539.222,32
44	01	09	00	Transnational	4.602.615,92
45	01	09	00	Transnational	2.664.166,05
47	01	09	00	Transnational	2.886.894,30
48	01	09	00	Transnational	1.965.920,16
49	01	09	00	Transnational	2.904.882,74
51	01	09	00	Transnational	6.464.206,70
53	01	09	00	Transnational	8.372.008,65
54	01	09	00	Transnational	10.441.518,82

56	01	09	00	Transnational	3.218.244,43
57	01	09	00	Transnational	3.005.719,71
58	01	09	00	Transnational	8.256.659,14
59	01	09	00	Transnational	1.190.305,71
60	01	09	00	Transnational	4.456.458,75
61	01	09	00	Transnational	26.061.528,34
67	01	09	00	Transnational	3.311.556,38
69	01	09	00	Transnational	3.001.604,34
70	01	09	00	Transnational	1.767.947,49
72	01	09	00	Transnational	5.291.937,84
81	01	09	00	Transnational	5.074.964,47

* The categories should be coded for each dimension using the standard classification.

** Allocated amount of the Community contribution for each combination of categories.

2.1.4 Assistance by Target Groups

The CENTRAL EUROPE Operational Programme does not foresee any specific target group.

2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used

Information on the use made of assistance repaid or re-used following cancellation of assistance as referred to in Articles 67 and 98(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

Cancellation of assistance as referred to in Article 98(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 was not re-used for the CENTRAL EUROPE Operational Programme.

2.1.6 Qualitative analysis

- *Analysis of the achievements as measured by physical and financial indicators, including a qualitative analysis on the progress achieved in relation to the targets set out initially. Particular attention shall be paid to the operational programme's contribution to the Lisbon process including its contribution to the achievement of the targets of Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.*
- *Demonstration of the effects of the implementation of the operational programme on the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women as appropriate and description of the partnership agreements.*

The quantitative programme targets in terms of allocation of funds within all Priorities and Areas of Intervention, as set in the OP, have been achieved.

In this chapter a qualitative analysis of programme implementation including some “highlights” of horizontal nature are presented, while more in-depth information on specific achievements is provided in chapter 3 at the level of each thematic priority, also with the presentation of some project examples.

Output and result oriented achievements

According to findings of the programme evaluation, the programme managed to “*produce structural tools that decision makers will use in order to face the challenges of the financial crisis itself, therefore confirming its relevance to the challenges addressed. Enhanced transnational cooperation and the opportunity to strengthen networks are creating synergies among the existing resources and increasing the*

*background knowledge needed to tackle current problems*⁸. Therefore it has been confirmed that the programme is still answering the major problems of the CE area, even in a changing socioeconomic context.

By addressing the challenges identified in the programme SWOT analysis, projects have targeted the reduction of regional economic disparities, neglected infrastructures and physical barriers by e.g. improving the governance frameworks and public services, enhancing knowledge management and transfer of competences to a high number of target groups, implementing demonstrative pilot actions as well as institutional dialogues across different categories and levels of stakeholders. In addition, projects openly commit themselves to create employment.

The value of transnational cooperation has been confirmed within the Programme evaluation indicating that *“the programme acts as a facilitator of a better, direct interaction of research and policies. This is particularly important when considering the current financial crisis as projects targeting stronger relationships among the public, private sector, education and training centres may pave the way to long-term stability and growth as they are supposed to capitalise the existing knowledge into economic activities and create virtuous circles in terms of consistency of the competences created by universities/training centres with the specific needs of the market and of public bodies”*⁹.

In terms of integration of project results into regional and local policies, the programme evaluation highlights that *“even though the exchange of know-how and knowledge through transnational cooperation still remains the main factor of success for the CE projects, the results are being integrated into the local political agendas and the development of new skills (or the strengthening of existing ones) within the regional and local authorities”*¹⁰.

The above confirms that the programme has achieved its objectives (as set in 2007) by supporting - through transnational cooperation - the improvement of skills, capacities and attitude of relevant stakeholders towards problems affecting the area.

In quantitative terms, approved projects have delivered outputs and results which are mostly in line and in many cases even exceeding the targets set in the application forms (as displayed in Annex 1).

In total, 528 strategies and action plans have been developed out of which 257 (ca. 49 %) have been already implemented or adopted. Furthermore, 462 tools have been developed and their majority has been practically implemented, linked to those tools 846 trainings have been organised. The targets for those indicators which were set in the approved application forms were exceeded by up to 150 %.

Even though a high number of permanent cooperations (267) and management structures (51) were reported, the rather ambitious targets were only partially reached by the approved projects (92 % and 55 % respectively). This is mostly due to the fact that, at the time of setting the indicator targets in the application forms, the indicator definition of management structures was not precisely understood by all beneficiaries (i.e. transnational and permanent character of governance and management systems) - see also the respective explanations on the achievements per priority (chapter 3.1) .

In total 952 pilot actions (113 % of the set target) have been implemented which were testing and demonstrating novel approaches and tools. Due to the “outputs and results oriented approach” characterising the programme, about one third of the approved projects realised also pilot investments amounting to about € 10 M.

In addition to direct investments, 23 approved projects (19 %) included pre-investment activities (e.g. feasibility studies, preparation of future investments, establishing links to potential investors or funds etc.) for implementing large scale investments which would later be funded through complementary funding sources. In total, approved projects prepared an investment volume of about € **790 M**. In addition, projects managed to leverage high amounts of private/public funds (more than € **3.500 M**), i.e. exceeding by far the

⁸ CENTRAL EUROPE On-going evaluation - Final report (section 2.1 Relevance of the CE Programme), Consortium Soges S.p.A. - ERAC. Approved by the MC in November 2012.

⁹ ditto

¹⁰ CENTRAL EUROPE On-going evaluation - Final report (section 2.2 Effectiveness of the CE Programme), Consortium Soges S.p.A. - ERAC. Approved by the MC in November 2012.

respective target value. The programme management bodies performed to the possible extent verifications on the plausibility and reliability of reported figures with regard especially to investment prepared and funds leveraged (see also chapter 2.7.1 in this regard).

Projects were also successful in terms of job creation, reporting **1870 jobs** created through pilot actions and investment preparation/funds leverage.

More detailed information on the performances and achievements per Priority is presented in chapter 3.

The sound programme implementation under a quantitative point of view is also confirmed by “core-indicators”, with achievements which are in line with targets set in the OP and application forms (as displayed in Annex 1).

In terms of capitalisation of project achievements, the programme independent evaluation has also positively assessed the cross-fertilisation and capitalisation actions (cross-fertilisation events, thematic studies etc.) put in place by the MA/JTS in order to strengthen and enlarge the impact of project results.

Contribution to EU policies

Indicators provided in the previous chapters as well as in Annex 1 show that projects delivered active contributions to the strategic framework of 2007-2013 Cohesion programmes (Lisbon and Gothenburg goals): projects were setting in place cooperation networks, strategies and pilot actions able to promote competitiveness, innovation and learning capacities on one hand, and to promote resource efficient and sustainable development processes on the other. In this respect it is to be noted that the contributions to the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas are cross-cutting for all four Programme Priorities, with 81 % of approved projects contributing to the environmental dimension of sustainability and 97 % of approved projects addressing the economic dimension. For quantitative information in this respect please refer in particular to the indicators “Category 1 - Environmental sustainability/Contribution to the Gothenburg agenda” and “Category 2 - Economic sustainability/Contribution to the Lisbon agenda” provided in Annex 1.

Most elements of the CE 2013 programme have shown already a high relevance to the EU2020 policy framework. As highlighted in an internal study¹¹, and as confirmed within the Programme on-going evaluation¹² (which had a special analytical focus on analysing the alignment of approved projects with the EU 2020 strategy) projects were in most cases characterised by a high relevance in terms of contribution to the dimensions of smart and sustainable growth (rather than to the inclusive dimension). This is particularly evident for projects approved under Priority 1 (Innovation), 2 (Accessibility) and 3 (Environment).

The implemented projects were supporting all flagship initiatives (through more than 70 % of the ERDF allocated by the programme), with a main emphasis on Innovation Union and Resource-efficient Europe. According to the Programme evaluation conclusions *“the current CE programme is already well-positioned for the future with most of its projects showing a strong link to the future EC policy objectives”*.

¹¹ “Contribution of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme to the future transnational cooperation 2014+”, chapter 3.1 - CE JTS. December 2011.

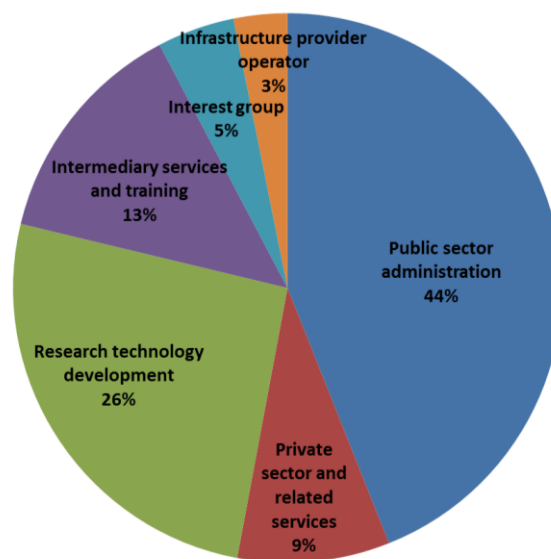
¹² 3rd and 4th Programme Evaluation Report, Consortium Soges S.p.A. - ERAC. Approved by the MC in May 2012, resp. November 2012.

Involvement of target groups and stakeholders

The programme has reached a wide involvement of beneficiaries, notably about 1.300 central European institutions¹³ as well as 12 institutions from outside the cooperation area.

From a qualitative point of view, projects involve a wide range of institutions that, at all levels, are playing key roles in the local and regional development processes. In other terms, projects are in most cases implemented by multi-level governance, multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral partnerships able to activate synergies for delivering effective benefits to the involved regions and beyond. This has been confirmed by the programme evaluation which highlighted that the CE 2013 programme “*has improved multi-level governance: an overall goal of ETC programmes*”.

As already highlighted in the Annual Implementation Reports, an important contribution to this result could be reached by actions carried out by the MA/JTS at transnational level and the network of Contact Points (NCP) at national level. Programme bodies spent a big effort in addressing relevant stakeholders, allowing to reaching and involving national and regional policy makers, territorial and urban management actors, scientific institutions and economic players both as partners and associated institutions (with an “observer” status) in the approved projects. For quantitative information in this respect please refer to the indicator “Category 5 - Partnership and cooperation oriented” in Annex 1.



The higher than expected involvement of private bodies in the projects (ca. 16 % of funds instead of the 3,6 % planned originally in 2007 are allocated to private partners) shall be regarded as a positive effect of the “outputs and results oriented approach” followed by the Programme. This aspect was also confirmed within the Programme on-going evaluation which included a specific focus study on the involvement of privates and stating that “*private partners’ participation gives a concrete support in providing know-how and in providing a voice to the representation of the local stakeholders in the partnership*”¹⁴.

During their implementation projects activated a wide range of competent/relevant target groups and stakeholders also beyond the partnerships, maximising the overall Programme effects and visibility. This was considered also of particular importance by the programme evaluation in terms of actively informing policy stakeholders at EU, national, regional and local level about the project achievements.

The reported figures provided in Annex 1 “Outreach to selected target groups” (Category 7 - “Communication and Knowledge Management oriented”) clearly demonstrate a very active outreach to different types of target groups (e.g. more than 42.000 entities of the public sector and 75.000 entities of the business sector as well as more than 20.000 research/technology development entities), highly exceeding the set targets.

It is to be noted that in some instances during reporting of project progress a double or multiple counting of some target groups could have occurred, since those data are based on the six-monthly progress reports in which in certain instances the involvement of a same project target group in more than one reporting

¹³ This figure refers to the no. of institutions involved in the projects approved within four standard calls and the restricted Call for strategic projects. Some institutions are simultaneously participating as partners in more than one project. Some others (e.g. national/regional administrations, universities), participate in projects with different departments/units and therefore have to be regarded as different partners. This considered the exact number of single institutions involved shall be considered as slightly overestimated.

¹⁴ 3rd and 4th Programme Evaluation Report, Consortium Soges S.p.A. - ERAC. Approved by the MC in May 2012, resp. November 2012.

period was reported. This issue has been corrected by including in the statistics the final figures as stated in the project Final reports where potential double counting has been eliminated to the possible extent.

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that the “Partnership Principle”¹⁵ has been successfully implemented by the programme.

Intensity of cooperation

As already highlighted in the Annual Implementation reports, approved projects showed a high intensity of cooperation, going far beyond the minimum requirements set in the regulations¹⁶ for transnational cooperation (beneficiaries from at least two countries, of which at least one shall be a Member State) and in the OP¹⁷ (at least three financing partners from at least three countries, at least two of which are Member States). Indeed, projects involve on average 11 partners coming from 6 out of 8 central European countries.

In terms of the application of the 20 % flexibility rule¹⁸, the approved projects show the participation of 3 partners from Romania, two partners from Belgium and 6 partners from German Regions outside the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area. However, administrative obstacles somehow hampered the effective involvement of beneficiaries located in EU regions outside the CENTRAL EUROPE area. These consisted in the long time needed for the setting up of necessary legal agreements for the OP implementation (Memorandum of Understanding) as well as the adaption of the national Management and Control Systems for First Level Control of the involved Member States which resulted in delays in activating the ERDF reimbursement to these partners.

At NUTS 2 level, all but one regions of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area were involved in approved projects through institutions located in these areas¹⁹. The intensity of cooperation is rather evenly distributed all over the territory of the programme, with a few hot-spots.

The analysis of cooperation networks at the regional and local level, carried out with the support of the ESPON Programme, shows that approved projects directly involve 211 NUTS 3 areas (see map below).

Taking into account also the involvement of associated partners, which are contributing without budget to the project’s application and dissemination of project achievements, the territorial effects of the projects might have event a higher potential.

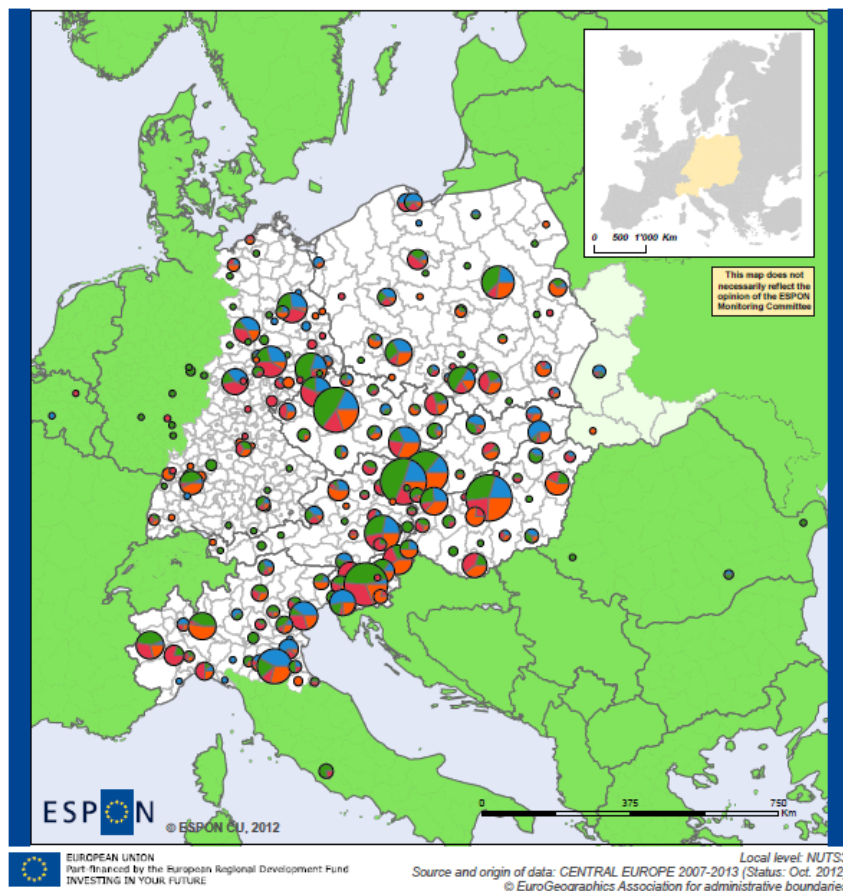
¹⁵ As defined in Art. 11 of the Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006

¹⁶ Article 19 of Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006.

