

Funded by the European Union



Final Report

(Based on the ADRION CP, 15.10.2014)

Ex-ante evaluation of the Adriatic-Ionian Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

Metis GmbH

A-1220 Vienna, Donau-City-Straße 6

Tel.: +43 1 997 15 70, Fax: +43 1 997 15 70 66

E-mail: office@metis-vienna.eu

www.medis-vienna.eu

Vienna, 15.10.2014

Authors:

Christine Hamza

Angelika Kronberger

Haris Martinos

João Pedro Silva

Final Report

(Based on the ADRION CP, 15.10.2014)

Ex-ante evaluation of the Adriatic–
Ionian Cooperation Programme
2014–2020

Content

Executive Summary	7
Summary of the environmental report.....	11
1 Introduction	14
1.1 Objectives of the ex-ante evaluation.....	14
1.2 Background information and methodology	15
1.3 Short description of the ADRION programme	20
2 Evaluation of the programme strategy	26
2.1 Consistency of the programme strategy	26
2.1.1 Contribution to Europe 2020	26
2.1.2 Contribution to the needs of the region	28
2.2 Assessment of the external coherence.....	45
2.2.1 Coherence with Partnership Agreements and National Strategies	45
2.2.2 Coherence with other strategies and programmes	49
2.2.3 Coherence with other ESI Funds programmes and other relevant policies and programmes.....	52
2.2.4 Main findings of the external coherence evaluation	55
2.3 Assessment of the internal coherence.....	55
2.4 Assessment of the intervention logic	57
3 Indicators, outputs and results of the programme.....	66
3.1 Indicator assessment.....	66
3.2 Performance framework.....	71
4 Consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme.....	74
5 Evaluation of the implementation provision	76
5.1 Human resources and administrative capacity for management of the programme.....	76
5.2 Programme level arrangements for monitoring, data collection and evaluation...	78
5.3 Reduction of the administrative burden	79
5.4 Involvement of partners	80
6 Contribution to the horizontal principles	81
Annexes	83

Tables and figures

Table 1: Overview of the final draft ADRION Programme	21
Table 2: Documents considered in the ex-ante evaluation	23
Table 3: Contribution to Europe 2020	27
Table 4: Transnational needs and challenges of Adriatic Ionian countries.....	30
Table 5: Evaluation of needs defined in the territorial analysis.....	35
Table 6: Relevance of interventions to the needs of the region.....	38
Table 7: Coherence between national strategies of EU Member States and ADRION	46
Table 8: Coherence between national strategies on non-EU countries and ADRION .	46
Table 9: Coherence between Italian ROP and ADRION	47
Table 10: Coherence between Greek ROP and ADRION	48
Table 11: Comparison between EUSAIR pillars/topics and ADRION PAs/SOs	49
Table 12: Relation between ADRION, EUSDR and EUSALP	50
Table 13: Coherence between Thematic Priorities in IPA-CBC programmes and ADRION *	51
Table 14: Coherence between ETC-CBC programmes and ADRION *	52
Table 15: Coherence with other relevant policies and programmes.....	53
Table 16: Definition of the specific objectives	56
Table 17: Assessment of the internal consistence.....	57
Table 18: Assessment of the intervention logic	58
Table 19: ADRION output indicator assessment	67
Table 20: ADRION result indicator assessment	69
Table 21: Ex-ante evaluation of the performance framework	72
Table 22: Budget allocation breakdown by PAs and contribution.....	74
Table 23: ADRION financing plan	74

Abbreviations

AA	Audit Authority
ADRION	Adriatic Ionian Cooperation Programme 2014-2020
AL	Albania
BH	Bosnia Herzegovina
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross Border Cooperation
COSME	EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
CP	Cooperation Programme
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
CSP	Country Strategy Papers
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
fMA	Future Managing Authority
GDP	Gross domestic product
GR	Greece
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
IP	Investment Priority
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JAP	Joint Action Plan

JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MED CP	Mediterranean Cooperation Programme
MNE	Montenegro
MC	Monitoring Committee
MS	Member States
NCP	National Contact Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRP	National Reform Programme
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Priority Axis
R&D	Research and Development
RES	Renewable energy sources
RIS	Research and Innovation Strategies
ROP	Regional operational programme
RS	Serbia
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEE	South-East Europe Programme
SFC	European Union Structural Funds Communication system
SI	Slovenia
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-related
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SO	Specific objective
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TF	Task Force
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TO	Thematic Objective

Executive Summary

This document is the Final Report of the ex-ante evaluation of the ADRION Cooperation Programme 2014-2020. It is based on the CP Version of 15. October 2014.

The entire ex-ante evaluation was characterised by:

a) A truly interactive and also iterative process. The independent evaluators worked closely with a number of structures and key actors that were directly involved in the elaboration of the ADRION Programme. The different main elements of the Programme were generally elaborated successively, and this permitted the evaluators to appraise new contents step-by-step and to formulate related recommendations for further improvements.

b) A combination of various methods and techniques were applied, mainly relating to theory-based evaluation and especially to programme theory. The ex-ante evaluation accomplished all the analyses required by the Art 55 of the CPR and specifically by the 'Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation', issued by the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy. The present document presents these analyses including outcomes, assessments and recommendations flowing from them. It is structured in six sections:

- Introduction, including conformity with implementing regulations
- Evaluation of the programme strategy, including assessment of external and internal coherence
- Indicators, outputs and results of the programme
- Consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme
- Evaluation of the implementation provision
- Contribution to the horizontal principles

The main findings of these analyses are briefly reported below:

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (a), ex-ante evaluations shall appraise the contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, having regard to the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account national and regional needs and potential for development as well as lessons drawn from previous programming periods: The ADRION Programme directly refers to all three Europe 2020 Priorities. The 5 specific objectives (excluding Technical Assistance) address all the Europe 2020 objectives, particularly emphasising the following goals:

- 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed
- 3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in R&D
- greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990
- 20% of energy from renewables
- 20% increase in energy efficiency

The specific objectives of the ADRION Cooperation Programme follow the needs of the territory according to the territorial analysis and SWOT analysis and the regional strategies of each of the programme countries.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (b), ex-ante evaluations shall appraise the internal coherence of the proposed programme or activity and its relationship with other relevant instruments: The ex-ante evaluation has found that the priority axes, the specific objectives and the plans of the programme are clearly structured, and that the single milestones are compatible, consistent and coherent. The assessment of the interdependency between the specific objectives within each priority axis and between the specific objectives from the various priority axes has shown that the ADRION Cooperation Programme has a high degree of internal consistency and coherence. The priority-setting is comprehensible and the structure of the programme is therefore logical. However it is necessary to assure a coherent interaction between Priority axes 1, 2, 3 with Priority axes 4 during the implementation phase.

