

Interreg Italia-Slovenia 2021-2027

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EN 6 EN 1. Joint programme strategy: main development challenges and policy responses 1.1. Programme area (not required for Interreg C programmes) Reference: point (a) of Article 17(3), point (a) of Article 17(9) The Programme area extends over a total surface of 19,841 km ² and has a total population of approximately 3 million inhabitants. It covers 5 Italian NUTS 3 regions (Venice, Udine, Pordenone, Gorizia and Trieste) and 5 Slovenian NUTS 3 regions (Primorsko-notranjska, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška and Goriška). Overall, on NUTS 2 level on the Italian side, the regions involved are those of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia, while for the Slovenian side Slovene Western and Eastern Cohesion regions. The five Italian NUTS 3 regions are one in NUTS 2 region Veneto and four in NUTS 2 region Friuli Venezia Giulia and the five NUTS 3 regions on the Slovenian side are one in NUTS 2 cohesion region Vzhodna Slovenija and four in NUTS 2 cohesion region Zahodna Slovenija. The land border between Italy and Slovenia is 232 km long and very diversified in terms of morphology, crossing mountains, plains and coastal zones. The Programme area encompasses Alpine mountainous landscapes and foothills, hills and plains, river basin areas, seashore lagoon landscapes, Karst landscapes and more than 320 Km of coast on the Adriatic Sea which represents a resource both from an environmental and an economic point of view. The Programme area comprises urban areas as Trieste, Udine, Gorizia, Ljubljana, Pordenone, Venice, conurbation Koper-Izola-Piran, Nova Gorica, Kranj and Postojna. It also includes several urban centers located in relatively short distances from each other. There is close proximity between the cities of Trieste and Koper on the coast, in the southern part of the cross-border area and the functional urban area in Goriška (Nova Gorica, Gorizia, and -empeter-Vrtojba), where the EGTC GO is operating since 2011. EN 7 EN 1.2 Joint programme strategy: Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities as well as inequalities, joint investment needs and complimentary and synergies with other funding programmes and instruments, lessons-learned from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies. Reference: point (b) of Article 17(3), point (b) of Article 17(9) Overview of the socio-economic features The Programme area is extremely diversified in terms of morphology and orography of the territory and in terms of population density. It is characterized by the presence of predominantly densely populated areas on the Italian side and more rural areas on the Slovenian side. The border areas show ongoing negative population change trends, especially on the Italian side, where the population is everywhere decreasing, and ageing is a growing issue (Eurostat 2020). Moreover, disparities are increasing between urban centers and smaller municipalities. Concerning the economic situation, the area is not far from EU standards, the Italian side being slightly above the EU average of GDP per capita and the Slovenian side being slightly below. Both the Italian and Slovenian economies, which have been growing favorably across all sectors in the recent years, are currently influenced by the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering Eurostat data referred to the past four years, in the Programme area the GDP per capita is the highest in the Trieste and Osrednjeslovenska NUTS3 regions whereas it is the lowest in Primorsko- notranjska NUTS3 region. All data for the period between 2016 and 2019 show an increase of GDP per capita for all NUTS3 regions. Research and Innovation According to the annual Innovation Union Scoreboard that compares the results obtained in the field of research and innovation by the EU Member States, in year 2020, both Italy and Slovenia are in the group of the fimoderate innovatorsfl, only Friuli Venezia Giulia Region is ranked as fistrong innovatorfl. A key aspect in the development of R&D policies is linked to the introduction of the regional Smart Specialization Strategies. These have been developed in order to set priorities that build on the regional competitive advantages. Although all three specialization strategies of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto Region	