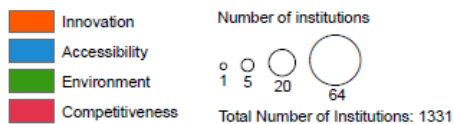
¹⁷ Chapter 6.2 of the OP.

¹⁸ Except the NUTS 2 region Valle d’Aosta (IT).

¹⁹ Except the NUTS 2 region Valle d’Aosta (IT).



**Institutions involved in projects of priority 1-4:
Innovation, Accessibility, Environment and Competitiveness**



An analysis on the generation of networks through transnational partnerships has been performed (for the entire programme and per thematic topic²⁰) by considering the intensity of both the regions' involvement in projects (No. of approved projects in which a certain region is participating) and the bilateral cooperation between regions established through approved projects (No. of bilateral linkages between regions)²¹.

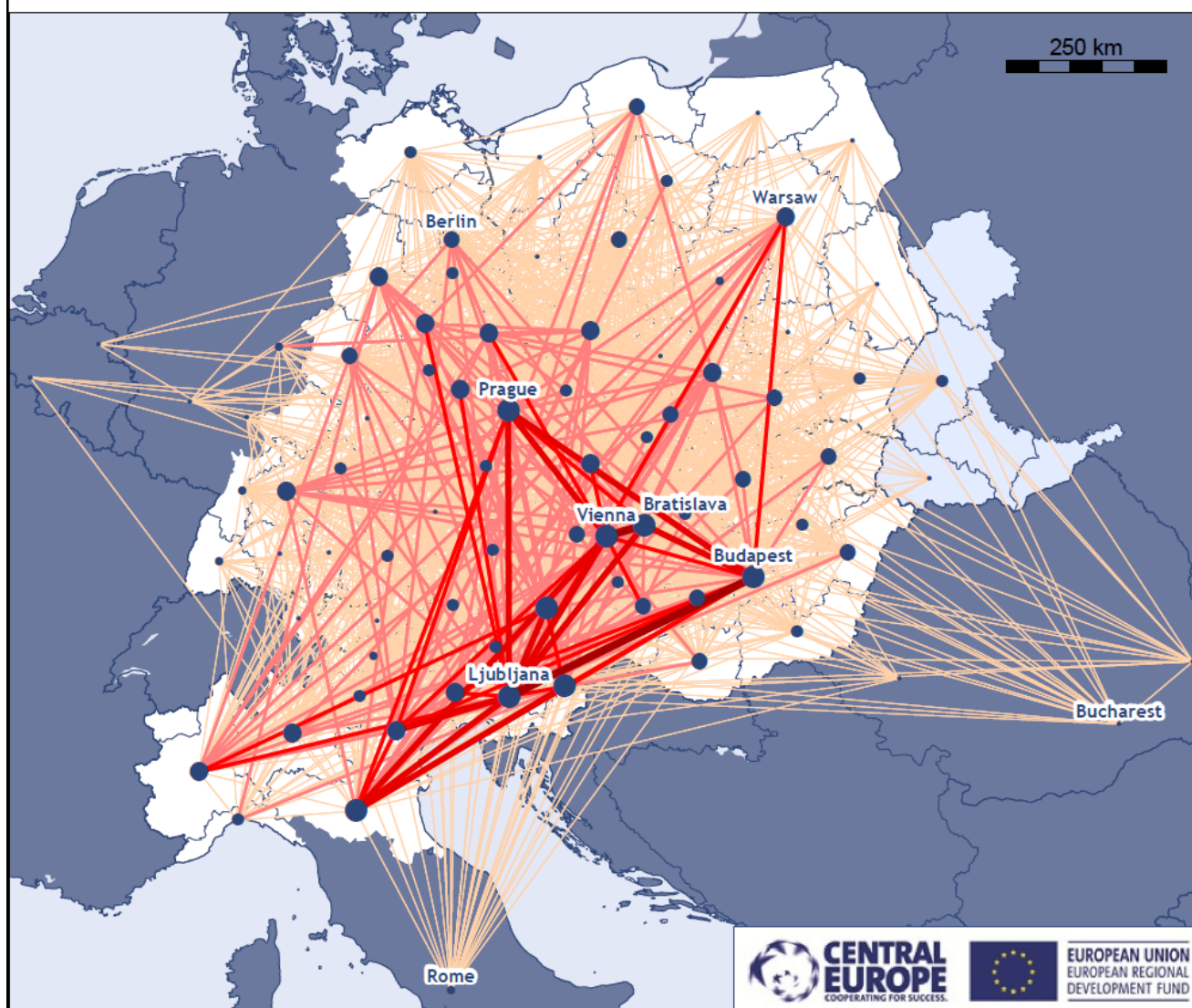
Since networks of territorial cooperation can be characterised as learning networks, these serve mostly to build new knowledge and to develop common solutions or strategies. With the help of visualisation of regional cooperation intensity the potential of regions to learn from the experience of other regions is illustrated (see map below).

²⁰ 6 thematic topics were used in the frame of thematic capitalisation: technology transfer and business innovation, sustainable public transport and logistics, energy efficiency and renewable energies, environmental risk management and climate change, demographic change and knowledge development, cultural heritage and creative resources

²¹ This analysis has been carried out in the framework of a Master Thesis entitled "Networks in European Territorial Cooperation by the example of the cooperation programme CENTRAL EUROPE" at the University of Vienna - Department of Geography and Regional Research. Author: Ms. Alexandra Frangenheim, 2013.

As a result it can be observed that both participation in projects and bilateral cooperation links are well spread over the Programme area (with also some links to Romanian and Belgian regions participating under the 20 % flexibility rule). The centre of cooperation, shown by a strong dark red triangle, evenly involves regions from all Member states. It is to be observed that frequency of cooperation leads to cooperation maturity whereby, agglomerations and economical strong regions have advantage (Frangenheim, 2013). Still, the participation of certain peripheral regions in the programme area is comparably lower however, for a more accurate analysis of this phenomenon, it would be necessary to analyse the structure of cooperation networks in programmes partially overlapping with CENTRAL EUROPE (e.g. the Baltic Sea and the Alpine Space programmes).

The map below displays the overall geographical coverage and intensity of cooperation links at NUTS 2 level generated by all 124 approved projects.



Extent of cooperation:
Number of projects
per region

- 49 and more projects
- 25-48 projects
- 13-24 projects
- 7-12 projects
- 4-6 projects
- 1-3 projects

Intensity of cooperation:
Number of bilateral linkages
between regions

- 40 and more linkages
- 30-39 linkages
- 20-29 linkages
- 10-19 linkages
- 1-9 linkages

Local level: Nuts 2

Origin of data: CENTRAL
EUROPE Programme 2007-2013

(c) EuroGeographics Association
for administrative boundaries

Status: September 2012

Cartography:
Alexandra Frangenheim

Contribution to Macro-Regional Strategy objectives

In application of EC recommendations²², current and potential links and synergies between the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and the Macro-Regional Strategies (MRS) existing in the cooperation area were thoroughly investigated in 2011²³ and 2013²⁴, providing factual evidence on the territorial and transnational effects generated by approved projects both on existing (Baltic and Danube) and potential/future MRS (Adriatic-Ionian, Alpine, Carpathian).

As already highlighted in the Annual Implementation reports, overall, 56 out of the 124 approved projects were directly contributing to one or more MRSs.

In addition, representatives of the various programme bodies were participating to debates and public events organised in the framework of the Adriatic-Ionian, Baltic and Danube Macro-Regional Strategies.

Financial-administrative progress

Under the financial point of view, the 124 approved projects had an average financial size of 1,8 M EUR ERDF, i.e. slightly lower than the average assumed in the Operational Programme. The approved projects have covered well the Priority Themes allocation in the Operational Programme, with 70% of the Priority Themes addressed by at least one project.

With regard to Programme financial/management aspects, the total amount of declared and certified expenditure requested by the CA to the EC was of EUR 281.134.031,47 which is equal to 94,2 % of the total funding allocated as in the OP. Thanks to the streamlining of procedures for reducing administrative burden, together with the effort of beneficiaries and programme bodies, the CE 2013 Programme has always reached its financial commitments in line with the financing plan of the OP and therefore avoiding any automatic de-commitment of funds as set out under Article 93 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.

Simplification

In order to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries to the maximum possible extent, and in application of Programme on-going evaluation recommendations, the MA/JTS undertook an extensive simplification process that allowed streamlining procedures, improving programme performances and reducing administrative burden. Among others, the following measures were implemented:

- Simplified calculation method for staff costs;
- Partial substitution of paper submission with electronic submission of project progress reports;
- Merging of reporting periods into one single project progress report, for those projects experiencing reporting delays;
- Simplification of MA/JTS internal procedures for the monitoring of project progress reports;
- Simplification of procedures for the implementation of withdrawals of unduly paid-out funds resulting from irregularities or financial mistakes.

More information on simplification measures is available in the respective annual implementation reports.

As a concluding remark, it can be stated that the Programme did not encounter any specific problems along the implementation of the tasks described above.

²² In the annual examination letters of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, EC recommended to activate synergies with the MRS overlapping with the cooperation area, specifically the Danube MRS and to report on the participation in the works for the up-coming Adriatic Ionian Strategy.

²³ Internal study "Contribution of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme to the future transnational cooperation 2014+". MA/JTS, December 2011.

²⁴ Analysis carried out in 2013 in the framework of the process for the preparation of the CENTRAL EUROPE 2020 Cooperation Programme (analysis of the Programme's external coherence),

2.2 Information about compliance with Community law

Any significant problems relating to the compliance with Community law which have been encountered in the implementation of the operational programme and the measures taken to deal with them.

As described in the Programme Description of the Management and Control System (DMCS)²⁵, the respect of the applicable EU and national legislation of all countries involved in the CE Programme was ensured according to the procedures established at Programme as well as at the national levels [the latter in the framework of the national control systems established according to Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006].

With reference in particular to **State aid rules**, it has to be mentioned that the programme verified the compliance of projects with the applicable rules already in the project selection phase. In detail, in case of project activities that were deemed as State aid relevant, the public support granted had to be recorded by the beneficiaries as aid within the *de minimis* regime in application of Regulation (EC) No. 1998/2006. In total **EUR 3.368.947,63** of public aid (i.e. **1,46 %** of the ERDF available for projects) was granted under the *de minimis* regime to 43 project partners (i.e. **3,3 %** of the total partners involved in CE projects) participating in 11 approved projects. Moreover, it is to be reported that a total of 13 project partners (**1 %**) granted indirect *de minimis* aid to final beneficiaries of project activities. Granting of indirect aid to final beneficiaries was monitored by the First Level Controllers and the MA/JTS during project implementation.

The above figures show that the *de minimis* aid granted by the programme remains very low compared to the overall public assistance granted. On the other hand, an internal analysis carried out in 2016²⁶ showed that, overall, the administrative management of State aid at all levels (beneficiaries, controllers, MA/JTS) absorbed resources for **at least 3,3 M EUR, therefore equalling the direct aid granted under *de minimis***. In addition - and as a non-quantifiable negative effect - the application of the State aid discipline to cooperation projects that, by nature, are focusing (and granting the large majority of aid) to initiatives of general interest, results in a disadvantageous reputation for the EU.

The compliance with **public procurement rules** was closely verified along the financial monitoring of projects implementation. The compulsory checklist template used by the First Level Controllers in order to document their control work also includes a section devoted to the verification of the compliance of claimed expenditure with the applicable EU, national and programme rules on public procurement. In addition, in compliance with the DMCS the MA/JTS performed plausibility checks on expenditure already validated by First Level Controllers, which also included the verification of the compliance with the applicable public procurement law. For further information in this respect please refer also to chapter 6.3.1.

The compliance of the projects with the applicable **publicity rules** was also closely verified along the entire project implementation phase. As in the case of public procurement, the compulsory checklist template used by the First Level Controllers also includes specific questions on the compliance with the applicable publicity rules. In addition, the verification of the existence of the projects carried out by the MA/JTS along the project monitoring process comprised also the verification of the compliance of all project outputs with the applicable publicity rules.

The impact of the projects on **environment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination** was addressed along the whole project lifecycle. In the application phase projects were requested to explain in detail their relevance with reference to the mentioned policies, highlighting positive effects and potential risks. During the project implementation phase, the verification of the existence of the project carried out by the First Level Controllers as well as the MA/JTS also includes the verification of the compliance with such policies. Within the monitoring of projects, their outputs were desk-screened with reference to their potential impacts on equal opportunities (e.g. assurance that new job opportunities, training courses, seminars, etc. are offered to all categories of potential interested subjects) and environment (e.g.

²⁵ Drafted in compliance with Article 71 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and accepted by EC on 26.01.2010.

²⁶ "Input paper for simplification of State aid in Interreg" sent to the MC of the successor Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme on 12.05.2016.

compliance of investments with the applicable environmental laws). With regard to the latter, in compliance with the DMCS the MA/JTS performed sample on-the-spot checks on investments in order to verify, among others, the compliance with environment obligations.

It can be concluded that **no problems were encountered** in relation to the compliance with Community law along the OP implementation.

2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

Any significant problems encountered in implementing the operational programme, including a summary of serious problems identified under the procedure in Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, where appropriate, as well as any measures taken by the managing authority or the monitoring committee to solve the problems.

No problems were encountered in implementing the OP.

2.4 Changes in the context of the OP implementation

Description of any elements which, without stemming directly from the assistance of the operational programme, have a direct impact on the programme's implementation (such as legislative changes or unexpected socio-economic developments).

Along the programme lifetime there was the need to perform two minor revisions of the CE OP in order to adapt it to the actual needs of the concerned regions.

A first revision occurred in 2011,²⁷ consisting in a reallocation of funds between priorities, between public and private expenditure as well as in an adjustment of output and results indicators. Adaptations were needed in light of the following facts:

- Projects approved under Priority 3 “Environment” were characterised by a cross-cutting nature, making them relevant also for other Programme Priorities. For instance, projects in the field of sustainable transport as well as cleaner production technologies were assigned to this priority (Areas of Intervention 3.3 and 3.4 respectively). This caused a higher than expected demand of funds under priority 3 by the central European stakeholders;
- Most of the central European stakeholders relevant for Priority 2 “Accessibility” were already successfully involved in approved cooperation projects and, at that time, they were mostly implementing projects of infrastructural nature funded by other programmes.
- The “output and result-oriented approach” followed by the programme caused a mobilisation of private resources higher than expected therefore financial allocations for national cofinancing had to be adapted.

A second revision occurred in 2012,²⁸ consisting in a minor shift of funds between programme priorities so as to maximise the absorption of funds by the 124 approved projects.

2.5 Substantial modifications pursuant to Art. 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

Cases where a substantial modification pursuant to Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 has been detected.

No substantial modifications pursuant to Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2016 were needed along the programme lifetime.

²⁷ Revised OP submitted to the EC by the MA on 9 March 2011 and approved by the EC on 25 July 2011.

²⁸ Revised OP submitted to the EC by the MA on 19 June 2012 and approved by the EC on 20 November 2012.

2.6 Complementarity with other instruments

Summary of the implementation of the arrangements made ensuring demarcation and coordination between the assistance from the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the EAFRD, the EFF, and the interventions of the EIB and other existing financial instruments (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006).

The coordination and complementarity of the CE Programme with other instruments has been ensured along the programme lifetime in compliance with procedures described in the accepted DMCS. In detail, during the project selection process the assessment of the received applications foresaw also the identification by the assessors of potential overlapping with other EU Programmes.²⁹ In cases where potential risks of overlapping were detected, measures undertaken consisted in the following:

- In cases of minor/solvable overlapping, project proposals were recommended for funding by the MA/JTS under condition that the potential overlapping was removed (e.g. in case of investments which might be funded by EAFRD programmes);
- In cases of major overlapping not solvable with conditions for approval, project proposals were regarded as lacking for the “Relevance” assessment criterion and were rejected (e.g. pure R&TD projects or projects clearly belonging to the sphere of ESF).

The main EU instruments monitored during the assessment of project proposals were: LIFE+, 7th Framework Programme, CIP, JASPER, JEREMIE, JESSICA, Regions for Economic Change Initiative as well as the Programmes financed by EAFRD, ESF and EFF.

In addition to the above, special measures were undertaken for detecting and avoiding overlaps with neighbouring transnational programmes (namely: South East Europe, Baltic Sea Region, Alpine Space and MED). To this end, coordination activities with the Joint Secretariats of the mentioned programmes took place during the assessment of proposals. This allowed, on one hand, to avoid overlapping to the possible extent and, on the other, to exploit potential complementarities among projects of different Programmes. Coordination activities consisted mainly in exchanging lists of projects to be recommended for funding as well as lists of involved applicants. In cases of detected potential overlapping, the Secretariats exchanged the application forms of the affected proposals and, if possible, overlapping was solved with conditions for approval (as described above).