The ADRION Cooperation Programme is integrated in a consistent development strategy that complements strategies at regional, national and EU levels and clearly differentiates itself from other funding instruments.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (c), ex-ante evaluations shall appraise the consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme: The internal financial allocation of the total budget of the ADRION Cooperation Programme is concentrated according to the Common Provision Regulation as well as to the European Territorial Cooperation regulation and meets the needs of the territory according to the territorial analysis. The allocation of 46% of the budget to environmental protection and sustainable development allows substantial support for the territorial environmental protection cooperation. A further 20% of the budget is allocated to innovation and 18% to sustainable transport development. The remaining 16% is allocated to supporting the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region and technical assistance. The allocation of the budget is coherent with the regulative requirements and follows the requirements of transnational cooperation programme to directly support the related strategy.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (d), ex-ante evaluations shall appraise the consistency of the selected thematic objectives, the priorities and corresponding objectives of the programmes with the CSF, the Partnership Agreement and the relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and, where appropriate at national level, the National Reform Programme: The thematic concentration of the ADRION Cooperation Programme on four thematic objectives complies with the regulation. The programme covers the following four thematic objectives: TO 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation through; TO 6: Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency; TO 7: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures; TO 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

The selected thematic objectives of the ADRION Programme correspond to the specifications of the Common Provision Regulation and the Partnership Agreements or the Country Strategy Papers. The assessment of the interdependency between the specific objectives of each priority axis and between the specific objectives of the different priority axes showed that the ADRION Cooperation Programme presents a high interdependency between Priority Axes 1, Priority Axes 2 and Priority Axes 3. The

interdependency of Priority Axes 4 with the other Priority Axes is somewhat less elaborated.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (e, f, h), relating to the assessment of the relevance and clarity of the proposed programme indicators, how the expected outputs will contribute to results, and the rationale for the form of support proposed: The ADRION Cooperation Programme defines mainly specific output indicators. These indicators meet the regulatory requirements, follow the intervention logic of any cooperation programme and are assessed positively. No derogations or specific aspects were found to be implausible or questionable in the quantifications of targets for the programme territory. The result indicators seem to be adequate in terms of relevance, logic and clarity. A method was proposed to the Task Force members by the drafting team as to how to measure the result indicators and their progress over time. According to this method, the calculation of baseline data is based on the outcomes of an online survey, which at this stage is still in progress.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (g), relating to the assessment whether the quantified target values for indicators are realistic, having regard to the support envisaged from the ESI Funds: The quantified targets are being chosen in accordance with the general regulation. The ADRION Cooperation Programme adequately meets these requirements. The target values chosen for the output indicators (measurement units are in all cases numbers) are largely realistic.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (h) relating to the assessment of the suitability of the milestones selected for the performance framework: The performance framework envisaged in the ADRION Cooperation Programme is broadly realistic. The allocation of the expenditure over the timeline is conservative and takes sufficiently into account the absorption risks in the light of the new n+3 rules. Whilst on average the expenditure targets seem adequate for the programme, substantial deviations can be expected between the priority axes.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (i, j, n), relating to the assessment of the adequacy of human resources and administrative capacity for management of the programme, the suitability of the procedures for monitoring the programme and for collecting the data necessary to carry out evaluations, and measures planned to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries: In general, the human resources and the administrative capacity for the management of the ADRION Cooperation Programme is adequate. Current information provided by the Future Management Authority has indicated that there is adequate provision of human resources for the management of the programme. However due to the fact that the programme cannot build on previous experiences resources for unforeseen drawbacks should be reserved and the programme should capitalize as best as possible on the experiences of the SEE programme in the programming period 2007-2013.

The process of collecting statistical data for monitoring and evaluation is at the time of the ex-ante report not finally decided and the ex-ante team pointed out that bottlenecks in comparable data collection can occur. Furthermore the Task Force members could not deliver an exhaustive explanation about the national and regional reduction of administrative burden and the programme implementation process as a whole. The implementation phase of the programme should specifically focus on national and regional improvements in terms of programme implementation (information dissemination, application process and reporting as well as financing) and adjusted

processes between IPA and ERDF related payments to beneficiaries. Furthermore, positive effects could be generated for the beneficiary with the transition to e-Cohesion.

In accordance with Article 55 (3) (l, m), relating to the assessment of the adequacy of planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination, particularly regarding accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the adequacy of planned measures to promote sustainable development: The measures with respect to the horizontal objectives of 'sustainable development', 'equal opportunities and non-discrimination' and 'equality between men and women' are described in detail in the Programme. In the preparation of the programme a Strategic Environmental Assessment was conducted and therein made recommendations which have been taken into account. By implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment the ADRION Cooperation Programme adheres to the requirement of considering the cross-cutting sustainable development principle. The programme proposes concrete interventions regarding evaluation and monitoring as well as in the phase of the project selection in all three horizontal principles.

Summary of the environmental report

According to SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been carried out. A Draft Environmental Report was prepared and submitted in July 2014 based on CP version 1 in line with the provisions of Annex I of the SEA Directive. It underwent a consultation process in the ADRION partner countries. Italy and Slovenia consultation comments were integrated in the SEA final report. However, the outcomes of the consultations in the other ADRION partner countries have not yet been communicated to the SEA team¹.

Environmental status quo

The current state of the environment within which the ADRION cooperation programme is proposed is briefly described and considered against the basis of European status reports on the environmental situation. Efforts are still needed to make improvements in respect to general soil conditions, water resources, air quality, fauna, flora and biodiversity. Technological improvements to reduce emissions are cancelled out by increasing energy and transport demand. The diversity of the natural heritage is one of the biggest assets of the programme area. Although the NATURA 2000 network has been established in most Member States during the last ten years, the loss of biodiversity has not come to a halt. Cultural landscape and heritage sites represent part of Adriatic-Ionian area's identity and the integration of these values into economic activities is just at the beginning.

Programme objectives and priorities

In the light of the Community Strategic Guidelines (Lisbon/Gothenburg) the overall strategic goal of the ADRION programme is to act as a policy driver and governance innovator fostering European integration among Member and non-Member states, utilising the rich natural, cultural and human resources surrounding the two seas and enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion in the programme area. To achieve this goal the programme proposes the following five priorities:

Priority Axis 1: Innovative and Smart Region

Thematic Objective 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation through:

IP 1b: SO 1.1: Support the development of a regional Innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area

Priority Axis 2: Sustainable region

Thematic Objective 6: Protecting the environment and promotion resource efficiency

IP 6c: SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area

IP 6d: SO 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area[^]

¹ Responses still awaited from Albania, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia. SEA legislation does not apply in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Priority Axis 3: Connected region

Thematic Objective 7 Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures

IP 7cSO 3.1: Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area

Priority Axis 4: Supporting the governance of the EUSAIR

Thematic Objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions under the ESF to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration.