and Slovenia are under revision for the programming period 2021-27 at the time of drafting the Programme, common priorities can still be highlighted in order to build cross-border development paths. The shared priorities cover: agri-food, ICT, creative industries, logistics, health and sustainable tourism. On the other hand, the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) identifies Italy at the bottom of the list as regards connectivity and use of online services. With respect to R&D expenditure in the ICT sector EN 8 EN (2015 data) Slovenia ranks above the EU average while Italy ranks below. The ICT sector share of GDP is lower than the EU average for both countries. As for the application of digital solutions in the private sector Italy is in the medium-low range in comparison to the EU average but the value for penetration is among the lowest within the EU. The values for these two indicators are in mid-range for Slovenia. The preliminary analysis showed that digitalization is a cross-cutting need, the use of online services and digital skills needs to be improved. Digitalization is a horizontal topic and it is considered important by authorities and stakeholders in the cross-border area. The digital connectivity and utilization of ICT is a significant factor for the socio-economic development of the area. The availability of high-capacity broadband internet connection is crucial. In addition, digitalization is proven to boost productivity and serve as a basis for new high-tech services. All of this considered, several joint challenges have been identified. First, the majority of enterprises in the Programme area are relatively small and with low innovation capacity and therefore less competitive: there is a low level of expenditure in R&D and specifically in industrial research which is necessary for technological transfer. This highlights the need to tackle reduced competitiveness for not digitalized SMEs, looking at digitalization as a potential for business support and clustersTM promotion on one side, and on the other side there is the demand for administrative and bureaucratic simplification and digitalization, especially in rural and remote areas. In the same perspective, the investments in R&D are below the economic development level in the area and there is scarce collaborative approach in innovation processes, all leading to a SMEsTM limited ability to employ available research and innovation products. Moreover, opportunities may derive from the integration of S3 strategies. Therefore, desired change covers four main directions for the needed actions to support more investments in R&D and the involvement of SMEs: promoting technological upgrade and improving technological transfer to SMEs, increasing and giving continuity to investments in R&D and applied research, strengthening cooperation between R&D centers and enterprises, promoting the creation of cross border clusters and promoting capitalisation of R&D results achieved at regional level in a new integrated framework taking advantage of S3 shared priorities. Furthermore, changes may be delivered by promoting enterprise cross-border networking, clustering and technology transfer also through digital advisory services to SMEs. Energy, Climate change and Sustainable Development The Programme area is facing common challenges in the field of climate change, pursuing global sustainable development objectives. The variety of climatic zones within the area confirms the need to find specific effective countermeasures. Main focal points are: emissions reduction, renewable energy production, energy efficiency. Climate change is affecting the Programme area in terms of increasing average temperature, vulnerability to floods and natural disasters, showing the need for further interventions in the fields of energy, transport, water management, sustainable soil consumption, better forest management and natural risks prevention in a long-term perspective. EN 9 EN The latest data on GHGs emissions provided by European Environment Agency and Eurostat (published October 2020, situation in 2018) confirm that both Italy (-17.9%) and Slovenia (-7.2%) are reducing emissions compared to 2005 level, but still not reaching the -20% target set for 2020 by the EU Climate and Energy Package. The increase in the share of renewables is essential to reach the EU climate and energy goals. The EU target is to reach 20% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 and at least 32% by 2030: Italy has reached its national 2020 target (17%), although its result (18.2%) is below the EU average of 20%. Slovenia has not reached its national 2020 target (25%) yet, albeit with a national share above the EU average 20% (21.7%). At the local level, 75 out of the 259 municipalities of the Italian side territorially involved in the Programme are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (29%), with an absolute preeminence in the NUTS 3 area of Udine (25 municipalities) and Pordenone (24 municipalities), and a relative one in the NUTS 3 area of Trieste (50%) and Pordenone again (49%), Venezia and Meolo in the metropolitan area of Venice. Many Slovenian municipalities are also signatories, with the majority of them located in Gorenjska region, but there are also others, among which Idrija, Pivka and the three urban municipalities of Koper, Nova Gorica and Ljubljana. In 2015, all United Nations Member States approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The document entails 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Both countries had a high score in year 2020, Slovenia ranks 12th with a score of 79,8 and Italy ranks 30th with a score of 77,07 out of 162. Both countries urgently need to take up climate change action. Following the UN agreements on climate change and EU strategies, all EU countries have to prepare and adopt a 10-year integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP). Both Italy and Slovenia have submitted the final versions of their NECP. Main elements of these climate plans envisage the reduction of fossil energy sources in traffic, industry, households and agriculture (e.g., thermic renovation of buildings, strengthening environmentally friendly production processes, increasing the attractiveness and thus the share of public transport systems, sustainable forestry), the promotion of renewable energy (solar, geothermal, wind, biomass) and the protection of biodiversity. It is also crucial for CO2 reduction plans to contain measures for increasing the awareness of the population about these issues and R&D activities. For what concerns waste and water management, data of year 2019 show that the population in Cohesion region Zahodna Slovenija generates 482kg of municipal waste/person. 71.9% of the amount is separately collected. 1.8% of the produced waste is hazardous waste from production and service activities. ISPRA data for 2019 report that in Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions, solid waste was produced for a total of 365.80 kg per person and 334.41 kg per person, respectively. The Veneto region is the first in Italy for the percentage of separate collection of urban waste, with 73.6%, while the Friuli region is fourth with 65.5%. The circular economy has potential in supporting bottom-up approaches in designing and implementing EN 10 EN material flow in loops that are terminating at the local or regional level (i.e., waste of one industry is material for another, leading to reduced pressure on natural resources). The Slovene Government has declared circular economy and green development as SloveniaTMs strategic objectives and adopted the Framework Programme for the Transition to a Green Economy in 2016. Furthermore, a Roadmap towards Circular Economy in Slovenia was prepared in 2018. In Slovenia, Strategic Research and Innovation Partnership on Circular economy connects the business sector, educational and research institutions, NGOs, and other partners into new value chains. Such partnerships focus on sustainable energy, biomass, and alternative raw materials, secondary raw materials, functional materials, processes and technologies, and circular business models. Several attempts were also made to introduce circular practices into tourism. EU Directives on Circular economy have been transposed in the Italian legal system through Legislative Decree no. 116/2020, mainly focused on waste reduction and recycling. It has been preceded by Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Law No. 34/2017, that enforces the regional