With regard to the exploitation of synergies among transnational programmes of the area, it has to be highlighted that the CE Programme was proactively supporting cooperation and coordination efforts which brought, among others, to the organisation of a joint event of all transnational programmes (Katowice - PL 15-16 September 2011) as well as in organising joint working sessions taking place on a regular basis. Mutual learnings improved the effectiveness of programme implementation.

2.7 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation measures taken by the management authority or the monitoring committee, including difficulties encountered and steps taken to solve them.

2.7.1 Project monitoring

The analysis of the project progresses was performed in accordance with the requirements set in the accepted DMCS. The approved projects were monitored through Start-Up reports, Preparation Cost Reports, six-monthly Progress Reports and the Final Report. The full monitoring process is recorded and stored in the Programme Monitoring System.

Complementing the information provided in the progress reports, the Final report focused on the presentation of major achievements of the project and potential impacts, highlighting the changes/improvements resulting from the project implementation and providing a joint reflection of the

²⁹ The application manuals of all calls specifically describe the overlapping with other funds as a cause for reducing the “Relevance” of the received applications. A specific question in the assessment grid annexed to the DMCS is devoted to it under the “Relevance” assessment criterion.

partnership on project experience and achievements. Further, it gave the possibility to provide feedback on programme management procedures and suggestions on possible improvements in the current and future Programming period.

During the monitoring of project progresses, special attention was paid to the verification of the targets reached by the projects concerning the “Output and results oriented” indicators (category 6 in Annex 1).

In detail, all outputs achieved had to be provided as annexes to the Progress Reports and were further checked both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In order to verify the existence of pilot investments and the respect of the relevant requirements (e.g. legal and technical requirements, publicity etc.), on the spot checks of pilot investments (see also chapter 6.1) were carried out by the relevant JTS Project and/or Financial Managers (supported by external experts when needed) in compliance with § 7.5 of the Subsidy Contracts.

With regard to results achieved, the plausibility of all the reported figures was checked through the analysis of evidences of such results as, e.g.:

- For strategies/policies implemented/adopted: the explanation of the policies affected and of the endorsement by competent decision making bodies, for the benefit of whom;
- For investment preparation: the description of the investments prepared (with a clear short- term implementation perspective), of their value and, if applicable, of the new jobs linked to them;
- For private/public funds leveraged: the description of the leverage of funds in the concerned field during or after the end of the project (short or mid-term perspective)
- etc.

The desk analysis of the reported results was mostly complemented by project visits (e.g. at project meetings/events) of the JTS project, finance and/or communication managers. Those visits did not only aim at performing verifications but also at giving guidance/support to the partnerships. On-the-spot checks were also performed after the end of the project implementation period, in order to verify project’s existence.

In compliance with the DMCS, and in addition to the above, the plausibility of the reported costs was performed by the JTS on a sample of at least 5 % of Progress Reports received per reporting period, consisting in additional checks on invoices and other supporting documents on a random basis. For more information on plausibility and on-the-spot checks please refer also to chapter 6.1.

2.7.2 Programme evaluation

Communication evaluation

Results of the external communication evaluation were presented in 2011 by the company “Rambøll Management Consulting” in compliance with Art. 4 of the Regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006. It was conducted on the basis of both desk analysis of programme documents and direct data collection with a survey that addressed more than 3.200 persons from the JTS database.

The main finding of the communication evaluation was that the programme had overall reached the communication goals set in the communication and capitalisation plan already in 2011. As at the same time less financial resources were used than originally forecasted, communication of and about the programme was considered to be effective and efficient.

Regarding target groups, the evaluation found that these were defined in line with the programme goals and well reached through communication activities. Messages delivered to the various audiences were generally judged to be transparent and understandable. However, it was also concluded that the impact of communication activities could even be further increased by refocusing contents and by using language that is less technical and easier to understand.

Following the evaluation results, the JTS has adapted communication as described in chapter 7.

On-going programme evaluation

The on-going programme evaluation [Art. 47-49 of the Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006], was carried out between January 2011 and December 2012. The evaluation was performed by a consortium composed of the companies Soges S.p.A, (IT) and ERAC BV (NL).

In order to accompany and steer the programme evaluation a dedicated Evaluation Task Force was set up. The members of the Task Force were nominated by the national delegations of the Monitoring Committee.

The programme evaluation focussed on the assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and consistency of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and its implementation by the programme bodies, making use of the most recent data on project progresses. It also contained a specific analysis on the involvement and role of private partners in the programme as well as an analysis of the programme's contribution to the EU 2020 strategy.

The programme evaluation results were presented in four evaluation reports which were discussed by the Programme Evaluation Task Force during dedicated Task Force meetings and approved by the MC.

The final evaluation report includes also an update of the evaluation conclusions and recommendations, taking into account the follow-up measures already started following recommendations provided in the intermediate reports.

The main conclusions of the Programme evaluation can be summarised as follows:

- CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is well implemented and on track for achieving the set goals: it can be considered as benchmark for the transnational cooperation programmes;
- Confirmation of the relevance of the Programme, which is able to answer the major problems of the central Europe area (as defined in the SWOT analysis of the Operational Programme), even in the changing context of the socio-economic crisis;
- Successful support by the programme of both transnational and place-based cooperation;
- Good coverage and high intensity of participation of the entire central European territory;
- Experienced and professional programme management;
- Administration and reporting instructions are rated as clear but administrative burden is perceived as high by the beneficiaries;
- Programme objective for private partners' involvement has been largely exceeded;
- the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is well-positioned for the future, with most of its projects showing a strong link to the future EU policy objectives (covering all flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 strategy).

Follow up measures following the recommendations formulated by the evaluators have been implemented with regard to both the CENTRAL EUROPE 2007-2013 Programme as well as the one for the 2014-2020 period:

CE 2007-2013 Programme

- Continuation of networking actions with relevant bodies (e.g. EC "thematic" DGs, EIB, Macro-Regional relevant institutions, etc.) to make use of synergies also through a set of 6 thematic studies summarising project achievements and showcasing the positioning of the Programme against the relevant EU policy frameworks³⁰. Such studies have been spread to relevant thematic stakeholders.
- Continuation of efforts with thematic capitalisation and communication in cooperation with the network of Contact Points;
- Streamlining the monitoring and reimbursement processes, reducing the administrative burden for beneficiaries.

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme (2014-2020)

- Guidance and training to Lead Partners targeted to the understanding and use of the indicators.

³⁰ Available for download at the following link: www.central2013.eu/documents-2007-2013/programme-publications/thematic-studies/?L

- The system of National Contacts Point has been confirmed also for the Interreg CE Programme, as in the adopted Cooperation Programme, further strengthening its advisory role.
- The role and function of the external evaluation of projects has been further emphasised in the programme application manual for the Interreg CE Programme. Even if the project external evaluation is not compulsory, it is nevertheless strongly recommended.
- A specific emphasis has been given to macro-regional strategies when designing the Interreg CE Programme. Macro-regional strategy stakeholders of all strategies geographically overlapping with the programme area have been specifically addressed in the partner consultation process.
- The strategic relevance of projects has been taken into great consideration when setting up the programme implementation framework, according to which projects have to show a clear contribution to the achievement of programme results, generating a clear and visible change compared to the initial situation.
- The set of rules concerning the formal/administrative eligibility requirements for project proposals has been strongly simplified, with an expected significant reduction of the No of proposals rejected out of formal mistakes and, ultimately, a significant reduction of administrative burden for applicants and programme bodies.
- The MA/JTS actively contributed to the harmonisation and streamlining of procedures and tools across programmes, under the umbrella of the INTERACT Programme. This allowed to harmonised branding and communication approaches, harmonised templates of application form and progress report, harmonised eligibility rules, etc. The MA/JTS also directly contributed to the development of the common electronic Monitoring System (eMS) through the participation to the eMS “core group” of programmes as well as to the building of common knowledge and capacity with regard to State aid applied to cooperation programmes.

The MC was continuously updated on the follow up measures set in place by the MA/JTS in order to implement recommendations given by the evaluators.

2.8 National performance reserve

Not applicable for the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.

3. IMPLEMENTATION BY PRIORITY

In this chapter the physical and financial implementation of the programme is presented with detailed information at priority level, with also some project examples of good practices and their contribution to the programme objectives.

In particular, it includes an analysis of achievements of all 124 approved projects in terms of outputs and results obtained as well as target groups reached (indicator categories 6 and 7 as described in Annex 1). Achievements have been compared with the targets set by the projects in their Application Forms. An overview table of the targets and achieved values of all priorities is included in Annex 1.

The CENTRAL EUROPE Programme did not foresee the possibility of sharing ERDF and ESF in any of the Programme priorities³¹.

³¹ Art. 34.2 of the Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006.

3.1 Priority 1 - Facilitating innovation across Central Europe

3.1.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

Information on the physical and financial achievements of the priority

The four standard calls for proposals and the Restricted Call for Strategic Projects absorbed € 47.571.786,05 ERDF, that is 90,9 % of the ERDF budget allocated to this Priority (€ 52.352.215 ERDF³²). An overview on the quantitative achievements within Priority 1 is provided in the table below:

Priority 1	Total No of projects funded	ERDF absorbed (€)	ERDF absorbed in % vs. Priority allocation
1 st Call	4	7.049.131,30	13,5 %
2 nd Call	12	19.047.431,96	36,4 %
3 rd Call	8	13.073.806,25	24,9%
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	1	2.246.182,05	4,3 %
4 th Call	5	6.155.234,49	11,8 %
TOTAL	30	47.571.786,05	90,9 %

Details according to the Areas of Intervention within the Priority are provided below:

Area of Intervention	1.1 - Enhancing framework conditions for Innovation	1.2 - Establishing capabilities for the diffusion and application of innovation	1.3 - Fostering knowledge development
1 st call	1	3	0
2 nd Call	5	5	2
3 rd call	5	1	2
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	1	-	-
4 th Call	-	-	5
Total No. of projects funded	12	9	9

For detailed information on the achievement of targets referring to the subset of ex-ante quantified output and result indicators as in the Operational Programme, please refer to the tables provided in chapter 2.1.1.

The tables below provide information on the additional indicators referring to the outputs and results obtained and target groups reached (categories no. 6 and 7 as in Annex 1) in a cumulative manner, by comparing the targets set by the projects in their application forms (expected values for all projects approved) with the achievements reported for all approved projects.

³² As in the revised version of the Operational Programme (Version 2.1), approved on 20 November 2012.

Additional output indicator: Category 6 - Output and results oriented for Priority 1 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Type of Action	Description of the foreseen outputs as in the AF	Priority 1		
		Target (AF) ³³	Achievements of all approved projects	
		No.	No.	%
Joint Strategy + action plan development	No. of strategies/policy documents developed/improved	91	128	141 %
	No. of strategies/policy documents implemented/adopted	66	72	109 %
Transnational tool development	No. of tools developed	99	116	117 %
	No. of tools implemented	90	98	109 %
	No. of trainings for new tools prepared or implemented	281	300	107 %
Joint management establishment	No. of permanent cooperations established	218	180	83 %
	No. of permanent management structure established	31	21	68 %
Investment preparation	Volume of investment prepared in Mio EUR	11	-	0 %
	No. of jobs to be created through these investments	360	291	81 %
	Volume of private/public funds leveraged in Mio EUR	41	130	317 %
Pilot actions including investments	No. of pilot actions implemented (including No of investments realized)	166	192	116 %
	Volume of investment realized through pilot actions in Mio EUR	0,5	0,32	63 %
	No. of jobs to be created through pilot actions	104	132	127 %

³³ Quantification of target based on all 30 approved projects under Priority 1.

Additional indicator: Category 7 - Communication and Knowledge Management oriented for Priority 1 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Outreach to selected target groups	Priority 1		
	Target (AF) ³⁴	Achievements of all approved projects	
	No.	No.	%
No. of entities of the public sector/administration addressed	3.589	11.127	310 %
No. of entities of the enterprise/business sector and related services addressed	26.330	36.119	137 %
No of research/technology development entities addressed	4.135	11.187	271 %
No. of entities providing intermediary services and training addressed	2.040	5.548	272 %
No. of interest groups addressed	1.559	4.758	305 %

³⁴ Quantification of target based on all 30 approved projects under Priority 1.

Qualitative analysis

- *Analysis of the achievements using the financial information (point 2.1.2) and physical indicators (point 3.1.1) and other relevant information.*
- *Demonstration of the effects of the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women (as appropriate).*
- *Analysis of the use of the Funds in accordance with Article 34(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. For ESF programmes, information required in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.*
- *List of unfinished operations and the schedule for their completion (final report only).*

Within Priority 1 relevant results towards creating favourable conditions for innovation were achieved through a variety of project activities and outputs aiming at developing structures and tools for, among others, business support and technology transfer. In addition, projects have tackled the topic of knowledge development by fostering human capital development in the education and research system as well as addressing brain-drain and re-migration.

According to a thematic study contracted by the MA/JTS in the frame of thematic capitalisation it has been concluded that “CENTRAL EUROPE projects create the framework for a fruitful policy learning process in the innovation field and address the relevant barriers to innovation faced by regional businesses”³⁵. Project achievements are related to two complementary and interlocked sub-themes, one with a focus on capacity building through policy learning and sharing, and one focused on pilot implementation and experimentation and involving final beneficiaries of new support measures and mechanisms. The study shows that policy learning and sharing is an important objective of cooperation between regional actors focusing on identification of good practices at local/regional level and on sharing and development of tools and mechanisms for implementation of such measures in other regions.

An important output is the impact on the leverage of national and regional funds. CENTRAL EUROPE projects are positioned upstream of national and regional funding, “importing” and adapting new practices into their regions as a result of transnational cooperation, which can be later disseminated and implemented towards final beneficiaries, namely SMEs, through the local funding available.

The set of good practices developed within the projects offers a repository of pre-validated solutions, at the level of regional policies, targeting existing and potential barriers to innovation. The good practices/measures have been benchmarked by regional actors with an inside knowledge of the field, assessed in terms of impact and potential transferability to other regions and in some cases enriched through pilot implementation or through contributions from other regions.

Projects have conducted also trainings and workshops targeted at the shortage of innovation management skills as well as more complex and tailored activities such as funding schemes, mechanisms to foster cooperation between innovation actors, internationalization of innovation or countering the lack of research capabilities.

Achievement of physical indicators

Projects have put a strong emphasis on the development (128) and implementation/adoption (72) of strategies and action plans, the targets as set by the projects have been exceeded (141% and 109% respectively); e.g. in the project 2CE132P1 CNCB an internationalisation strategy for clusters as well as 7 national cluster management concepts were developed; the project 3CE291P1 InoPlaCE developed a Transnational Action Plan which set course of further actions for improvement of conditions for the future operation of young innovators in central Europe.

Projects were also successful in the development (116) and implementation (98) of tools, thus exceeding the set targets (117 % and 109 % respectively). Also about 300 trainings for the developed

³⁵ INOVA: Thematic study: Technology transfer and business innovation in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, Final report, July 2013

tools were implemented. For example, the project 2CE232P1 ACCESS developed tools and techniques on innovation management focussing on peer-reviews of best practices in three innovation-intensive fields, namely biotech, mechatronics and agro food. The project 3CE394P1 NANOFORCE which main output is a platform for mediation between researchers and venture capital (“nanodeals generator”) or the project 2CE272P1 CEBBIS which developed a variety of pro-innovative tools/methodologies for SMEs (amongst others focussing on e.g. Business Intelligence, Portfolio, Technology Foresight, Lean Manufacturing etc.) combined with 19 specific training sessions some of which were tested in pilot actions.

In terms of permanent cooperations and management structures projects have not fully reached the set targets (about 83 % and 68 % respectively) which is mostly due to the fact that the indicator definition (i.e. transnational and permanent character of governance and management systems) was not fully understood by all beneficiaries when setting the targets in the application forms. Yet, projects managed to establish a significant number of sustainable cooperations (180) and joint management structures (21), e.g. the C2C Network (project 2CE096P1 INTRAMED-C2C) which expands the project partnership aiming to become a permanent structure for technology cooperation and transfer between R&D institutions and SMEs in the field of clinical and pharmaceutical research. The project 4CE429P1 i.e. SMART created entrepreneurship centres supporting unemployed young people (SMART Points) and the SMART Network which has been already institutionalised.