IP 11: SO 4.1: Facilitate the coordination and implementation of the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities.

Methodology of impact assessment

The impact assessment analysis focused on the most likely significant effects of the ADRION programme on the environment. There is a significant degree of uncertainty in the assessment, as the ADRION programme only defines the framework and type of actions and/or projects to be supported by the programme. The implementation of the actions and the projects to be funded, and their precise nature and scope are not yet known. The analysis therefore focused on an estimate of potential and non-quantifiable impacts. The effects of these potential risks will depend on the precise characteristics of the projects, as well as on external forces.

As a transnational cooperation programme, the ADRION programme will neither support heavy investments nor the development of large infrastructures, nor scientific and technology research. Investment in small-scale facilities or infrastructure might be supported in the case of pilot projects and for exchange of territorial experiences. The ADRION programme supports in particular intangible or 'soft' actions with potentially longer-term effects and a higher visibility for the programme area (such as, studies and research, networking, dissemination of knowledge and data, etc.).

For each area of intervention possible effects on the relevant environmental matters were analysed, with reference to 'guiding' questions and environmental protection objectives, based on legislation and strategic policies on international, state or community level. As none of the areas of intervention are described in sufficient detail to allow a quantitative assessment, the assessment concentrated on a qualitative description of possible impacts (positive, neutral, mixed or negative) on relevant environmental matters according to SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). The list of questions is not exhaustive.

The answers to these 'guiding' questions allowed us to describe the likely impact of the programme's actions depending their nature.

Moreover, this estimation was complemented for each potential impact by the following considerations:

- With which probability may this impact occur?
- If it happened, would the impact be frequent and/or occur in numerous areas (frequency throughout space and/or time)?
- If it happened, would it be of a long-term or short-term duration?
- If it happened, would the impact be reversible (or not)?
- If it happened would the impact have any cross-border effects (outside ADRION programme area)?

Therefore the assessment that has been carried out by this report is a strategic and qualitative assessment of potential environmental effects of the ADRION programme.

Possible environmental impact of the programme

The programme addresses the most important environmental issues of the ADRION programme area in a positive way.

The following table summarises the potential impact ratings regarding the nature of incidence:

Priority axes and objectives		Positive impact (+)	Negative impact (-)	Neutral impact (o)	Mixed impact (+/-)	No rating (=)
PA 1	TO1 - SO 1.1	10	0	15	1	0
PA 2	TO6 - SO 2.1	3	5	16	2	0
	TO6 - SO 2.2	10	0	16	0	0
PA 3	TO7 - SO 3.1	9	0	11	6	0
PA 4	TO11 - SO 4.1	0	0	0	0	26
Total		32	5	58	9	26

The impacts will all be of an indirect nature due to the objectives of the ADRION programme and its support for 'soft' actions. The above table shows that the general environmental impact of the ADRION programme is neutral-to-positive with no Specific Objective (SO) having an overall negative impact. It should be highlighted that an overall 39 rankings of the assessments of the impact of the ADRION programme are positive to the environment, while the SEA identified only six negative impacts for the whole programme.

The 'mixed' or 'negative' ratings concern mostly the SOs related to tourism (SO 2.1) and transport (SO 3.1). The drafting of PA4 - SO 4.1 is particularly wide. Without more (environmental) targeting, it was not possible to assess potential impacts.

Further negative impacts on environmental issues could not be excluded, if the programme were to support the preparation of additional transport infrastructure (road, rail, waterways). This could lead to an increase in land take, fragmentation of habitats and additional impact through air and noise pollution in sensitive areas. Such impacts should be taken into account in the project selection criteria.

1 Introduction

It was assumed in the SEA that the final version of the programme was the best alternative as it has been improved in an iterative way through the cooperation among programming, ex-ante evaluation and SEA. Main results and recommendations

Most of the programme priorities and areas of intervention will have positive or neutral impacts on the relevant environmental matters. Significant negative impacts on the environment can be prevented, as recommended in this SEA, during project selection by setting up criteria in line with the overall ADRION programme objectives and its priorities.

Programme implementation should focus on key issues of long-term balanced development in a transnational context, such as reducing negative impacts of climate change, management of natural resource, sustainable transport systems and reduced emissions, in line with the general principle of 'sustainability' as defined in the programme.

Recommendations of the SEA have been taken into account in the ADRION programme. The future managing authority will add an environmental impact pre-assessment at project selection level. Furthermore the ADRION programme will request output indicators on environmental issues (where applicable, according to the objectives of the project) at project proposals.

Additionally, the ADRION programme took into consideration environmental impact result indicator(s) at programme level.

1.1 Objectives of the ex-ante evaluation

The ex-ante evaluation process stipulated in Article 55 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), (Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013) has the primary purpose to 'improve the quality of the design of each programme'. The increased complexity of this process lies in the need for better 'embeddedness' of the programme in the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region and the integrated approach emphasised in the CPR. The ex-ante evaluation has to ensure not only conformity with the regulations but also the link to other programmes and strategies relevant to Cohesion Policy. In this context the evaluator should help to form a programme in the most efficient and effective way in line with the regulation which will serve as a source of feedback for the Managing Authority.

This is a fundamental difference from the previous funding period where the ex-ante evaluation was a separate process, mostly detached from programming. In this new consulting role the evaluator has to ensure continuity of the transnational development, coherence with the CPR and, in particular, the required thematic concentration. The evaluator continuously helps the formation of a clear intervention logic in the programme. All parts of the programme should be clearly linked to the needs and related specific objectives defined. The evaluator, at this stage, has to gather information about needs and requirements of all relevant stakeholders.

In accordance with the CPR Article 55 (3) and the European Commission (EC) Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation the evaluation has to assess the following aspects:

- the contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, having regard to the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account national and regional needs and potential for development as well as lessons drawn from previous programming periods;
- the internal coherence of the proposed programme or activity and its relationship with other relevant instruments;
- the consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme;
- the consistency of the selected thematic objectives, the priorities and corresponding objectives of the programmes with the Common Strategic Framework (CSF), the Partnership Agreement and the relevant country specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and where appropriate at national level, the National Reform Programme;
- the relevance and clarity of the proposed programme indicators;
- how the expected outputs will contribute to results;
- whether the quantified target values for indicators are realistic, having regard to the support envisaged from the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds;
- the rationale for the form of support proposed;
- the adequacy of human resources and administrative capacity for management of the programme;
- the suitability of the procedures for monitoring the programme and for collecting the data necessary to carry out evaluations;
- the suitability of the milestones selected for the performance framework;
- the adequacy of planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent any discrimination, in particular as regards accessibility for the disabled;
- the adequacy of planned measures to promote sustainable development;
- the measures planned to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

1.2 Background information and methodology

The contract for the Ex-ante Evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the 'Adriatic Ionian Cooperation Programme 2014-2020' (ADRION) was signed on 25 March 2014. The ex-ante evaluation and SEA kicked-off at the Task Force (TF) meeting of 1 April 2014 in Zagreb.