waste management system emphasizing reuse, restore and recycling besides the reduction in waste production, introduces a regional forum on circular economy composed by experts and stakeholders, and enhances the practice of Green Public Procurement. Veneto Region adopted its Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development that supports, among five strategic priorities, the promotion of circular economy (Del. CR No. 80/2020). The cross-border governance of waste circular management is still difficult because of differences in national regulations and high infrastructure costs. Specific needs of cross-border relevance, other than those related to climate change impact as addressed in the dedicated paragraphs above may exist in relation to waste generated by tourism, which could be particularly harmful to regional ecosystems. Common approaches for raising awareness and capacity building on circular economy may be considered in some protected natural areas and urban functional areas close to the border (as Trieste with its surroundings and Gorizia/Nova Gorica/—empeter-Vrtojba). The circular economy initiatives are becoming more applied, both on the level of companies and on the level of public local actors such as municipalities. However, there is still a gap at the regional and cross- border level and the circular economy targets are still not achieved and need to be further promoted. With respect to water management and related environmental issues, the Venice area has been characterized by special relationships with water, both internal and marine, throughout its history. The territory is interested by the final stretch of many important Italian rivers flowing in the Adriatic Sea: Tagliamento, Livenza, Piave, Sile, Brenta-Bacchiglione, and Adige. Most of the water courses are dammed, in some cases with the riverbed higher than the countryside level, typical of reclaimed lands. Those natural conditions, conjoint with a strong overbuilding, are the reasons for progressively more frequent flooding events, due to the difficulty in absorbing rainwaters. According to ARPA™s data, the water quality of hydrographic basins of those rivers is good. The European Parliament and the Council have adopted Maritime Spatial Planning Directive to create a common framework for maritime spatial planning in Europe, reduce conflicts between sectors, encourage investments and increase cross-border cooperation between EU countries to develop shipping lanes,

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EXTENT

Europeo

SECTORS

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BUDGET

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AIMS

Cooperazione, Digitalizzazione, Innovazione, Sviluppo, Tutela ambientale

PLACES TO INVEST

Slovenia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Venezia