A high number of pilot actions (192) have been implemented: in the project 2CE237P1 C-PLUS the Transnational Action Plan for world class cluster development has been tested in 6 pilot actions; in the project 2CE175P1 Re-Turn pilot actions in 8 case study regions focused on the support and training of migrants for their re-integration in the labour market.

In terms of leverage of private/public funds and job creation, the reported amounts (130 Mio EUR) have highly exceeded the set targets (317 %). Yet, it is to be noted that under this indicator also the amounts initially planned for investment preparation have been reported. In this context, major contributions come from the projects 1CE080P1 I3SME in which due to project results SMEs were able to create 284 jobs and leverage investments of about EUR 17 M€ in innovation mainly through applying to Structural funds for funding the development of new products, re-qualification, technological development, etc., the project 2CE199P1 PROINCOR which - following the conducted innovation audits and follow-up activities - induced additional funds (public/private) for companies amounting to about 33 M€ as well as the project 3CE281P1 SMART FRAME which generated transnational R&D projects with a volume of more than 18 M€ and 108 jobs due to the creation of start-ups.

Overall, 319 partners were involved in the 30 projects approved within Priority 1. 31 % of them belong to the “intermediary services and training sectors”, 29 % to the “public sector/public administration” and 25 % to the “research/technology development sector”. Partners from the enterprise/business sector and related services (including infrastructure providers and interest groups) are represented by about 15%. The participation of private institutions is of about 25 % and two projects in this Priority were led by private Lead Partners. Approved projects in Priority 1 predominantly involved the regional governance structures which demonstrates that the regional level is the most active one (55 % of partners acting at the regional level) in developing/implementing innovation policies and actions.

Projects of Priority 1 showed a high capacity to address their relevant target groups, in particular for the enterprise/business sector (more than 36.000 entities), research/technology development and the public sector (more than 11.000 entities each) going well beyond their initial targets. This is due to the fact that projects in Priority 1 put a specific focus on building networks between business, research and the public administration sector. In addition, a high number of other relevant target groups like entities providing intermediary services and training as well as interest groups were reached (about 5.500).

53 % of the projects approved within Priority 1 specifically promote the issue of equal gender opportunities (exemplary is the case of the project No. 4CE506P1 WOMEN specifically targeting women in rural areas) and 63 % of projects address the social dimension.

Overall, projects within Priority 1 show concrete contributions to the goals of Europe 2020 - Smart Growth (mostly for the Flagship ‘Innovation Union’), but also for Inclusive Growth (Flagship ‘Agenda for new skills and jobs’).

The 20 % flexibility rule has not been used in projects approved within Priority 1 while one project involved a partner from Ukraine.

Below some examples of projects are presented, which show relevant achievement in terms of transnational tools, cooperations and leverage of funds.

Project No. 2CE202P1 CLUSTERS-CORD - “Clusters and Cooperation for Regional Development in Central Europe” (2nd Call)

The project CLUSTERS-CORD has succeeded in strengthening cooperation on research and development amongst clusters from different countries, thus encouraging transfer of innovative concepts into commercial products and paving the way for greater internationalization of their activities.

Based on an analysis of 70 clusters in ten European regions, the project has selected five key industries for closer examination: Information and communication technology, tourism, health sciences, food processing, and energy and environment.



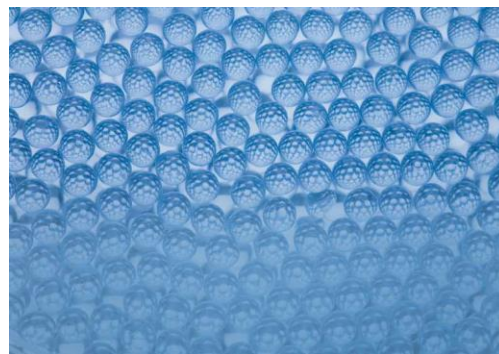
For each selected sector a working group was established in order to assure effective exchange activities and further analysis of its meta-clustering potential. Further activities focused on supporting cooperation and networking among cluster members (in particular SMEs) through the promotion of regional cooperation projects with R&D institutions, resulting in six companies introducing newly developed products within regional cooperation projects.

As a final result five strategic cooperation plans have been developed that resulted in the creation of five meta clusters. The meta-clusters are established on the basis of strategic cooperation plans and their existence is sealed in cooperation agreements defining the scope and terms of cooperation thus ensuring their sustainability.

Project No. 3CE394P1 NANOFORCE- “Nanotechnology for Chemical Enterprises - how to link scientific knowledge to the business in the Central Europe space” (3rd Call)

The project NANOFORCE was fostering the nanotech sector by facilitating research in nanotechnology, by encouraging investment in the results of this research and by promoting the technology as a safe means for producing new kinds of goods without taxing the environment.

The partnership developed a state-of-the art report on regulations to identify gaps in them and propose recommendations that could be taken up in the process of revision of the REACH Directive. To this purpose three nanomaterials were analysed in lab tests (TiO₂, ZnO, nanoAG) and potential health and environmental hazards evaluated. The lab tests were then followed by elaboration of Safety Data Sheets and specific exposure scenarios which were discussed during 14 joint working groups involving national authorities.



In order to mobilise public and private funding sources the project developed an interactive tool (Nanodeals Generator platform) which supports the launching of innovative & economically valid nanotech initiatives (nanodeals). A nanodeal is a business proposal for an agreement or project among innovative SMEs, Academia start-ups and spin-offs that is mutually beneficial for both the idea proposer and its potential investor, focusing on the exploitation of nanotechnology know-how through the approach “from lab to market”. The project proposed development of the Interregional Nanotech Venture Capital Fund (INVCF) to raise funding from international venture capitalists so they could

finance promising nanotech initiatives. The proposal of INVCF, with a tentative capital of EUR 30 million, is based on the development of a business plan elaborated by a group of experts. It is intended to serve as the financial part of the CE Nanotechnology Roadmap to foster nanotech research and development in central Europe.

Project No. 3CE346P1 Re-Turn - “Regions Benefitting from Returning Migrants”

Economically motivated migration of young and well-educated people from the new Member States to high-income countries is still dominating international migration flows in Europe, however statistics also show the willingness of central Europeans to come back to their home countries.

Therefore the project Re-Turn aimed to compensate for losses of human capital in earlier periods by getting educated migrants back to their home region. In particular, the implemented measures focussed on enhancing human capital and re-migrants' entrepreneurial abilities in seven central European regions. In particular, the project promoted these returnees as a source of innovative ideas and entrepreneurial energy who can drive regional development.



Throughout the project the 12 partners developed, tested and implemented new support policies, tools and services to promote return migration. Project partners, supported by a transnational advisory board and regional task forces, discussed the barriers and potentials associated with return migration in their regions and implemented pilot activities which covered the following three defined areas of intervention: *re-attract*, *re-integrate* and *re-employ* returning migrants. Finally, a transnational Strategy and a Memorandum of Understanding signed by regional/national policy makers and stakeholders ensure transnational cooperation and sustainability of results after the project's life time.

3.1.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

Information on any significant problems encountered in implementing the priority, including a summary of serious problems identified pursuant to the procedure in Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, where appropriate, as well as any measures taken by the managing authority or the monitoring committee to solve the problems.

The programme did not face any problems in this priority.

3.2 Priority 2 - Improving accessibility of and within Central Europe

3.2.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

Information on the physical and financial achievements of the priority

The four standard Calls for proposals and the Restricted Call for Strategic Projects absorbed € 42.367.781,95 ERDF, that is 90,3 % of the ERDF budget allocated to this Priority by the Programme (€ 46.942.879 ERDF ³⁶). An overview on the quantitative achievements within Priority 2 is provided in the table below:

Priority 2	Total No of projects funded	ERDF absorbed (€)	ERDF absorbed in % vs. Priority allocation
1 st Call	4	10.072.342,81	21,5 %
2 nd Call	8	15.762.295,97	33,6 %
3 rd Call	4	7.514.700,06	16,0 %
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	2	4.836.490,08	10,3 %
4 th Call	3	4.181.953,03	8,9 %
TOTAL	21	42.367.781,95	90,3 %

Details according to the Areas of Intervention within the Priority are provided below:

Area of Intervention	2.1 - Improving Central Europe's interconnectivity	2.2 - Developing Multimodal Logistics' cooperation	2.3 - Promoting sustainable and safe mobility	2.4 - Promoting information and communication technologies and alternative solutions for enhancing access
1 st call	3	0	0	1
2 nd call	2	1	5	0
3 rd Call	0	2	1	1
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	1	1	-	-
4 th Call	-	-	-	3
Total No of projects funded	6	4	6	5

For detailed information on the achievement of targets referring to the subset of ex-ante quantified output and result indicators as in the Operational Programme, please refer to the tables provided in chapter 2.1.1.

The tables below provide information on the additional indicators referring to the outputs and results obtained and target groups reached (categories no. 6 and 7 as in Annex 1) in a cumulative manner, by comparing the targets set by the projects in their application forms (expected values for all projects approved) with the achievements reported for all approved projects.

³⁶ As in the revised version of the Operational Programme (Version 2.1), approved on 20 November 2012.

Additional output indicator: Category 6 - Output and results oriented for Priority 2 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Type of Action	Description of the foreseen outputs as in the AF	Priority 2		
		Target (AF) ³⁷	Achievements of all approved projects	
		No.	No.	%
Joint Strategy + action plan development	No. of strategies/policy documents developed/improved	51	81	159 %
	No. of strategies/policy documents implemented/adopted	28	34	121 %
Transnational tool development	No. of tools developed	48	64	133 %
	No. of tools implemented	53	40	75 %
	No. of trainings for new tools prepared or implemented	18	73	406 %
Joint management establishment	No. of permanent cooperations established	13	14	108 %
	No. of permanent management structure established	14	10	71 %
Investment preparation	Volume of investment prepared in Mio EUR	1.244	615	49 %
	No. of jobs to be created through these investments	1.170	900	77 %
	Volume of private/public funds leveraged in Mio EUR	186	2.556	1372 %
Pilot actions including investments	No. of pilot actions implemented (including No of investments realized)	78	78	100 %
	Volume of investment realized through pilot actions in Mio EUR	1,4	1,6	120 %
	No. of jobs to be created through pilot actions	66	12	18 %

³⁷ Quantification of target based on 21 approved projects under Priority 2.

Additional indicator: Category 7 - Communication and Knowledge Management oriented for Priority 2 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Outreach to selected target groups	Priority 2		
	Target (AF) ³⁸	Achievements of all approved projects	
	No.	No.	%
No. of entities of the public sector/administration addressed	4.714	8.802	187 %
No. of entities of the enterprise/business sector and related services addressed	26.327	13.442	51 %
No of research/technology development entities addressed	888	3.593	405 %
No. of entities providing intermediary services and training addressed	731	1.577	216 %
No. of interest groups addressed	447	2.183	488 %

³⁸ Quantification of targets based on 21 approved projects.

Qualitative analysis

Within Priority 2, projects have implemented a variety of activities in terms of supporting European transport corridors (logistics and intermodal systems) as well as sustainable urban and regional transport showing a strong focus on the policy level. Projects have also implemented relevant activities to the support of the use of ICT and the access to ICT services.

According to a thematic study³⁹ contracted by the MA/JTS in the frame of thematic capitalisation it has been concluded that *“CENTRAL EUROPE transport projects are well aligned to the objectives of the European Commission policy in this field, with some projects even anticipating more recent objectives”*.

The study also showed that projects have promoted and demonstrated the principal feasibility of modal shifts in passenger and freight transport to energy efficient transport modes such as non-motorised modes (e.g. cycling), public transport, rail or inland waterways. Thereby project achievements constitute first essential steps towards the implementation of principal goals at EU level (White Paper), as for example the decrease of conventionally fuelled cars in urban areas or the reduction of transport related emissions. Projects have implemented a number of pilot actions, partly including pilot investments, for applying new technologies or new planning approaches.

In accordance with the objectives at EU level, “modal shifts in long-distance freight transport from road to rail and waterborne transport” have been tackled within CENTRAL EUROPE projects through developing cooperation structures for better access to European sea ports or through establishing strategic cooperation between and within trans-European transport corridors.

Projects have actively participated in the TEN-T revision process but provided also bottom-up contributions for the ongoing development of the TEN-T core network respectively for the improvement of specific corridors (e.g. Baltic-Adriatic Corridor, South-North Axis, Central Axis etc.), which also tackle the closure of the missing links on local and regional scale (e.g. “last mile” improvement). Important in this regard is the preparatory work (e.g. the implementation of feasibility studies or institution-building-processes with a clear transnational approach) for future large scale infrastructure investments (e.g. the TEN-T core network).

Achievement of physical indicators

Within Priority 2, projects tackled the topics of logistics, multimodality and the strengthening of hubs aiming also to complement the national investments in these fields. In pursuance of this aim, about 67 % of the projects included pilot actions with a strong demonstration character and about 50 % of the projects had foreseen investment preparation activities and/or the leverage of external funds, in particular through elaborating feasibility studies (e.g. on the topics of intermodal transport, pipelines and waterway transport) for large-scale investments to be financed through other financing sources.

Projects were successful in terms of development and implementation/adoption of strategies and action plans, substantially exceeding the targets as set in the application forms (159% and 121% respectively). Examples include e.g. the Joint strategy and action plan for “Removing barriers to Regional Rail Transport” (project 2CE217P2 INTER Regio Rail), the Joint Declaration for Electric Trolleybus Mobility (project 2CE121P2 TROLLEY), the joint transnational action plan for the promotion of tracking and tracing of dangerous goods in central Europe (project 4CE492P2 ChemLogT&T).

Projects put also a high emphasis on the development of tools (64) out of which more than 60% haven been practically implemented during the project the project lifetime. Also a high number of trainings linked to those tools have been conducted. For example, the project No. 3CE378P2 EMPIRIC developed a GIS tool for the mapping of central European intermodal platforms; through incubators and light infrastructures the project No. 1CE036P2 KASSETTS managed to set up an open logistics broker network made of a wide range of brokers, SMEs and Logistics operators testing the ICT-platform developed

³⁹ Komobile w7: Thematic study: Sustainable public transport and logistics in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, Final report, April 2013

within the project; the traveller information service elaborated within the project No. 4CE433P2 EDITS, contributing to the improvement of multi-modal cross-border services, which are to be put in place in parts of Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia (see project examples below).

Projects have set up relevant permanent cooperations and management structures, though for the latter not fully reaching the set targets (108 % and 71 % of the set targets) which is mostly due to the fact that the indicator definition was not fully understood by all beneficiaries when setting the targets in the application forms (i.e. transnational and permanent character of governance and management systems). Examples of relevant and sustainable cooperations and management structures include the Transnational Logistics Centre Incubators established within the project 2CE152P2 BATCo, the Transnational multi-sector Road Safety network developed within the project 2CE134P2 SOL or three pro rail alliances set up in Poland, Austria and Romania within the project 2CE189P2 FLAVIA.

A high number of pilot actions (78) have been implemented being in line with the set targets. Within 5 projects those pilot actions included also physical pilot investments amounting to about 1,6 M€. For example, within the project 3CE343P2 Central MeetBike pilot investments for bicycle infrastructure and monitoring were implemented; the project 3sCE415P2 INWAPO implemented several pilot investments for improving port infrastructure; within the project 2CE121P2 TROLLEY nine “supercaps” for trolleybuses were purchased to test a Kinetic Energy Recovery System allowing optimised energy use.

Projects were highly successful in investment preparation and leverage of funds. Notably projects managed to prepare investments amounting to about 615 M EUR⁴⁰ and leveraging funds of about 2.556 M€ (exceeding the set target by more than 13 times). These high amounts are mainly related to the results of the projects 1CE011P2 CHEMLOG, 1CE055P2 SONORA and 2CE189P2 FLAVIA in which feasibility studies have been prepared facilitating the implementation of investments for large scale intermodal transport infrastructure. In addition, the project 2CE121P2 TROLLEY prepared investments in new trolley buses. This sets also the basis for a considerable number of jobs to be created through those investments (900) even though the reported figures stay somewhat below the very ambitious target (compared to other thematic priorities) as set in the application forms.

Overall, 266 partners were involved in the 21 projects approved within Priority 2, with 51 % of them coming from the “public sector/public administration”, 22 % from the “research/technology development sector” and 13 % acting as “infrastructure providers”. Partners from the enterprise/business sector and related services (including intermediary services and interest groups) are represented by about 14 %. The majority of infrastructure providers (84 %) participating in CENTRAL EUROPE projects are actually involved in projects funded within Priority 2. The participation of private bodies is of 19 %.