The **inception report** under this contract was submitted on 30 April 2014. Subsequently, the ex-ante team has participated at the TF meeting of 23 May 2014.

The **1st interim report** of the ex-ante evaluation of the transnational Adriatic-Ionian Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 has been approved on 9 July 2014 and included a first ex-ante assessment of consistency and external coherence.

The **2nd interim report** of the ex-ante evaluation of the transnational Adriatic-Ionian Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 was approved on 11 August 2014. The 2nd interim report included the ex-ante assessment of consistency, internal and external coherence and intervention logic.

The **3rd interim report** was based on the 2nd interim report and further developed the ex-ante evaluation of coherence and consistency of the strategy as well as the assessment of the intervention logic, indicators, outputs and results of the programme. The assessment was based on the 2nd draft cooperation programme submitted on 11 August 2014. The 3rd interim report was approved at the ADRION TF meeting on the 19 September 2014.

The **draft final ex ante report** was based on the 3rd draft of the Cooperation Programme (CP) of 11 September 2014 taking into account further fine-tunings of the CP. For the approval of the draft final ex-ante report a written procedure was conducted and no comments received by the time of the drafting of the final report.

The **final ex-ante report** serves as the complementing paper to the final ADRION programme for the submission to the European Commission and is based on the 4th and final draft ADRION CP of 15th October 2014 further referred to as the final draft CP.

The ex-ante evaluation however comprises four main steps which are delivered according to the CP content. The main steps of the ex-ante evaluation contain:

- Evaluation of the programme strategy (1st and 2nd interim report).
- Coherence and consistency (1st 2nd 3rd interim report).
- Indicators, outputs and results of the programme (3rd interim report, draft final report, final report).
- Administrative capacity and procedures (draft final and final report).

All four steps are incorporated in the final draft ex-ante report including an executive summary according to the CPR Article 55 (3) which will be part of the ADRION Cooperation Programme.

The content of the four steps are described in the following sections.

Evaluation of the programme strategy

The first step of programming should define a compact and coherent strategy. This strategy should be based on substantial analyses of the challenges and needs of the programme area. A SWOT analysis with particular emphasis on transnational issues should serve as a basis for establishing the needs the programme is addressing. The first step of the ex-ante evaluation would be to follow the logical path of the strategy formulated.

In this context the ex-ante evaluators assess the consistency of the formulated Priority Axes (PA) and specific objectives with Europe 2020 and other relevant national and macro-regional strategies, notably the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) but also the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, etc. Evaluation of the external coherence involves also other ESI Funds and national funding instruments. Furthermore, the strategy should take account of lessons learned from the past.

The evaluation of the programme strategy has been conducted with the help of a checklist of questions introduced already in the inception report which formed the basis for the respective steps of the evaluation:

- To what extent do the programme objectives and planned actions respond to the sectoral and territorial challenges and needs as identified in the analysis and presented in the SWOT table?

- How are the intended results and planned measures related to national strategic priorities and to the Europe 2020 Strategy goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?

Coherence and consistency

Besides the external coherence of the programme with national, regional and macro-regional strategies and with other instruments and programmes (e.g. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF)), the ex-ante assessment concentrates on internal coherence and consistency between the specific objectives of each PA, and between the specific objectives of the different priority axes.

This step of the evaluation is crucial to assess the fundamental intervention logic of the programme and its integrated approach. Therefore it forms the central part of the evaluation. In this phase however the ex-ante evaluator, the programming authority and all relevant stakeholders need to hold a discussion about the desired measures. In this highly interactive process the ex-ante evaluator takes over the monitoring and consulting part in order to help define measures and retain a feasible intervention logic in the programme.

The two most important steps in this phase involve the evaluation of:

- Internal coherence – between different actions;
- Internal consistency – between needs, specific objectives and the planned actions.

The following questions on the **intervention logic** are proposed for this particular step of the ex-ante evaluation:

- How does the programme contribute to national strategies?
- Are there any overlaps and duplication with other policy instruments?
- To what extent the formulated intervention logic secures that the selected actions will contribute to the achievement of the regional, national and EU goals?
- How are specific objectives translated into actions and how do they affect the interventions foreseen under the other priorities?
- Who is not reached by any intervention, although identified as a relevant potential beneficiary? What kind of gaps are there? How can these gaps be filled?
- Do the measures serve the defined specific objectives relevant for the programme?
- How are different actions related to each other? Are there any overlaps or gaps?

Further assessment involves the **financial allocation**. Again both the internal and external coherence of the financial allocation should be assessed:

- (To what extent) Is the distribution of expenditures consistent with the hierarchy of objectives?
- (To what extent) Is the distribution of expenditures consistent with the unit cost of the various measures?

-
- How and to what extent have the recommendations of previous evaluations been taken into account (concerning cost unit accounting, absorption capacity, etc.)?
 - (To what extent) Is the allocation of financial resources through the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) consistent with the way resources are allocated through various European financial instruments (ESF, ERDF, Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)) and through other national or regional financial instruments?
 - Assessment of risk involved in financial implementation.
 - Which actions are associated with an elevated implementation risk?
 - Which follow-up measures should be adopted for investments bearing higher uncertainties?

Indicators, outputs and results of the programme

In order to assess the activities launched in the programme a further step in the intervention logic is required. This involves the link between objectives, support actions with outputs, and expected results. Indicators are directly linked to objectives and actions of the programme.

Based on the intervention logic of the programme, indicators are to be defined. The system of indicators corresponds to the levels in the hierarchy of objectives and consists of:

- baseline indicators, i.e. values of specific issues at the beginning of intervention. The situation analysis is always broader than the areas targeted by objectives, therefore two types of baseline values are defined – one relating to the context (also reflected in the SWOT), and the other related to the intervention and objectives (e.g. the number of ETC networks before 2014);
- common and specific output indicators²;
- result indicators³;
- indicators in the programmes to be used as milestones in the performance framework (Article 21 and annex II of EU Reg. No. 1303/2013)⁴.

Administrative capacity and procedures

This particular step assesses the management system of the responsible bodies involved. This is particularly complex in ETC programmes with different actors of different nationalities, including several non-Member States in the case of the ADRION. An additional issue of this step in the evaluation is to ensure a coherent and feasible monitoring system. The monitoring and data system has to be aligned with the regulatory requirements for a feasible monitoring and evaluation system to be put in place, compliant with the regulations. The key issues of the ex-ante evaluation are to assess:

² Based on the provisions of the regulation on European Territorial Cooperation, Article 8(2) lit.b point iv).

³ Based on the provisions of the regulation on European Territorial Cooperation, Article 8(2) lit.b point ii) impact indicators are not required, a fact that also reflects the nature of ETC programmes. However a qualitative description of the intended impact is necessary.

⁴ Based on the provisions of the regulation on European Territorial Cooperation, Article 8(2) lit.b point v).

- the adequacy of human resources and administrative capacity for programme management, including the availability of sufficient advisory capacity;
- the procedures for monitoring and data collection;
- the provision (structures and processes) for the coordination of implementation.

In **evaluating the administrative capacity** the evaluation team particularly assesses the resources and capacity of the responsible authorities. This process will be embedded in a communicative and iterative process between the evaluators, the programmers and the responsible managing authority (MA).

It is particularly important to take account of lessons learned, especially from difficulties and bottlenecks in the programming period 2007-2013 (in the case of ADRION those arising in its precursor, the South-East Europe (SEE) Programme). Based on this experience, future assumptions will be drawn to serve as a basis for discussion among the programming partners. Each ETC programme has different issues which are of particular relevance for the programme. Addressing these issues should however contribute to the future programming period in terms of a more effective implementation of the programme. The issues concentrate mainly around reporting, evaluation, administration and control.

The ex-ante questionnaire which helps to collect the relevant aspects of the current period includes the following questions:

- Are the key bottlenecks and difficulties of the current period relevant for the future?
- Are there adequate measures implemented to prevent difficulties?
- Are the right assumptions drawn for the future implementation?
- What are the main bottlenecks between relevant involved bodies?
- Are the proposed resources adequate for the work load?

The specific task of evaluating the **data system** as a basis for monitoring and evaluation is somewhat new in the funding period 2014-2020. The European Commission puts particular emphasis on the quality and feasibility of the data system. In this respect the ex-ante guidance proposes a relevance matrix which should assess the relation between data system, monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, the ex-ante evaluator assesses the **involvement of partners**, focusing on the following questions:

- To what extent does the communication from the MA to the partners and to the wider public (particularly the potential beneficiaries) reflects the integrated approach and the concerted effort to reach the EU objectives?
- Are there stakeholders who are not sufficiently involved in programme design and implementation, although suggested as relevant partners?

During the evaluation process the ex-ante evaluators have applied the tools of document analysis and meta-analysis grids. Logical framework method and coherence matching were the key tools for the evaluation of the topics concerning external and internal consistency and coherence. Additionally, exploratory discussions were led with the future MA and Joint Secretariat (JS) and thematic workshops were held with the programmers on specific topic areas.

1.3 Short description of the ADRION programme

An overview of the ADRION CP is provided in Table 1, below, based on Section 2 of the final draft CP. The CP is structured into four PA, each corresponding to one Thematic Objective (TO) (with one or more Investment Priorities (IP), and comprising one or more Specific Objectives (SO)).

Table 1: Overview of the final draft ADRION Programme

Priority axes	Thematic objectives	Investment priorities	Specific objectives	EU Contribution in Euro
PA 1: Innovative and smart region	TO 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation through:	IP 1b: Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies	SO1.1 Support the development of a regional innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area	19,831,323.00 (ERDF and IPA) 20%
PA 2: Sustainable region	TO 6: Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	IP 6c: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage	SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area	45,612,043.00 (ERDF and IPA) 46%
		IP 6d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and promoting ecosystem services, including through NATURA 2000, and green infrastructures;	SO 2.1: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area	
PA 3: Connected region	TO 7: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	IP 7c: Developing and improving environment-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems including (...) (...) inland waterways and maritime transport, ports (...) multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility	SO 3.1: Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area	17,848,191.00 (ERDF and IPA) 18%

Priority axes	Thematic objectives	Investment priorities	Specific objectives	EU Contribution in Euro
PA 4: Supporting the governance of the EUSAIR	TO 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the [EUSAIR]	IP 11: Supporting the governance of the EUSAIR	SO 4.1 : Facilitate the coordination in implementing the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities	9,915,662.00 (ERDF and IPA) 10%
PA 5 Technical Assistance			SO 5.1: Actions to increase in efficiency and effectiveness the management and implementation of the cooperation programme SO 5.2: Actions to improve the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the programme implementation	5,008,063.74 (ERDF) 941,333.00 (IPA) 6%

The final draft CP is currently undergoing a consultation procedure with Task Force members during which comments and consequential amendments may be incorporated in the CP. In summary the following final draft sections are currently available to the ex-ante team.

- Section 1.–Strategy
- Section 2 – Priority axes (with the exception of baseline values for result indicators)
- Section 3 – Financing plan
- Section 4 – Integrated approach to territorial development
- Section 5 – Implementing provision
- Section 6 –Coordination
- Section 7 – Reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries
- Section 8 – Horizontal principles
- Section 9 – Separate Elements

The final ex-ante evaluation report is based on the ADRION Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 dated 15 October 2014 and a number of additional documents that became available in the course of the evaluation (see Table 2).

In order to assure the external coherence the Task Force has been asked to provide the evaluators with documents representing the main regional and national policies considered necessary for the ex-ante evaluation. The documents that have been made available to the ex-ante evaluators are listed in Table 2, above and in Annex 2 of this report.

Furthermore, the analysis has included European policy documents, strategies and programmes, issued after the publication of the Europe 2020 strategy, and particularly relevant for the ADRION 2014-2020.