Projects of Priority 2 showed a high capacity to address all relevant stakeholders in the field of accessibility, showing a good multi-level involvement of public and private sectors, service providers and research institutions. Projects of this Priority also showed very good performances in addressing the research/technology development entities (about 3.600 entities) and the public sector (more than 8.800 bodies) widely exceeding the set targets (405% and 187% respectively). As for the private sector, about 13.400 entities of the enterprise/business sector have been addressed, accomplishing about 50 % of the very ambitious target (more than 26.000 private entities). It is expected that the involvement of private actors will further increase as a result of pilot actions and preparation of investments.

Projects of Priority 2 are characterised by a quite balanced distribution of different levels of territorial governance, setting however an emphasis on partners representing the regional level (about 37 %). This is in line with the mostly horizontal nature of topics addressed by projects and multi-governance approaches applied (e.g. local, regional and national transport authorities cooperate with national associations and EU wide active research institutions to develop strategies for the improvement of transport systems and offers).

33 % of the projects approved within Priority 2 specifically promote the issue of equal gender opportunities and 62 % of the projects address the social dimension.

⁴⁰ The set target for “Investment preparation” was not fully achieved due to the fact that amounts were partly reported under the indicator “Funds leveraged” which was highly exceeded.

Overall, projects within Priority 2 show direct and concrete contributions to the goals of Europe 2020 - Sustainable Growth and for the Flagship ‘Resource-efficient Europe’ in terms of supporting competitive and resource efficient transport systems.

The 20 % flexibility rule has been used by 2 projects approved within Priority 2, which involved 2 partners from two EU countries outside the Central Europe area (Belgium and Romania). In addition, 3 partners from Ukraine were participating in two projects of Priority 2.

Below some examples of projects are presented, which show relevant achievement in terms of strategy development, transnational tools, and leverage of funds.

Project No. 2CE152P2 BATCo - “A Green Corridor for Baltic-Adriatic Transport” (Second call)

The project BATCo tackled the transportation corridor that leads through central Europe, connecting the Baltic and Adriatic seas. 18 partners from Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland and Slovakia worked together to positively influence transport planning for the Baltic-Adriatic Axis. The project has undertaken technical, environmental and economic interventions to ensure that the Baltic-Adriatic Axis is developed as a green transport corridor. It has successfully demonstrated the importance of improving railway infrastructure, in particular through the removal of infrastructural, operative and legal bottlenecks, to maintain or improve the current ratio of rail-to-road traffic. In order to encourage innovative transport and logistics services, a “Transnational Logistics Centre Incubator Concept” has been implemented as a pilot.



BATCo has managed to significantly influence European transport policy and decision-making processes and contributed to include the Baltic-Adriatic Axis to the TEN-T Core Network. It has established a framework for future activities, particularly such focusing on the development of regions along the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor to gain economic added-value due to the possibilities and potentials created by transnational transport axes. The Baltic-Adriatic Axis has already been included in several national and regional transport master plans in the partner countries and further policy improvements/adoptions will, as transport planning is an ongoing process, definitely be made in parallel to infrastructure implementation until the full-implementation of the TEN-T Core Network 2030.

Project No. 3sCE415P2 INWAPO - “Upgrading of Inland Waterway and Sea Ports” (Strategic call)

Central Europe’s inland waterways offer economical, environmentally friendly freight transport, but this potential is not sufficiently exploited. INWAPO was focused on increasing attractiveness of waterborne transport by helping to improve efficiency of ports on the Adriatic Sea as well as seaports along the Danube, Elbe/Labe and Wisla fostering freight traffic on waterways and assisting in better integration of ports with connections to the hinterlands.



One key output of the project was to verify the assumption that there is a significant demand for sea and river freight transport services in central Europe. Project partners investigated different waterway systems: Northern Adriatic ports (Venice, Trieste, Koper), Danube ports (Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Komarno), Labe (Mělník, Lovosice, Ústí nad Labem, Děčín) and Wisla ports (between Gdansk and Warsaw). The partnership conducted market-based surveys with the direct involvement of logistics operators and clients and produced 12 studies on the potential demand of waterway services in central Europe. The results of this research have been presented to the

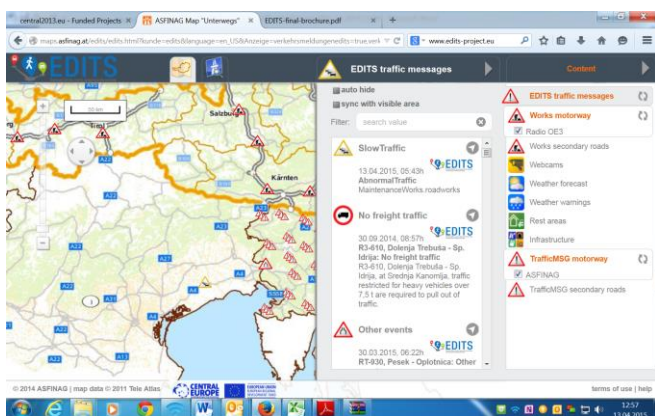
port communities involved, and also to most of the companies that represent the potential market for these waterways.

INWAO partners produced eight market-review analyses, focusing on commodities with a higher potential to be shifted from road to inland waterways and railways. These analyses were then used to investigate the feasibility of new intermodal links. INWAO also defined common benchmarks for inland and seaports. This information combined with the needs assessment allowed project partners to make proposals to logistics operators in terms of investment plans. Moreover, three pilot investments were implemented in the ports of Vienna, Budapest and Bratislava. An environmental analysis produced by the project investigated the impact of increased transport volumes. Furthermore, the project defined environmental sustainability benchmarks so that it will be easier to integrate environmental assessments in future investment plans for other ports.

Project No. 4CE433P2 EDITS - “European Digital Traffic Infrastructure Network for Intelligent Transport Systems” (4th Call)

Sophisticated travel information services that cover several modes of transport help citizens of central Europe achieve greater mobility, but most travel-information services systems only provide information within a local or regional area, and little cross-border information is available. EDITS encouraged transnational cooperation to implement cross-border travel information for all modes of transport.

Rather than developing a centralised travel-information platform, the project focused on creating a harmonised environment for exchanging information - so that data can be used across borders. For this purpose the project developed and harmonised the definitions necessary for exchanging data related to public transport and geographical information systems. This work was followed by pilot testing in three demonstration areas (CENTROPE region; Italian bordering provinces of Modena and Ferrara; border triangle between Austria, Italy and Slovenia). The project collected the opinions of travellers affected by these pilots, to determine passenger needs, and this input was reflected in recommendations for further platform development.



The pilots helped developing actual multi-modal cross-border services, through which passengers will be able to receive real-time information on multiple modes of cross-border travel in their own language. The partnership committed itself to operate the developed services also after the project end and elaborated also a business plan and rollout strategy.

3.2.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

The programme did not face any problems in this Priority.

3.3 Priority 3 - using our environment responsibly

3.3.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

Information on the physical and financial achievements of the priority

The four standard Calls for proposals and the Restricted Call for Strategic Projects absorbed € 75.545.476,85 ERDF, that is 99,0 % of the ERDF budget available in this Priority by the Programme (€ 76.332.879 ERDF⁴¹). An overview on the quantitative achievements within Priority 3 is provided in the table below:

Priority 3	Total No of projects funded	ERDF absorbed (€)	ERDF absorbed in % vs. Priority allocation
1 st Call	11	23.269.038,92	30,5 %
2 nd Call	12	22. 779.381,68	29,8 %
3 rd Call	9	15.519.624,96	20,4 %
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	2	4.892.003,75	6,4 %
4 th Call	8	9.085.427,54	11,9 %
TOTAL	42	75.545.476,85	99,0 %

Details according to the Areas of Intervention within the Priority are provided below:

Area of Intervention	3.1 - Developing a high quality environment by managing and protecting natural resources and heritage	3.2 - Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made hazards	3.3 - Supporting the use of renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency	3.4 Supporting environmentally friendly technologies and activities
1 st Call	5	1	3	2
2 nd Call	3	4	5	0
3 rd Call	1	3	4	1
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	-	-	2	-
4 th Call	-	-	-	8
Total No of projects funded	9	8	14	11

For detailed information on the achievement of targets referring to the subset of ex-ante quantified output and result indicators as in the Operational Programme, please refer to the tables provided in chapter 2.1.1.

The tables below provide information on the additional indicators referring to the outputs and results obtained and target groups reached (categories no. 6 and 7 as in Annex 1) in a cumulative manner, by comparing the targets set by the projects in their application forms (expected values for all projects approved) with the achievements reported for all approved projects.

⁴¹ As in the revised version of the Operational Programme (Version 2.1), approved on 20 November 2012.

Additional output indicator: Category 6 - Output and results oriented for Priority 3 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Type of Action	Description of the foreseen outputs as in the AF	Priority 3		
		Target (AF) ⁴²	Achievements of all approved projects	
		No.	No.	%
Joint Strategy + action plan development	No. of strategies/policy documents developed/improved	130	166	128 %
	No. of strategies/policy documents implemented/adopted	84	87	104 %
Transnational tool development	No. of tools developed	130	148	114 %
	No. of tools implemented	93	114	123 %
	No. of trainings for new tools prepared or implemented	151	297	197 %
Joint management establishment	No. of permanent cooperations established	32	48	150 %
	No. of permanent management structure established	21	9	43 %
Investment preparation	Volume of investment prepared in Mio EUR	138	51	37 %
	No. of jobs to be created through these investments	258	144	56 %
	Volume of private/public funds leveraged in Mio EUR	123	488	398 %
Pilot actions including investments	No. of pilot actions implemented (including No of investments realized)	468	512	109 %
	Volume of investment realized through pilot actions in Mio EUR	5,7	5,5	96 %
	No. of jobs created through pilot actions	57	148	260 %

⁴² Quantification of targets based on 42 approved projects under Priority 3.

Additional indicator: Category 7 - Communication and Knowledge Management oriented for Priority 3 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Outreach to selected target groups	Priority 3		
	Target (AF) ⁴³	Achievements of all approved projects	
	No.	No.	%
No. of entities of the public sector/administration addressed	8.357	12.493	149 %
No. of entities of the enterprise/business sector and related services addressed	11.168	14.726	132 %
No of research/technology development entities addressed	1.328	3.101	234 %
No. of entities providing intermediary services and training addressed	961	1.674	174 %
No. of interest groups addressed	1.704	4.488	263 %

⁴³ Quantification of targets based on 42 approved projects under Priority 3.

Qualitative analysis

Within priority 3, projects have achieved relevant outputs with regard to the development and adoption of common strategies and action plans for environmental protection (focussing mainly on biodiversity, water, soil and air) and the reduction of risks and impacts of natural and man-made hazards, including climate change. Furthermore, projects were focussing on the implementation of pilot actions in the field of waste management, resource efficiency, eco-innovation and cleaner production. In addition, a significant number of projects have implemented activities in the field of energy, related among others to the improvement of energy efficiency of the building sector, the development of regional energy action plans and the exploitation of endogenous renewable energy sources. Project achievements lie mostly in a combination of methodological developments (analysis, concepts, best practices, strategies etc.), tools and pilot implementations with strong regional character and strong stakeholder orientation.

According to a thematic study on environment and climate change⁴⁴ contracted by the MA/JTS in the frame of thematic capitalisation it has been concluded that *“efforts to adapt to climate change or to minimise and prevent environmental risks cannot be taken by countries and regions in isolation if they are to be effective. Cooperation between regions participating in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is therefore an important tool for enhancing cohesion and approaching issues that have spatial development characteristics”*.

The study also highlighted that an important result of project activities has been the uptake of accumulated knowledge and experience in the preparation and implementation of policies, plans, programmes or strategies – for example, the development of flood risk prevention management plans for lakes, or climate change adaptation plans for natural sites. Various mechanisms (such as memoranda of understanding, charters, business cooperatives, institutional networks, and educational or training programmes) have been established to ensure the continuation of climate change and natural risk management activities already implemented within the projects. Examples of innovative practises and mechanisms include the foundation of the European School for Brownfield Redevelopment, the establishment of Regional Re-use Centres, the adoption of the Memorandum of Flood Protection, etc.

Most projects have carried out pilot actions (e.g. on river revitalisation, soil remediation, waste collection etc.) to test small-scale practical implementation of activities, with the aim to prepare large-scale implementations. Those different types of achievements are considered to have significant spin-off values in terms of impacts beyond the project lifetime.

An additional thematic study on energy efficiency and renewable energies⁴⁵ indicates that *“CENTRAL EUROPE projects have created viable policy toolkits for both energy efficiency and renewable energies, covering the tools and actions needed for benchmarking, strategy setting and the provision of ongoing financial and political support. They have also contributed to raising awareness in the regions of sustainable energy potentials and are likely to have a large impact on central Europe to achieve its 2020 targets by supporting smart and sustainable growth through behavioural change of citizens and municipalities.”*

With regard to energy efficiency project achievements include numerous pilot actions such as small-scale renovations of historic and other public buildings in order to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of novel approaches. Also a variety of strategies and tools has been developed which constitutes a comprehensive policy package for energy performance monitoring and improvement and therefore provides a substantial set of good practice encouraging their uptake at regional level. Furthermore, projects have produced a high number of regional energy concepts and strategies promoting renewable energies and demonstrations to secure political buy-in and investment. Project policy-recommendations and strategies are contributing to national strategies and EU initiatives, such as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

⁴⁴ Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC): Thematic study: Environmental risk management and climate change (draft version)

⁴⁵ Greenovate! Europe: CENTRAL EUROPE PROGRAMME: Thematic Study on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies, April 2014

Achievement of physical indicators

Pursuing the aim of developing and implementing innovative environmental solutions, a high number of projects of Priority 3 (81 %) have implemented pilot actions, partly including pilot investments, supporting the desk and field studies which were performed, in order to test and demonstrate the viability and effectiveness of newly developed solutions.

In total, 512 pilot actions were implemented, thus even exceeding the fairly ambitious targets which were set. Examples of pilot actions include e.g. the project No. 2CE187P3 UFIREG which implemented air quality measurement systems for ultrafine particles of five selected central European cities; within the project No. 2CE120P3 INCA-CE regional-scale application and testing of the developed weather nowcasting and warning system was carried out; the project No. 2CE120P3 INARMA carried out pilot actions for civil defence in case of flood disasters consisting of two emergency drills; within the project No 3sCE412P3 CEC5 seven demonstration buildings in different countries were renovated or built in order to highlight and address energy efficiency potentials (see project examples at the end of this section).

Projects approved under Priority 3 have proven to be successful also in terms of development and implementation of strategies and action plans, also well exceeding the set targets, e.g. within the project 2CE166P3 ENSURE a Joint Transnational Energy Concept was developed from which five regional action plans were set up; the project 2CE243P3 EULAKES has developed a joint transnational strategy for basin-wide lake management that addresses environmental, economic and sociocultural concerns; the project 1CE064P3 URBAN-SMS prepared a comprehensive urban soil management strategy that allows planners to consider the value of soils and to involve soil protection in the planning process.

Projects were also very active in developing new tools (148) out of which about 77 % were practically implemented and a high number of trainings (297) linked to those tools have been conducted. Also in this case the set targets were substantially exceeded. Examples include e.g. a software (EnergySavingTool) designed to forecast energy demand and CO₂ emissions in regions depending on the used energy sources (project 3CE393P3 ENERGYREGION), a GIS based conflict visualization tool targeting civic participation in biodiversity monitoring (project 3CE324P3 GREENNET), the Common European Sustainable Building Assessment (CESBA) tool (project 3sCE412P3 CEC5), the EDIT Value tool which helps SMEs to discover its own potential for improving resource efficiency (project 4CE448P3 PRESOURCE).

In addition, projects managed to establish a high number of permanent cooperations and management structures, though for the latter not fully reaching the set targets (150 % and 43 % of the set targets) which is mostly due to the fact that the indicator definition was not fully understood by all beneficiaries when setting the targets in the application forms (i.e. transnational and permanent character of governance and management systems). Examples of relevant and sustainable cooperations and management structures which have been set up are e.g. a Knowledge Network with Local Focus Groups and a joint Competence Center for energy efficiency measures of buildings (project 2CE187P3 GOVERNEE); a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the 49 members of the Zero-Emission Platform offering detailed information on renewable energies for zero emission transport (project 2CE268P3 REZIPE); the network of national contact points for supporting SMEs in using and applying cleaner production technologies and management systems (project 1CE002P3 ACT CLEAN); Regional Re-Use Centres which have established in four central European regions (project 3CE278P3 CERREC).

In terms of investment preparation, leverage of private/public funds, projects reported to have prepared 51M€ of future investments⁴⁶ and achieved a leverage of funds amounting to 488M€. A major contribution to it comes from the projects 1CE001P3 4BIOMASS, 1CE026P3 FOKS and 1CE050P3 REURIS which could unlock large investment projects for biomass plants, groundwater remediation plans as well as rehabilitation of urban river spaces. In addition, the projects 3CE302P3 CoP, 3CE350P3 MANERGY, 4CE499P CombinES and 3sCE412P3 CEC5 managed to leverage considerable amounts for the energy

⁴⁶ The set target for “Investment preparation” was not fully achieved due to the fact that amounts were partly reported under the indicator “Funds leveraged” which was highly exceeded (398 %).

efficient refurbishment of buildings and use of renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency within municipalities.

It is to be highlighted that through the implementation of pilot actions and investment preparation a significant number of jobs (in total 292 jobs) have been created, almost achieving the respective target (ca. 93 %). Those are mainly related to the results of the projects 1CE062P3 TRANSWASTE which focussed on the formalisation of informal waste collection activities and consequently created about 90 jobs of second-hand traders. Further, an important contribution to job creation comes from the projects 1CE001P3 4BIOMASS and 4CE561P3 DANUBENERGY linked to their pre-investment activities and leverage of funds for biogas plants.

428 partners were involved in the 42 projects approved within Priority 3, 43 % of them come from the “public sector/public administration” and 37 % from the “research/technology development sector”. Partners from the enterprise/business sector and related services (including intermediary services and interest groups) are represented by about 20%. The participation of private institutions is of 18 %.

Projects of Priority 3 showed a high capacity to address all relevant stakeholders, going well beyond the targets set in the Application Forms. This is particularly evident for the interest groups addressed as well as the research sector (reporting more than twice of the set targets). In particular the research sector (more than 14.700 institutions) was highly involved in the project implementation. As for the private sector, projects reported that more than 14.700 entities of the enterprise/business sector have been addressed. Also the public sector has been intensively addressed with about 12.500 institutions.

With regard to the territorial levels involved, in Priority 3 the national level was more involved (35 %) in comparison to other Priorities. This is in line with the fact that in many cases relevant environmental topics are to be addressed by the national governance level: e.g. project No. 2CE120P3 CEframe in which national ministries work together with the regional level and other relevant stakeholders in order to set up a sustainable integrated flood protection management; project No. 2CE120P3 INCA-CE in which national weather and hydrological services worked together with other relevant stakeholders and R&D institutions in order to set up a web-based transnational weather information system for more precise weather warnings; project No. 2CE124P3 TRANSENERGY in which national geological surveys cooperated for the sustainable use of geothermal resources. The regional level was represented by 29 % of project partners.

40 % of the projects approved within Priority 3 specifically promote the issue of equal gender opportunities and 64 % of projects address the social dimension.

Overall, projects within Priority 3 contribute to the Priorities Sustainable Growth and Smart Growth of the EU 2020 strategy, predominantly to the Flagship ‘Resource-efficient Europe’ and its related policy agendas for climate change, energy, biodiversity and regional development, but also to ‘Innovation Union’ in terms of contributions to innovation policy in the environment field.

The 20 % flexibility rule has been used by four projects approved within Priority 3, which involved 8 partners from regions outside the central Europe area (out of which 6 from Germany and 2 from Romania). Furthermore, in one project a partner from Ukraine was participating.

Below some examples of projects are presented, which show relevant achievement in terms of strategy development, transnational tools and leverage of funds.

Project No. 1CE062P3 TransWaste - “Formalisation of informal sector activities in collection and transboundary shipment of wastes in and to CEE” (1st Call)

Informal waste collection is common in central Europe, where many people earn a living by repairing and reselling discarded items. This activity can be beneficial, but if it is not controlled it poses risks.

Therefore the TransWaste project aimed at formalising this waste collection, carried out in most cases by minorities (ethnic group of Roma and Sinti), in ways that favourably address economic, environmental and social challenges. In particular, it strived to find legal possibilities to collect usable

items and give them a second life, so contributing to a better environment by waste prevention but also to a better livelihood for the collecting people.

TransWaste investigated the informal waste collection sector through techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, waste site observations and traffic counts at border crossings. The project has shown that more than 45 % of the waste are re-useable goods like furniture, sporting equipment or clothes. About 22 % could be allocated to the metal fraction and about 16 % are electronic equipment. This waste collection is carried out mostly illegally as in many cases collectors do not have a permission.



The project developed concepts for the formalisation of waste collection which were then tested through pilot actions. In Hungary, the International Second Hand Service (ISHS) association was registered in December 2011 which supports the informal waste collectors in changing their status and collecting habits into more “formalised” schemes. In Austria and Poland the “Re-Use corner” concept was tested which consists in setting up waste collection centres where the households can bring their used goods. The “Retourette” concept was implemented as pilot case in Slovakia where informal collectors were motivated to leave collected electro equipment for a fee in a waste collection company.

Project findings have shown that waste collectors integrated in formal waste collection concepts are a win-win situation for the involved regions under both the environmental and socio-economic point of view.

Project No. 2CE120P3 INCA-CE - “Integrated nowcasting system for the Central European area” (2nd Call)

The project INCA-CE was successful in developing joined meteorological forecasts and warnings with practical applications designed to manage civil protection, hydrology and road safety in various locations in central Europe. The “Integrated Nowcasting through Comprehensive Analysis” (INCA) weather model developed by the project, processes measurement data to show current conditions and to create projections of upcoming weather patterns. The project also supports a standardised and immediate information exchange across borders, so strengthening international cooperation in weather emergencies.



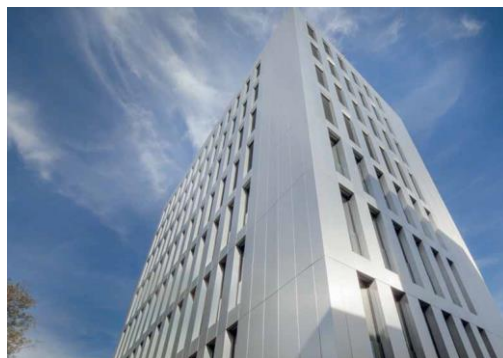
The model, tested within 8 pilot actions, has three application areas: civil protection, hydrology and road safety. The model is continuously refined on the basis of the outcomes of the pilot testing and through the input from a wide transnational community of users. Transnational strategies in operation of hydrology, civil protection and road safety were elaborated and adopted based on the results of the pilot actions.

The value of the project INCA-CE was recognised by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which chose the project as a “World Weather Research Programme/Forecast Demonstration Project”. With the support of WMO, the INCA model is to be adopted further in various countries around the world, allowing for an exchange of know-how, expertise and experiences. The model is already being

used and investigated by 24 institutions coming from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, and also from Belgium, China, Croatia, Israel, Switzerland and Turkey.

Project No. 3sCE412P3 CEC5 - “Demonstration of energy efficiency and utilisation of renewable energy sources through public buildings” (Strategic Call)

The CEC5 project strived to establish energy efficient public buildings that serve as examples for others and to find a common framework for assessing sustainable buildings, thus contributing to the European Union’s ambitious climate targets.



In order to achieve that, a Common European Sustainable Building Assessment (CESBA) tool was created which enables users to assess the energy performance of existing and new buildings. It was elaborated in cooperation with other projects financed from different EU programmes and is a bottom-up approach for generating an open-source assessment guideline together with establishing building standards for construction. CESBA indicators can be used as a planning and assessment instrument over the whole building life-cycle from planning and conception, to energy performance monitoring.

In order to show the usefulness of CESBA, seven demonstration buildings in seven central European countries were renovated or built to highlight and address energy efficiency potentials, also helping to raise awareness among the general public.

In order to transfer the results to other regions and countries, partners continue working on a joint European strategy on sustainable building together with a group of transnational experts.

3.3.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

The programme did not face any problems in this Priority.

3.4 Priority 4 - enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions

3.4.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

Information on the physical and financial achievements of the priority

The four standard calls for proposals and the Restricted Call for Strategic Projects absorbed € 51.622.775,41 ERDF, that is 92,8 % of the ERDF budget allocated to this Priority by the Programme (€ 55.622.437 ERDF⁴⁷). An overview on the quantitative achievements within Priority 4 is provided in the table below:

Priority 4	Total No of projects funded	ERDF absorbed (€)	ERDF absorbed in % vs. Priority allocation
1 st Call	10	21.790.656,61	39,2 %
2 nd Call	5	9.086.928,49	16,3 %
3 rd Call	7	9.230.006,06	16,6 %
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	2	3.860.572,26	6,9 %
4 th Call	7	7.654.611,99	13,8 %
TOTAL	31	51.622.775,41	92,8%

Details according to the Areas of Intervention within the Priority are provided below:

Area of Intervention	4.1 - Developing polycentric settlement structure and territorial cooperation	4.2 - Addressing the territorial effects of demographic and social change on urban and regional development	4.3 - capitalizing on cultural resources for more attractive cities and regions
1 st Call	5	1	4
2 nd Call	1	2	2
3 rd Call	1	3	3
Restricted Call for Str. Pr.	-	2	-
4 th Call	3	-	4
Total No of projects funded	10	8	13

For detailed information on the achievement of targets referring to the subset of ex-ante quantified output and result indicators as in the Operational Programme, please refer to the tables provided in chapter 2.1.1.

The tables below provide information on the additional indicators referring to the outputs and results obtained and target groups reached (categories no. 6 and 7 as in Annex 1) in a cumulative manner, by comparing the targets set by the projects in their application forms (expected values for all projects approved) with the achievements reported for all approved projects.

⁴⁷ As in the revised version of the Operational Programme (Version 2.1), approved on 20 November 2012.

Additional output indicator: Category 6 - Output and results oriented for Priority 4 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Type of Action	Description of the foreseen outputs as in the AF	Priority 4		
		Target (AF) ⁴⁸	Achievements of all approved projects	
		No.	No.	%
Joint Strategy + action plan development	No. of strategies/policy documents developed/improved	126	153	121 %
	No. of strategies/policy documents implemented/adopted	55	64	116 %
Transnational tool development	No. of tools developed	107	134	125 %
	No. of tools implemented	55	67	122 %
	No. of trainings for new tools prepared or implemented	101	176	174 %
Joint management establishment	No. of permanent cooperations established	26	25	96 %
	No. of permanent management structure established	26	11	42 %
Investment preparation	Volume of investment prepared in Mio EUR	109	125	115 %
	No. of jobs to be created through these investments	8	37	463 %
	Volume of private/public funds leveraged in Mio EUR	10	334	3335 %
Pilot actions including investments	No. of pilot actions implemented (including No of investments realized)	133	170	128 %
	Volume of investment realized through pilot actions in Mio EUR	2,4	2,3	95 %
	No. of jobs to be created through pilot actions	303	206	68 %

⁴⁸ Quantification of targets based on 31 approved projects under Priority 4.

Additional output indicator: Category 7 - Communication and Knowledge Management oriented for Priority 4 (Source: Application Forms, Progress Reports and Final Reports)

Outreach to selected target groups	Priority 4		
	Target (AF) ⁴⁹	Achievements of all approved projects	
	No.	No.	%
No. of entities of the public sector/administration addressed	6.609	9.977	151 %
No. of entities of the enterprise/business sector and related services addressed	10.785	10.781	100 %
No of research/technology development entities addressed	839	2.314	276 %
No. of entities providing intermediary services and training addressed	932	1.331	143 %
No. of interest groups addressed	10.282	3.932	38 %

⁴⁹ Quantification of targets based on 31 approved projects under Priority 4.

Qualitative analysis

Projects of Priority 4 implemented a range of relevant activities in terms of supporting polycentric development, improved urban and regional cooperation as well as establishing and improving cooperation and governance structures. Projects have also tackled territorial issues of demographic change and the ageing of society and worked on the preservation of cultural heritage to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of the central European regions.

According to dedicated thematic studies in the fields of demographic change and cultural heritage and creative resources - contracted by the MA/JTS in the frame of thematic capitalisation - it has been concluded that projects *“contribute significantly to making shrinking regions more attractive, especially through matching local skills with business needs and retaining competences for regional growth. In addition attention is given to adapting services for the younger generations and the ageing society”*⁵⁰. Furthermore, *“projects revealed and valorised creative or cultural resources as well as innovation potentials that contribute to economic growth in the central European regions”*⁵¹.

The study on demographic change also highlighted that projects investigated a wide range of solutions that will help shrinking regions with structural problems in relation to public services such as child care, healthcare or housing as well as improving their accessibility through innovative mobility concepts. Project achievements are also related to increase the number of elderly involved in the labour market as well as to build up entrepreneurial skills and employment opportunities for local vulnerable groups.

The study on cultural heritage and creative resources highlighted that sustainable concepts for the revitalisation or reuse of brownfields and derelict buildings aimed at an appropriate utilisation and valorisation of cultural and creative resources lead to an enhanced attractiveness for current and future investors. Further project achievements contribute to the protection and valorisation of cultural heritage and the improvement of its management as well as the development of innovative governance strategies for improving creative industries environment.

Project activities focussed on developing, identifying and dissemination of good practices and tools serving as a basis for strategies and implementation plans, the implementation of pilot actions such as testing or improving existing or developing of new services as well as the creation of strong regional networks and permanent management structures.

Achievements of physical indicators

Projects of Priority 4 have put a strong emphasis on the development (153) and implementation/adoption (64) of strategies and action plans, exceeding well the targets (about 120 %). For example, in the project 3CE283P4 CE-Ageing Platform about 200 good practices were included in the Green paper “Central European Ageing Strategy”; in the project 2CE178P4 CREATIVE CITIES Local Implementation Plans were set up to facilitate the creative industry cooperation and be a trigger for launching the creative industry cluster; in the project 4CE521P4 SHIFT-X a Strategy for Promotion of Industrial Heritage was elaborated for which a broad support by relevant stakeholders could be achieved; in the project 4CE524P4 CITY REGIONS strategic recommendations for the positioning of city regions in macro-regional strategies have been prepared and published.

Projects were also successful in the development (134) and implementation (67) of tools, thus exceeding the set targets (about 120 %). Also 176 trainings for the developed tools were implemented. Examples include a knowledge management system providing information on intangible heritage in Central Europe (project 3CE347P4 CCC), a catalogue of innovative practices in housing and care for the elderly and people with disabilities in central European cities (project 3sCE416P4 HELPS), an e-book “New innovative solutions to adapt governance and management of public infrastructures to demographic change in shrinking regions and cities of central Europe”

⁵⁰ PAU: Thematic study: Demographic change and knowledge development in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, May 2014.

⁵¹ ERICarts: Thematic study: Cultural Heritage and Creative Resources in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, March 2014

which was used as training material during national and transnational study tours (project 3sCE414P4 ADAPT2DC).

In terms of permanent cooperations and management structures projects have not fully reached the set targets (about 96 % and 42 % respectively) which is mostly due to the fact that the indicator definition was not fully understood by all beneficiaries when setting the targets in the application forms. Yet, projects managed to establish relevant and sustainable cooperations and joint management structures. For example, within the project No. 1CE094P4 CENTROPE CAPACITY the Centrope Agency, a polycentric governance model was completed being followed by the development of a permanent cooperation; within the project No. 2CE174P4 CIRCUSE a circular land use management structure was established.

Most of the projects of Priority 4 (77 %) included pilot actions for the testing and demonstration of innovative solutions. In total a wide range of pilot actions (170), some of them including pilot investments amounting to about 2,3 M€, has been implemented, and the reported numbers were well exceeding the set targets (128 %). For example, the project 3CE361P4 TRADITIONAL AND WILD realised several pilot investments (pilot scale dryer and laboratory, exhibition room etc.) in the frame of pilot actions which supported the collection and processing of wild plants fostering the sustainable use of this traditional knowledge and expertise among vulnerable groups; in the project 2CE149P4 YURA concepts were tested to actively involve young people in educational offers; in the project 3CE344P4 RENEWTOWN pilot actions including pilot investments were implemented with the aim to adapt buildings constructed during the socialist period to different types of functions (such as cultural activities, SME support, public space etc.).