Table 2: Documents considered in the ex-ante evaluation

Country	Type of document	Availability
Albania (AL)	Country Strategy Paper Albania (Draft 20.2.2014)	Yes
	Progress Report 2013	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH)	Country Strategy Paper (Draft 18.3.2014)	Yes
	Progress Report 2013	Yes
Croatia (HR)	Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 (Draft April 2014)	Yes
	Draft Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014 - 2020	Yes
	Draft Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020	Yes
Greece (GR)	Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020 (signed)	Yes
	Ανατολική Μακεδονία, Θράκη (Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki)	Yes
	Κεντρική Μακεδονία (Kentriki Makedonia)	Yes
	Δυτική Μακεδονία (Dytiki Makedonia)	Yes

Country	Type of document	Availability
	Θεσσαλία (Thessalia)	Yes
	Ήπειρος (Ipeiros)	Yes
	Ιόνια Νησιά (Ionia Nisia)	Yes
	Δυτική Ελλάδα (Dytiki Ellada)	Yes
	Στερεά Ελλάδα (Stereia Ellada)	Yes
	Πελοπόννησος (Peloponnisos)	Yes
	Αττική (Attiki)	Yes
	Βόρειο Αιγαίο (Voreio Aigaio)	Yes
	Νότιο Αιγαίο (Notio Aigaio)	Yes
	Κρήτη (Kriti)	Yes
Italy (IT)	Partnership Agreement (Draft May 2014)	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Calabria	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Basilicata	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Puglia	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Molise	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Abruzzo	Yes
	Only a draft available ⁵	
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Marche	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Umbria	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Emilia Romagna	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Lombardia	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Veneto	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF Bolzano	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Trento	Yes
	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Sicilia	Yes
Montenegro (MNE)	Country Strategy Paper	Yes
	Progress Report 2013	Yes
Serbia (RS)	Country Strategy Paper (Draft 21.3.2014)	Yes
	Progress Report 2013	Yes
Slovenia (SI)	Partnership Agreement (Draft May 2014)	Yes
	Operational Programme for the Investment for growth and jobs goal for Slovenia	Yes
Draft CBC Programmes	(or summaries with Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities):	
AL-MNE	Summary/information on Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes
BH-MNE	Summary/information on Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes

⁵ http://www.regione.abruzzo.it/xeuropa/docs/porfesr1420/Master_POR_FESR_Abruzzo_01072014.pdf

Country	Type of document	Availability
GR-AL	First Draft (July 2014)	Yes
GR-IT	Draft (July 2014)	Yes
HR-BH-MNE	Summary/information on Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes
HR-RS	Summary/information on Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes
HR-SI	Summary/information on provisional selection of Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes
IT-AL-MNE	Summary/information on Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes
IT-HR	Draft (August 2014)	Yes
IT-SI		NA*
RS-BH	Summary/information on Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes
RS-MNE	Summary/information on Thematic Objectives or Thematic Priorities	Yes

* Not available

2 Evaluation of the programme strategy

The first step of programming would be to define a compact and coherent strategy. The strategy however should be based on substantial analyses of the challenges and needs of the programme area. A SWOT analysis with particular emphasis on transnational issues would serve as a basis for establishing the needs the programme is addressing. The first step of the ex-ante evaluation would be to follow the logical path of the strategy formulated.

In this context the ex-ante evaluators assess the consistency of the formulated strategy with Europe 2020 and other relevant national and transnational strategies (notably the EUSAIR but also the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, etc.). Evaluation of the external coherence involves also other ESI Funds and national funding instruments. Furthermore, the strategy should take into account lessons learned from the past.

The evaluation of the programme strategy will be conducted with the help of a checklist of questions which forms the basis for the respective steps of the evaluation of the contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the sectoral and territorial challenges and needs as identified in the analysis and presented in the SWOT table.

2.1 Consistency of the programme strategy

Evaluation question:

- How are the intended results and planned measures related to national strategic priorities and to the Europe 2020 Strategy goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?

2.1.1 Contribution to Europe 2020

Considering challenges and needs in relation to Europe 2020 objectives and assessing the contribution of the ADRION to Europe 2020 is an important aspect of the ex-ante evaluation.

The CP clearly acknowledges the importance of Europe 2020 and this is reflected, for instance, in the SWOT which is firmly linked to the goals of Europe 2020.

Table 3 provides an overview of the contribution of the programme objectives to the Europe 2020 strategy. The table shows direct contribution as “+”, indirect contribution as “/”, no contribution “0” and negative contribution as “-”.

It shows that the smart growth goal is covered by the draft ADRION CP. However, the goals for sustainable and inclusive growth are addressed only indirectly and the latter only to a limited extent.

Table 3: Contribution to Europe 2020

Specific objectives	75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed	3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in R&D	greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990	20% of energy from renewables	20% increase in energy efficiency	reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%	at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education	at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion	contribution to flagship initiatives
SO1.1: Support the development of a regional innovation system for the ADRION region.	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	2, 4, 5
SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the ADRION Region	0	0	/	/	0	0	0	/	4
SO 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the ADRION region	0	0	/	/	/	0	0	0	4
SO 3.1: Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the ADRION Region	0	0	/	0	/	0	0	/	5
SO 4.1 : Facilitate the coordination and implementation of the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

Contribution to the flagship initiatives

Furthermore the ex-ante evaluation assesses the contribution to the following flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategies:

1. Digital agenda for Europe
2. Innovation Union
3. Youth on the move
4. Resource efficient Europe
5. An industrial policy for the globalisation era
6. An agenda for new skills and jobs
7. European platform against poverty

Regarding the contribution to the flagship initiatives the ADRION contributes to the following initiatives, as indicated in Table 3, above:

Priority axis 1 (TO 1) is contributing to the flagship initiatives for smart growth, 'Innovation Union' and is also linked to 'Resource efficient Europe' as well as to 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era'.

Priority axis 2 (TO 6) relates mainly to the flagship initiative 'Resource efficient Europe'.

Priority axis 3 (TO 7) contributes more indirectly to the flagship initiative 'Resource efficient Europe' as well as indirectly to the initiative 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era'.

Priority axis 4 (TO 11) contributes indirectly to all flagship initiatives.

Thematic focus

Based on an analysis of the territorial challenges and needs of the programme area, the ADRION programme has selected four thematic objectives with corresponding investment priorities (IP). The CPR recommends a focus on a maximum of four out of eleven defined thematic objectives. The ADRION Programme strategy fully complies with the provisions of the CPR.

Findings and recommendations

- The smart growth goal of Europe 2020 is covered in SO 1.1.
- SO 2.1 and 2.2 can make a contribution to the sustainability goal of Europe 2020.
- SO 3.1 can indirectly contribute to the Europe 2020 goals.
- SO 4.1, 5.1 and 5.2 are indirectly linked to all Europe 2020 goals.

The ADRION does not directly refer to the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy although it contributes at least to three of them.

2.1.2 Contribution to the needs of the region

Assessing whether the challenges and needs identified have been consistently translated into the objectives of the CP is an important aspect of the ex-ante evaluation.

Evaluation question:

- To what extent do the programme objectives and planned measures respond to the sectoral and territorial challenges and needs as identified in the analysis and presented in the SWOT table?