In terms of investment preparation and leverage of funds, the reported amounts (125 M€ resp. 334 M€) highly surpassed the set targets, e.g. the project 2CE174P4 CIRCUSE induced further investments for rehabilitation of urban and peri-urban functional sites and urban improvements amounting to more than 20 M€; the project 2CE177P4 SECOND CHANCE leveraged private and public funds of about 17 M€ including the purchase and renovation of a building to develop it into a multifunctional cultural centre; the project No. 1CE073P4 ACT4PPP prepared investments of about 110 M€ for the reconstruction of infrastructure and buildings through Public Private Partnership models to be implemented after the project end; the project 1CE014P4 COBRAMAN which managed to leverage funds and attract investors (for more than 171M€) for projects of brownfield rehabilitation. This sets also the basis for a considerable number of jobs (243) created through those pilot actions and investments.

315 partners were involved in the projects approved within Priority 4. Majority of the partners (57 %) come from the “public sector/public administration” and 18 % from the “research/technology development sector”. Intermediary services and training sectors partners were represented by about 13 % of partners. Partners from the enterprise/business sector and related services (including interest groups and infrastructure providers) are represented by about 12%. The participation of private institutions was of 14 %.

Priority 4 shows a fairly balanced distribution of different levels of territorial governance. This is in line with the horizontal nature of the topics in this Priority which are addressed by cooperation structures following a multi-governance approach involving regional, local authorities and communities. Projects of Priority 4 showed a very high capacity to address relevant stakeholders highly exceeding most of the set targets, especially with regard to the research and technology development sector (276 %). Also the high target set for addressing the private sector (targeting more than 10.700 private entities) has been reached. In addition, the public sector (almost 10.000 institutions) and entities providing intermediary services and training (more than 1.300 organisations) have been intensively addressed.

52 % of the projects approved within Priority 4 specifically promote the issue of equal gender opportunities and 87 % of projects address the social dimension.

Overall, projects within Priority 4 show concrete contributions to the goals of the EU 2020 strategy, mainly in terms of “Smart growth” and “Inclusive growth”.

Within Priority 4, the 20 % flexibility rule has been used by one project involving one partner from outside the Central Europe area (Belgium). Further, in one project a partner from Ukraine was participating.

Below some examples of projects are presented, which show relevant achievement in terms of strategy development, transnational tools and leverage of funds.

Project No. 2CE177P4 SECOND CHANCE - “From Industrial Use to Creative Impulse” (2nd Call)

The project SECOND CHANCE tackled one of the key socio-economic and environmental challenges affecting the central European area: since the 1990s, thousands of factories have been shut down and more than 50 % of the manufacturing jobs have been lost, leaving brownfield sites in almost every city. Thanks to this project, 10 public and private partners from Krakow (PL), Leipzig (DE), Ljubljana (SI), Nuremberg (DE) and Venice (IT) have jointly developed, in close collaboration with their local stakeholders, innovative solutions to transform derelict sites into cultural linchpins of their cities, while at the same time enhancing the attractiveness of the neighbourhoods where the sites are located and spurring urban regeneration in these areas. The project worked on both, building capacity of policy makers/ implementers and economic actors as well as on testing, through 5 pilot actions, how cultural activities could translate into re-use of the industrial sites and buildings. Pilot investments were implemented through site-specific PPP models.



The project significantly contributed to turn abandoned eyesores into engines for urban development that can revitalise their neighbourhoods, create employment and stimulate the local economy. It clearly demonstrated the viability of concepts and practices for a revitalisation of brownfields and derelict buildings, by using them as a driver for creativity and through valorisation of cultural resources. Besides the agreements signed between public authorities and companies to guarantee the future of the revitalised sites, in several cases pilot investments supported by the project were mainstreamed in much larger investments implemented through PPP models.

Project No. 3CE361P4 Traditional and wild - “Promoting traditional collection and use of wild plants to reduce social and economic disparities in Central Europe” (3rd Call)

Even though there is a renaissance in demand for wild plants, which can be used for food and medicine, the wealth of traditional knowledge about harvesting and utilising those plants is disappearing. Therefore the project Traditional and Wild aimed at the revival of traditional knowledge on the properties and collection of plants to promote their sustainable use for the benefit of vulnerable and marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities (especially the Roma population) women and elderly. With demographic and land tenure changes in central Europe leading to rapid urbanisation, these groups have been left behind in rural areas with no or limited opportunities for income generation and for contributing to the economy.



Project partners drew up a capacity building strategy, with manuals and modules to train the identified target groups to better understand the main aspects of sustainable plant collection and utilization activities, in order to build-up their entrepreneurial and marketing skills and enhance employment opportunities. At the same time, a database of available plants was created with details and peculiarities on how plants were traditionally used in the partners regions.

The project also realised small-case investments for processing of plants and a demonstration laboratory. Finally, guidelines for product certification of collected wild plants were developed including also the procedure and requirements for a potential product development on the market.

Project No. 4CE469P4 CENTRAL MARKETS - “Revitalising and promoting traditional markets in central Europe” (4th Call)

Markets are an important economic, social and cultural resource, however the survival of traditional markets is under threat as they cope with increasingly competitive large retailers. To help promote and preserve these traditional markets, the CENTRAL MARKETS project has developed innovative market revitalisation strategies. These should allow the cities and regions to re-discover traditional markets as an engine for development of urban districts.



Project partners from eight central European cities and regions researched relevant EU and national legislation and policies and collated data on markets and their governance - to draw a picture of the current situation of city markets in central Europe. This resulted in the elaboration of a draft strategy highlighting policy recommendations for revitalising traditional markets in the urban context. In order to test the effectiveness of the revitalisation strategy, partners undertook eight pilot actions focusing on market governance improvements, communication strategies and innovative concepts and involving a wide range of stakeholders. Pilot actions assisted in creation and dissemination of a Common Transnational Strategy, which is supported by joint political commitment. The strategy is designed to revive markets through the improvement of their management system and related services - so that the entire market site, the district and the surrounding city/region is enhanced, and their attractiveness increased.

Throughout the project, CENTRAL MARKETS constantly worked to reinforce existing market networks, in order to strengthen the project’s transnational cooperation and ensure the transferability of its results.

3.4.2 *Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them*

The programme did not face any problems in this Priority.

4. ESF PROGRAMMES: COHERENCE AND CONCENTRATION

Not applicable.

5. ERDF PROGRAMMES: MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable.

5.a ERDF/CF PROGRAMMES: ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS WITH TOTAL INVESTMENT COSTS EQUAL TO OR HIGHER THAN EUR 25 MILLION AND EQUAL TO OR LOWER THAN EUR 50 MILLION (IF APPLICABLE)

Not applicable.

6. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- *Explanation of the use made of technical assistance.*
- *Percentage of the amount of the Structural Funds contribution allocated to the operational programme spent under technical assistance.*

The programme Technical Assistance (TA) budget 2007-2015 amounts to € 19.680.886 (6 % of the programme budget) corresponding to an ERDF support of € 14.760.664 (75 % co-financing).

TA comprises the budget for the “Core Management” (CM) that is the budget allocated to activities carried out by the MA/JTS for the proper implementation of the programme, as well as the budget managed at national level in each of the 8 Member States participating in the programme. The latter comprises the budget for expenditure related to the activities of the CPs (as stipulated in chapter 6.1.7 of the OP) as well as costs borne at national level for the control of projects in compliance with Article 16 of the Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006 and as laid down in chapter 6.1.2 of the OP⁵².

The TA budget supported the employment of - in average - 18 full-time equivalents at the level of the MA/JTS and 5 full-time equivalents at the level of the CPs.

Activities carried out under the TA budget can be clustered along the following categories, reflecting the programme management workflows:

- Application and contracting;
- Monitoring and payment;
- Control and audit;
- Programme communication and capitalisation (see chapter 7);
- Other Programme management tasks;
- Preparations for the successor Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.⁵³

6.1 Summary of activities performed under the TA CM budget

A brief overview of activities and main outputs obtained under the TA CM budget is presented in the following table.

⁵² According to the revision of the OP occurred in 2011, costs for control of projects' expenditure are eligible only in those countries following a “centralised” First Level Control system (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia).

⁵³ This category of tasks was carried out in application of MC decisions taken during the 11th MC meeting (Vienna, 10 November 2011) and the 13th MC meeting (Torino, 16 November 2012), as well as in compliance with the amended “Guidelines on the closure of operational programmes adopted for assistance from the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund (2007-2013)” [Commission Decision No. C(2015) 2771 of 30.04.2015].

Categories	Main tasks	Main outputs
Application and contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of application documents (call announcement, application manual, application form, annexes) Lead Applicant Briefings and other events for capacity building of applicants and networking Drafting/update of the methodology for the assessment of applications Administrative Compliance check of received applications Quality assessment, financial capacity check of private lead applicants and State aid analysis of received applications Seminars for building capacity of lead partner in the start-up phase Contracting of 124 approved projects Establishment of agreements for the implementation of projects with authorities of Member States outside the programme area Implementation of calls for additional capitalisation activities aimed at improving absorption of funds and restricted to already approved projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 sets of application documents 5 rounds of transnational events for capacity building of applicants 5 versions of the methodology for the assessment of applications 545 applications subject to Administrative Compliance check 430 applications subject to quality assessment and, where relevant, financial capacity check of private lead applicants and State aid analysis 14 transnational seminars/workshops for partner search and capacity building of applicants 5 lead partner seminars for 124 lead partners along 5 calls 124 subsidy contracts signed 2 agreements set in place with BE and RO and 2 descriptions of national control systems 2 calls for additional capitalisation activities implemented, resulting in 5 projects granted with additional funding for capitalisation
Monitoring and payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processing of Start Up Reports Processing of Preparation Cost Reports Processing of Progress Reports Processing of Final Reports Seminars and workshops for capacity building of beneficiaries carried out at the transnational level Mid-term analysis of projects implementation and, if applicable, budget reductions due to underspending Management of project major changes (content, partner, duration and budget wise) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 124 Start Up Reports processed and approved 95 Preparation Cost Reports processed, approved and paid out 717 Progress Reports processed, approved and paid out 124 Final Reports processed and approved 17 transnational seminars/workshops for capacity building of beneficiaries 124 projects subject to mid-term analysis 144 project changes analysed and approved
Control and audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execution of plausibility checks on expenditure on a sample of 5% of reports per each reporting period of each call Execution of on-the-spot checks on a sample of projects for checks on investments or administrative checks Quality review of centralised FLC systems executed on-the-spot, including follow up actions Annual reporting to MC, AA, GoA, CA, FLC bodies on the results of MA/JTS on-going controls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61 plausibility checks on expenditure 14 on-the-spot checks on projects, out of which 7 checks on the spot were performed on closed projects 11 quality reviews of centralised FLC systems 6 annual reports sent to MC, AA, GoA, CA, FLC bodies on the results of MA/JTS on-going controls 5 GoA meetings organised, including follow up 229 audit reports for audits on operations and 11 system audit

Categories	Main tasks	Main outputs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practical organisation of GoA meetings, as support to AA ▪ Analysis of draft audit reports and management of communication flows between AA, audit company and audited bodies ▪ Monitoring and follow up of audit findings ▪ Issuing of quarterly irregularity reports to AA ▪ Management of the CE FLC network, including the implementation of 7 meetings for training and exchanges 	<p>reports analysed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approx. 530 audit findings followed up ▪ 309 irregularity reports issued (mostly with small amounts) out of which 5 were reported to OLAF ▪ 1 FLC network established and 7 transnational FLC meetings organised
Programme communication and capitalisation (see also chapter 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drafting and mid-term update of the programme communication and capitalisation plan ▪ Setting up and updating the programme website, including a major relaunch at programme mid-term ▪ Setting up and maintaining programme social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) ▪ Implementation of annual public programme conferences for information and networking including a joint conference for all transnational programmes ▪ Implementation of thematic workshops for cross-fertilisation among approved projects linked to the public conferences ▪ Implementation of thematic exhibitions ▪ Implementation of project competitions ▪ Preparation of the printed magazine “CENTRAL EUROPEAN” ▪ Publication of electronic newsletters with relevant information on programme and projects ▪ Preparation of infographics for visual communication ▪ Preparation of wall calendars ▪ Drafting and publication of thematic studies along the following topics addressed by approved projects: Innovation; Transport; Environment; Energy; Cultural heritage; Demographic change ▪ Preparation of “PORTRAITS”, booklets that showcase thematic project results ▪ Preparation and distribution of various promotional materials as roll-ups, cotton bags, notebooks, pens/pencils, USB sticks, lanyards, umbrellas, event folders, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 programme communication and capitalisation plan ▪ 1 programme website set-up and updated ▪ 3 social media channels: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter ▪ 7 programme annual conferences ▪ 1 joint conference for all transnational programmes ▪ 1 programme exhibition based on a project photo competition with 65 double-sided panels ▪ 8 thematic cross-fertilisation workshops ▪ 4 issues of the “CENTRAL EUROPEAN” printed and distributed ▪ 33 issues of the CE electronic newsletter ▪ 1 programme and 6 thematic infographics for the exhibition ▪ 3 issues of the CE wall calendars printed and distributed ▪ 6 thematic studies ▪ 6 thematic “PORTRAITS” booklets, printed and distributed in 3 production runs ▪ Various promotional materials as roll-ups, cotton bags, notebooks, pens/pencils, USB sticks, lanyards, umbrellas etc.
Other Programme management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drafting and annual revision of the programme DMCS, including 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 DMCS accepted by EC and 5 annual revisions of the DMCS and

Categories	Main tasks	Main outputs
tasks	<p>the pre-analysis of descriptions of national control systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of two revisions of the OP Implementation of the evaluation of programme communication activities and implementation of follow up measures Implementation of the programme on-going evaluation and implementation of follow up measures Reporting to MC (yearly report on project implementation progress, drafting of studies, analyses, other technical documents of relevance for a sound programme implementation) Reporting to EC on programme implementation (annual implementation reports) Drafting and revision of programme implementation documents (Implementation Manual, Control & Audit Guidelines, TA manual) Drafting and revision of guidance documents for beneficiaries and controllers (fact-sheets, templates, etc.) Implementation of MC meetings, including follow up Implementation of CP meetings, including follow up Preparation of annual work plans for the TA CM and CPs, approved by the MC Preparation of annual reports for the TA CM and CPs, approved by the MC 	<p>annexes submitted to AA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 updated versions of the OP approved by the MC and adopted by the EC 1 report on evaluation of programme communication activities and 4 presentations on follow-up measures implemented 4 reports on programme on-going evaluation and follow-up measures implemented Various reports, studies, analyses and other technical documents regularly submitted to the MC 8 annual implementation reports approved by the MC and the EC 1 Implementation Manual, 1 Control & Audit Guidelines, 1 TA manual, updated according to needs Various fact-sheets, templates, other technical documents for the guidance of beneficiaries and controllers 14 MC meetings implemented 16 CP meetings implemented 9 annual TA CM work plans and 72 annual TA CP work plans approved by the MC 9 annual TA CM reports and 72 annual TA CP reports approved by the MC
Preparations for the successor Interreg CE Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting of an analysis on the contribution of the CE 2007-2013 Programme to the 2014-2020 programming period Preparation of a comprehensive "Territorial Analysis CE2014+" Implementation of the programme ex-ante evaluation and SEA, with implementation of follow up measures Implementation of partner dialogue for consulting on the Cooperation Programme (CP) Implementation of meetings of the programming committee "Steering Group 2014+" (SG2014+) including follow up Implementation of workshops of the SG2014+ including follow up Drafting of the OP, also with the support of external experts, and negotiations with EC until adoption Setting in place of the application modules of the programme IT monitoring system using the INTERACT electronic Monitoring System (eMS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 analysis on the contribution of the CE 2007-2013 Programme to the 2014-2020 programming period 1 Territorial Analysis CE2014+ 5 ex-ante evaluation reports, 1 scoping report, 1 environmental report, 1 SEA report, 1 environmental statement 1 survey, 1 transnational event and 8 national events for partner dialogue on CP, 1 report summarising the outcomes of the partner consultations 12 meetings of the SG2014+ implemented 2 workshops of the SG2014+ implemented 1 OP (including annexes) adopted by EC following negotiations Application modules of the eMS customised for Interreg CE 1 evaluation plan and 1 communication strategy approved by the MC and submitted to EC 1 application package for the first call, 1 assessment

Categories	Main tasks	Main outputs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of the programme evaluation plan and communication strategy Preparation of the programme implementation documents, namely: application package for the first call, assessment methodology for the first call, model of subsidy contract, model of partnership agreement, programme implementation manual, programme TA manual Preparation of guidance documents for applicants and beneficiaries (fact-sheets, templates, tools, etc.) Preparation of the description of functions and procedures set in place by the MA and CA, in view of the designation of authorities Implementation of events for capacity building of applicants in preparation of the first call for proposals 	<p>methodology for the first call, 1 model of subsidy contract, 1 model of partnership agreement, 1 programme implementation manual, 1 programme TA manual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various guidance documents for applicants and beneficiaries (fact-sheets, templates, tools, etc.) First draft of the description of functions and procedures set in place by the MA and CA, including partial descriptions of national control systems 1 round of transnational events for capacity building of applicants in preparation of the first call

6.2 Summary of activities performed under the TA national management budget

A brief overview of activities and main outputs obtained under the TA national management budget are presented in the following table. Please note that these activities are closely linked to the before-mentioned activities performed under the TA CM budget. All activities carried out on the transnational level were coordinated or even jointly implemented with the national level.