Assessment of the challenges and needs

The challenges and needs listed in the territorial analysis which accompanies the ADRION programme should provide the basis for justification of the CP strategy. In order to assess the provided challenges and needs the ex-ante evaluation compares existing documents with the challenges and needs identified in the Programme. The following documents have been taken into account:

- Partnership Agreements of Member States (MS)
- Progress Reports 2013
- Country strategy papers
- National Reform Programme (NRP) and country-specific recommendations.

Comparing the challenges and needs in relevant documents listed in Table 4 with the needs identified in the territorial analysis (see Table 5, below) we can see that the territorial analysis and the draft CP acknowledge to a large extent the specific needs expressed in the documents listed above, as indicated in the “evaluation” column of Table 5. However, a more coherent reference system could add value to the strategy.

Table 4: Transnational needs and challenges of Adriatic Ionian countries

References for EU objectives for EU28: Europe 2020 Strategy (headline targets & action fields)	Europe 2020 headline targets					Other relevant EU 2020 action fields	
	Employment	Innovation	Energy / environment	Education	Poverty / social exclusion	Competitiveness	Digital society
Specific ETC related needs and challenges in the Adriatic Ionian linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing transnational needs and challenges in the Adriatic Ionian Territorial Analysis Adriatic Ionian Strategy (EUSAIR)	High-skilled jobs Blue growth Diversified tourism offer	Research and innovation to boost high-skilled employment, growth and competitiveness	Energy networks Marine environment: coastal and marine biodiversity pollution of the sea Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	N/C*	N/C*	Promote research and innovation and high-skilled jobs	N/C*
Specific ETC related issues in Italy linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Italy: NRP 2013 Council recommendations Staff working paper EC position on partnership agreement Partnership agreement	Labour mobility	Improve SME's innovation competence Raise R&D capacity of SME	Climate change adaptation Risk prevention Joint management of environmental resources Energy efficiency Renewable energy	Quality of the education	Labour market segmentation Youth unemployment Women's participation in the labour market	Promote SME's internationalisation	Digital gap

References for EU objectives for EU28: Europe 2020 Strategy (headline targets & action fields)	Europe 2020 headline targets					Other relevant EU 2020 action fields	
	Employment	Innovation	Energy / environment	Education	Poverty / social exclusion	Competitiveness	Digital society
Specific ETC related issues in Slovenia linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Slovenia: NRP 2013 Council recommendations Staff working paper EC position on partnership agreement Partnership agreement	Reduce labour mobility barriers	Enhance 'knowledge triangle' between businesses, research & education Joint research with marketable objectives	Resource efficiency Environmental protection Climate change adaptation Removing transport bottlenecks	Vocational training	Labour market segmentation & flexibility Youth unemployment	Foster SME set up & development	N/C*
Specific ETC related issues in Croatia linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Croatia: Council recommendations Staff working paper Partnership agreement	Low labour market participation, especially of youth. Mismatch of labour market supply and demand.	Underdevelopment of knowledge based factors of growth. Inefficiency in turning R&D investments into patentable results and economic value	The share of renewable energy sources is below target and new investments are hindered by administrative constraints. Large investment needed to meet agreed targets on waste and water management. Protection of rich biodiversity.	Better vocational education and training outcomes and enhanced participation in education system.	Highest at-risk-of-poverty rate in EU Limited access to appropriate and quality community-based services to promote active inclusion. National minorities tend to face discrimination.	Overcome unfavourable business environment (and the transport and ICT networks hinder competitiveness).	Inefficient public administration on central and local level.

References for EU objectives for EU28: Europe 2020 Strategy (headline targets & action fields)	Europe 2020 headline targets					Other relevant EU 2020 action fields	
	Employment	Innovation	Energy / environment	Education	Poverty / social exclusion	Competitiveness	Digital society
Specific ETC related issues in Greece linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Greece: Council recommendations Staff working paper Partnership agreement	High unemployment, especially among the young and women.	Lagging behind in innovation.	Reduction in CO ₂ emissions, energy efficiency. Environmental protection.	Insufficiently developed life-long-learning. Weaknesses at all levels of educational provision.	Risks of poverty and social exclusion. High proportion at-risk-of-poverty.	Improve competitiveness of SMEs	Improve access to ITC, its use and quality
Specific ETC related issues in Serbia linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Serbia: Country Strategy Paper (Draft 21.3.2014) Progress Report 2013	Low labour market participation. Mismatch of supply and demand.	Improve quality and quantity of both public and private research and innovation.	Poor energy efficiency. Increase the use of renewable energy. Waste, water and wastewater management; air quality. Capacity for climate change action; reduced greenhouse gas emissions.	Reform the education and training system to better match with labour market needs.	Women, youth, Roma, low-skilled, people with disabilities are most disadvantaged in the labour market	Improve environment for doing business and the functioning of the business sector, especially SMEs.	Digital divide and the digital gap.

References for EU objectives for EU28: Europe 2020 Strategy (headline targets & action fields)	Europe 2020 headline targets					Other relevant EU 2020 action fields	
	Employment	Innovation	Energy / environment	Education	Poverty / social exclusion	Competitiveness	Digital society
Specific ETC related issues in Bosnia Herzegovina linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Bosnia Herzegovina: Country Strategy Paper (Draft 18.3.2014) Progress Report 2013	Extremely difficult labour market conditions. Very high unemployment; extremely high among the young population. Low labour market participation among women.	N/C*	N/C*	The education system does not respond sufficiently to labour market needs. Life-long learning concepts do not exist.	Refugees and internally displaced persons still have problems with economic reintegration and access to health care and social protection.	SME sector struggles to develop into a fully competitive force (administrative and regulatory burdens). Overcome obstacles for foreign investments (complex legal/regulatory framework).	Governance built on a highly decentralised and very costly structure undermining the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of public services.
Specific ETC related issues in Montenegro linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Montenegro: Country Strategy Paper [N/A] Progress Report 2013	Critical labour market situation. Low activity/employment rates, high unemployment.	Active participation in EU R & I programmes.	Adopt long-term plan for development of renewable energy sources. Lack of political priority and adequate financing and limited awareness of environmental and climate requirements.	Mismatch between skills available and needs. Improve links between different levels of education and training and other sectors.	Discrimination against people with disabilities. Equal opportunities.	Promote skills at all levels in sectors with significant trade with the EU.	N/C*