Categories	Main tasks	Main outputs
Application and contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to applicants on the national level Support to national programme bodies and the MA/JTS linked to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapter 6.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapters 6.1 and 7 Additional national communication outputs for all stakeholders included 8 up-to-date national websites, 8 national newsletters (regularly published) and other publications, national events and seminars (see chapter 7 for details) as well as the production of national give-aways.
Monitoring and payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to beneficiaries Support to national programme bodies and the MA/JTS linked to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapter 6.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapters 6.1 and 7 Additional national communication outputs for all stakeholders included 8 up-to-date national websites, 8 national newsletters (regularly published) and other publications, national events and

Categories	Main tasks	Main outputs
		seminars (see chapter 7 for details) as well as the production of national give-aways.
Control and audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to beneficiaries Support to national programme bodies and the MA/JTS linked to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapter 6.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapter 6.1
Programme communication and capitalisation (see also chapter 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to national programme bodies and the MA/JTS linked to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapters 6.1 and 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapters 6.1 and 7 Additional national communication outputs for all stakeholders included 8 up-to-date national websites, 8 national newsletters (regularly published) and other publications, national events and seminars (see chapter 7 for details) as well as the production of national give-aways.
Other Programme management tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to national programme bodies and the MA/JTS linked to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapter 6.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapters 6.1
Preparations for the successor Interreg CE Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to applicants Support to national programme bodies and the MA/JTS linked to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapter 6.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to activities performed under the TA CM budget as listed in chapters 6.1 and 7 Additional national communication outputs for all stakeholders included 8 up-to-date national websites, 8 national newsletters (regularly published) and other publications, national events and seminars (see chapter 7 for details) as well as the production of national give-aways.

6.3 Financial information

The overall TA budget consumption from 2007 to 2015 is presented in the following table.

TA budget	Planned budget (EUR)	Spent budget (EUR)	Difference (EUR)	Absorption rate (%)
Core Management	17.031.225,21	17.278.923,12	247.697,92	
National management	2.648.099,79	2.279.421,29	-368.678,50	
Not allocated budget ⁵⁴	1.561,00	0,00	-1.561,00	
Total	19.680.886,00	19.558.344,41	-122.541,58	99,4 %

Interest generated by the pre-financing to the programme (EUR 670.588,62) has been used (based on MA proposal and MC approval) for the TA Core Management project in order to cover costs related to closure activities to be implemented after the end of the eligibility period (31.12.2015), in compliance with § 5.2.9 of the “*Guidelines on the closure of operational programmes adopted for assistance from the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund (2007-2013)*”⁵⁵. In order to do so, the amount of interest generated and indicated above replaced national contributions to the TA Core Management project.

7. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

Information in accordance with Article 4(2) of this Regulation, including achievements, examples of good practice and significant events.

The strategic management objectives of communication⁵⁶ can be summarised as to:

- Raise awareness of applicants about the programme;
- Build the capacity of applicants to apply with the programme;
- Build the capacity of beneficiaries to work with the programme; and to
- Strengthen the sustainability and transfer of programme and project results to thematic stakeholders and other interested audiences.

Concrete communication channels were planned, implemented and adjusted over the programme lifetime to meet these management objectives. Content was created and communicated to the target audiences through these channels according to expectations and needs in the various programme phases.

Half-way through implementation of the programme an external evaluation of communication was carried out, as presented in chapter 2.7.2. The evaluators concluded that it “*has mostly reached its overall communication goals set to date. At the beginning of 2011, most target indicators for the programming period have already been achieved. [...] At the same time, less financial resources have been used than originally forecasted. Accordingly, the programme’s communication has been effective and efficient. [...] However, not all target groups have been impacted to the same extent. While (potential) beneficiaries and stakeholders have generally been reached well, it is more difficult to reach out to the public, particularly the media.*”

⁵⁴ This amount is the left-over resulting from the proportional allocation to Member States.

⁵⁵ Annex to the Decision No C(2013) 1573.

⁵⁶ Throughout this chapter of the final implementation report, the more comprehensive term ‘communication’ will be used rather than the limiting terminology of ‘information and publicity’.

Main Achievements

- ✓ All target indicators reached
- ✓ Less resources used than planned
- ✓ Impact:
 - ✓ target groups know communication tools
 - ✓ target groups satisfied with information
 - ✓ target groups have a clear understanding of the programme
 - ✓ high response rate for the survey → target groups show high interest in the programme
- ✓ Good division of labour between JTS and CPs

Main Challenges

- Target indicators not ambitious enough
- Impact:
 - target groups reached unevenly → public and media hard to reach
 - knowledge of and satisfaction with communication tools spread unevenly → cross-country differences
 - communication shift necessary → more communication on project results
 - English language difficulties
- Language used in communication sometimes too technical and abstract

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting. *CENTRAL EUROPE Programme Evaluation of communication and capitalisation activities*. 2011, p. 4.

Evaluators recommended to adjust future communication better to the changing life cycle of the programme. In view of the upcoming capitalisation phase *“a shift in communication activities will be key in the second half of the programming period. Successful projects [...] and tangible stories have to be communicated to (potential) beneficiaries, stakeholders, and the public to spread lessons learned and to demonstrate the added-value of the programme.”*

This analysis became an important starting point for the thorough revision of the programme communication strategy. In February 2012, the Monitoring Committee approved a comprehensive relaunch of programme branding and communication in view of the upcoming capitalisation phase.

The rebranding and reorientation of communication soon became a good practice in Europe, which was presented amongst other in the European Commission’s INFORM Network Meeting in Paris in December 2012. Below, the various communication activities and their contribution to reaching the management objectives are briefly summarised.

7.1 Digital communication

Website and social media

According to the aforementioned evaluation report *“the programme website was the most popular information source for applicants and beneficiaries. Programme documents, news, events and information on funded projects were provided and regularly updated. A project idea and partner search database, the CENTRAL EUROPE Community, was well appreciated in times of open calls. Videos also seemed to fulfil their purpose of raising general awareness while a web forum was rarely used at all.”*

When communication was relaunched in 2012, the forum was therefore discontinued. Social media were introduced to further raise awareness and encourage discussion about the programme among thematic stakeholders. The focus of website content was increasingly put on thematic results and achievements. As part of this reorientation, a comprehensive and searchable output library was introduced and thematic website sections were created and regularly updated in 2014.

Through social media, the programme regularly reached thousands of interested stakeholders with teasers about project results and about upcoming funding opportunities of the follow-up programme Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE. Social media content was consequently linked to website content so that the used platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) ultimately helped to increase

traffic to the programme website. The network of national contact points was also encouraged to use social media with especially good results in Italy.

In 2014, an additional website was launched and regularly updated with information about the priorities and upcoming funding opportunities of Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE. The project idea and partner search database was shifted to this new website to support potential new applicants. News and events related to the new programme were provided as well as key documents.

In addition to the programme website, the national contact points regularly updated their national websites with both national and transnational content.

The following table provides an overview on programme reach through the various digital channels:

Digital activity	Indicator	Value	Data source
Website	Number of unique sessions on programme website	114.526	Monitoring of web statistics on unique sessions in 2014 (last year with regular updates of the programme website)
Project ideas and partner search database	Number of registered users	3067	Monitoring of registered users in the partner search database in 2015
Facebook	Number of Facebook page likes	1979	Monitoring of social media statistics at the end of 2015
LinkedIn	Number of followers on LinkedIn	2073	Monitoring of social media statistics at the end of 2015
Twitter	Number of followers on Twitter	992	Monitoring of social media statistics at the end of 2015

In compliance with Article 7(2)(d) of Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, the programme website contains also the list of beneficiaries, the names of the funded projects and the amount of public funding allocated to the projects.

Newsflash “the CENTRAL EUROPEAN”

The evaluators concluded already in 2011 that the electronic newsflash was increasingly popular with applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders. At the end of the programming period, the quarterly mailings reached more than 9,000 recipients with updates on programme developments. Stories were widely based on news and events from the website so that the newsflash ultimately helped to increase traffic to the programme’s main information source.

In addition to the programme newsletter, the national contact points regularly distributed national newsletter with both national and transnational content.

The following table presents the peak reach of the newsflash reached in 2015.

Digital activity	Indicator	Value	Data source
Newsflash	Number of stakeholders reached with newsflash	9.365	Monitoring of newsflash distribution list in 2015

7.2 Programme publications

Programme manuals

In order to thoroughly inform potential applicants and beneficiaries about rules and procedures for applying and working with the programme, a comprehensive programme manual was published and updated for each call. Manuals were partly translated and re-published by national contact points.

Programme leaflet

In the first five years of programme implementation, leaflets provided potential applicants with basic information about the programme and calls for funding. Leaflet content was updated with each call for proposals and distributed at events.

With the focus shifting towards capitalisation, the leaflet was thoroughly redesigned in 2012, featuring information on results in thematic project clusters to make stakeholders aware of these.

As of 2014, the focus was shifted back to potential applicants. The new Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and its upcoming funding opportunities were primarily presented. A redesigned leaflet was published for the annual event in 2014 and distributed in updated versions throughout 2015.

In addition to the programme leaflet, the national contact points regularly updated their national leaflets with both national and transnational content.

Magazine “the Central European”

Between 2008 and 2011 four issues of an English language magazine were published. They helped to increase general awareness on transnational cooperation and the funding themes in participating countries. The magazine was discontinued in 2012 after funding priorities had all been covered. It made way for the PORTRAITS publications featuring concrete project stories and results.

PORTRAITS publications

Following a first edition of the PORTRAITS publications in 2012, six thematic booklets were finally published in 2014. They showcase all 124 projects co-financed by the programme. The booklets provide an overview of what has been achieved to transfer knowledge through joint actions and pilot investments. They serve as a starting point to show what can be done and what directions should be taken next. The booklets were widely disseminated in postal mailings to transnational and national programme stakeholders as well as at events.

In addition to this publication, national contact points published their own project handbooks (e.g. in the Czech Republic), or translated relevant parts of the PORTRAITS publications (e.g. in Italy and Poland).

Thematic studies

In order to analyse programme achievements more deeply, thematic studies were contracted to external experts. In 2014 six thematic studies could be presented at the annual event. The studies look at the results of CENTRAL EUROPE projects against the background of wider European Union policies and the territorial policy framework. As a result, the thematic studies provide policy makers and thematic stakeholders with a precise picture on how CENTRAL EUROPE projects contribute to achieving policies formulated on EU level. They also contribute to increasing the knowledge of potential applicants about the programme.

Infographics

The programme addressed the external evaluators' finding of a too technical language in 2011 not only through improving the style of writing in the above publications. It also started visualising an increasing amount of information for all target groups in numerous infographics. Infographics on the programme as well as on the thematic achievements became a prominent part of the PORTRAITS project exhibition.

Wall calendars

Three CENTRAL EUROPE wall calendars were published for the years 2013, 2014 and 2015. The first two calendars focused on successful and strategic projects and the last one presented a timeline of the upcoming Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE call for proposals. Each year 1.000 calendars were sent to key transnational and national programme stakeholders and helped to raise their awareness about the programme.

7.3 Events

In 2011, the external evaluators came to the conclusion that national and transnational programme events overall supplied applicants and project partners with the information they need. More recent surveys confirmed this positive finding of the evaluators.

Public events

The programme organised a total of seven transnational public events, including the 2007 kick-off event in Vienna and the 2015 closure event in Prague. The aim was to raise awareness on the programme and to directly provide information about either calls or achievements. In 2011, the annual event was jointly organised with other transnational programmes in Katowice to reach a broader audience at mid-term.

Public events typically involved political keynotes and panel discussions and were combined with either partner search or project capitalisation workshops. As of 2012, a travelling PORTRAITS project exhibition based on the PORTRAITS publications became a fixed part of programme events. The photos for the exhibition were collected through a social media-based photo competition. This was one of the first such competitions organised on EU programme level and served as inspiration for the “Europe in my Region” photo competition of the European Commission’s DG Regio.

In addition to transnational public events, the programme organised 104 national meetings and events through the network of national contact points. These were directed primarily at national stakeholders and provided national information on upcoming calls for proposals and/or programme achievements.

Between 2011 and 2015, the programme also ran a series of 38 national and transnational events to prepare and implement the early stages of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme. The national and transnational meetings and events first focused on stakeholder involvement before the focus shifted in 2014 to awareness raising and capacity-building for the first call of Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE.

Events for applicants

Programme events helped potential applicants in building their partnerships and trained them on how to write good applications. Calls were accompanied by at least one national information day in each programme country and at least one transnational lead applicant briefing.

In the national events basic information was provided to raise the awareness of a broader audience. In the transnational events the programme presented concrete rules and procedures of a call and offered hands-on workshops on application writing. At the fringe of all events, potential applicants could also consult with the national contact points and the joint technical secretariat.

Events for beneficiaries

Lead partner seminars were organised soon after each funding decision to help new lead partners in the project contracting phase. In addition, the programme organised dedicated trainings on project management, finance and communication with their focus depending on the project life cycle.

The seminars targeted primarily the core management teams and aimed to improve project implementation quality. After positive experiences with organising an initial joint training for

project management teams in 2011, the programme further improved and repeated this format in between 2012 and 2014.

In addition, the national contact points organised a series of events to inform their beneficiaries on national reporting requirements and to improve the overall implementation capacity.

The following table provides an overview on the programme reach through events:

Event type	Indicator	Value	Data Source
Transnational public events	Number of overall participants in transnational events	3013	Monitoring of participation data of 8 events in 2007-15
Transnational applicant events	Number of overall participants in transnational events	1972	Monitoring of participation data of 14 events in 2007-15
Transnational beneficiary events	Number of overall participants in transnational events	1553	Monitoring of participation data of 17 events in 2007-15
National events	Number of overall participants in national events	12435	Monitoring of participation data of 17 events in 2007-15

Other events

Beyond organising dedicated events, the programme actively participated in 303 external events on all governance levels to increase awareness and knowledge about the programme.

The MA/JTS and the national contact points presented the programme or organised workshops at events of national ministries, overlapping transnational programmes, macro-regional strategies, the European institutions or other relevant stakeholders. In addition, the programme participated in a number of workshops and seminars organised by Interact and the Commission services to improve its capacity and to share experiences with other Interreg programmes and policy makers.

7.4 Media relations

Regarding media relations, the evaluation of programme communication activities came to the conclusion that *“while (potential) beneficiaries and stakeholders have generally been reached well, it is more difficult to reach out to the public, particularly the media.”*⁵⁷ Structural funds programmes are often too broad in their focus to be interesting to the media or to be easy to communicate to a broader general audience. News angles/stories that would be of interest to the media are often missing.

As a consequence, the revised communication strategy acknowledged that the programme role in communicating with the wider public is limited and that it should concentrate on reaching thematic stakeholders with relevant (thematic) programme news. Due to their regional anchorage and the fact that their work concretely influences the living and working conditions in the regions, projects are much better suited to communicate to people, businesses and the media as part of their result-based capitalisation activities. The programme has therefore focused on building communication capacity on project level through media training.

Nevertheless, the programme has regularly issued press releases about annual conferences and new publications as well as about strategic programme decisions such as funding decisions. In addition, the programme included journalists into its regular mailings and approached journalists directly with interesting news. Further to these activities and in line with the revised strategy, the network of national contact points stayed in contact with the media.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

7.5 Promotional materials

Most programme promotional materials were produced to raise awareness at the above mentioned events. Items such as roll-ups, walls, pillars, posters, umbrellas, cotton bags and many more also contributed to a consistent branding of programme activities. In addition, useful office products such as business cards, pens, notebooks, mouse pads and memory sticks were produced and distributed to create a longer lasting awareness effect.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 - Additional output indicators