References for EU objectives for EU28: Europe 2020 Strategy (headline targets & action fields)	Europe 2020 headline targets					Other relevant EU 2020 action fields	
	Employment	Innovation	Energy / environment	Education	Poverty / social exclusion	Competitiveness	Digital society
Specific ETC related issues in Albania linked to Europe 2020 objectives							
References for assessing ETC related needs and challenges in Albania: Country Strategy Paper Albania (Draft 20.2.2014) Progress Report 2013	Not sufficiently developed human resources in terms of skills, competences and qualifications in line with labour market needs.	N/C*	Build capacities for managing the environment sector Operate and maintain existing and new infrastructures in a sustainable way	Improved access and quality in education and training for young people and adults linked to economic development, employment and social inclusion.	Inadequate provision of social services in support of disadvantaged population, particularly minority groups.	Unclear weak law enforcement especially regarding contracts and a high perception of corruption, Limited access to business services and credit.	N/C*

* Not covered in the reference documents

Table 5: Evaluation of needs defined in the territorial analysis

Main needs	Evaluation
Innovative and smart region	
• Increased adoption of innovation and technologies by SMEs • Increased cooperation between research and industry • Need to focus on food security issues • Commercialisation/Utilisation of research (innovation); • Development of smart specialisation strategies and examination of synergies among the various countries and regions • More emphasis on new innovation areas and approaches; • Exchange of best practice of public administration technologies, in e-governance. • Innovation management support • Development of technology transfer activities	Needs are very broad however the following issues could be incorporated: • Underdevelopment of knowledge based factors of growth. • Inefficiency in turning R&D investments into patentable results and economic value • Enhance 'knowledge triangle' between businesses, research & education • Joint research with marketable objectives
Sustainable region	
• Need to turn towards a post fossil and low carbon economy allowing the four member states to further focus on the decoupling of their economies, while assisting the IPA countries to master the transition of their economies in that direction • Need to diversify the RES potential and to enhance local approaches • Need to conciliate energy production with aims of protecting nature, landscape and biodiversity, with touristic interests and the various interests of local residents • Need to mobilise the cultural landscape and the richness of biodiversity as key assets of the area providing high quality of life and global attractiveness • Need to manage manmade environmental pressure • Need to manage the high environmental vulnerability • Need to manage increased land and resources consumption • Need to integrate Ecosystem Services, Blue and Green Growth principles in regional development planning and establish sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets • Need to elaborate common indicators and statistics to measure tourism demand and offer • Need to share commons tools to measure environmental impact of tourism activities (water, soil, waste)	Needs are covering a wide range of different fields and meet the needs listed in Table 4.

Main needs	Evaluation
Connected region	
• Need to strengthen administrative capacity especially in the areas of maritime, inland-water transport and logistics • Need to share methodologies for collecting data and common indicators to monitor transport and accessibility conditions • need to simplify maritime transport procedures and to harmonize inland National transport legislations • Need to improve the port Greening (monitoring system for the quality of emissions by Shipping activities, adoption of common quality standards etc.)	There are few needs listed related to thematic objective 7. No specific recommendations are made in country position papers.
Towards a better governance of the EUSAIR	
The countries and regions in this area are distinguished by their individual level of development, needs and institutional capacities. Need to respond in a coordinated way to the development needs of the Adriatic Ionian Region, especially due to heterogeneity of administrative and institutional capacities, different political structures and governance systems.	Needs for this PA are not defined in the territorial analysis. However, a new sub-section in the "Description of the cooperation programme's strategy" section of the Final Draft CP deals explicitly with the EUSAIR governance needs.

Findings and recommendations

- The territorial analysis and the CP acknowledge to a large extent the specific needs of the region.
- Challenges and needs should be oriented along the choice of thematic objectives to be more comprehensible.
- Needs concerning PA 4 are not defined in the territorial analysis but, in line with the recommendations of the draft final ex-ante report, are covered explicitly in the ADRION Cooperation Programme.

Assessment of the ADRION contribution to the needs identified by the territorial assessment

In order to facilitate the assessment of the ADRION programme's contribution to the needs of the programme area, we have brought together in Table 6, below, the SOs and interventions envisaged in the draft CP with the justification for their selection. For each SO and its corresponding interventions, we provide an assessment as to whether and how far they could address the corresponding needs of the region. However it should be noted that there is no explicit link between the identified needs and SWOT analysis, and the PAs and SOs established in the CP.

Table 6: Relevance of interventions to the needs of the region⁶

	Justification	Indicative actions	Assessment of SO and interventions related to needs
PA 1	Relevant to IP-1b	SO 1.1: Support the development of a regional innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area	
SO 1.1	• Need to improve innovation capacities, competitiveness and internationalisation of SMEs confronted with international competition (tourism, agribusiness, creative industries, fisheries...) • Need to improve cooperation between actors of the quadruple helix, especially between research and businesses enterprises, R&D centres and higher education; and supporting networking, clusters and open innovation • Need to strengthen growth sectors representing important jobs potential • Need to support new innovation areas and approaches (Eco Innovation; Public Procurement for Innovation; Creative Industry; Service Industry and Social Innovation) in a context of strong economic crisis and tight public budgets	• Formation of transnational innovation networks in order to visualise the possible options for transnational cooperation for innovation in the ADRION area, identify the sectors to develop innovation activities, the mapping of the existing research and innovation resources and the coordination with the EUSAIR, regional and national RIS3 strategies, innovation governance initiatives and competence networks • Analysis of the framework conditions for innovation (legal, financial, administrative, technical, social, cultural and environmental) in order to define the "feasible domain" for innovation in the ADRION area and to develop operational typologies • Development of framework structures related to the consultation on legal, intellectual property, technical and financial issues and provision of related services especially for SMEs (including start-ups, spin-offs, collaborations), such as the support for Identifying access schemes to financial engineering for proof of concept mechanisms for start-ups. • Development of actions for raising competencies/skills of the stakeholders specially focusing on the involvement of partners from candidate and potential candidate countries including education and training concepts for the uptake and diffusion of innovation and circular knowledge management promoting the mobility of Researchers and PhD candidates in the ADRION region • Development of platforms for Knowledge sharing (knowledge innovative communities, data clouds) and formation of functional networks of joint distributed research facilities • Development of transnational "quadruple helix" clusters in common interest fields	The specific objective is very broadly held however it covers a wide range of different needs listed.

⁶ Based on Table 1 of Final Draft ADRION CP and relevant sections on indicative actions to be supported under each Specific Objective

	Justification	Indicative actions	Assessment of SO and interventions related to needs
	• Need to stimulate the adoption of innovation and technologies by the SME • Development of smart specialisation strategies by the use of RIS3 results; • Need to promote the Innovation management support (IP advise, tech-transfer, prototyping, demonstrators, etc.);	addressing all stages of the innovation cycle including idea generation, conception and prototyping, transfer, patenting, commercialisation etc. • Development of transnational models for the design, testing, up-scaling, comparison and evaluation of innovations (policies, tools, processes, actors, organisations and interfaces) • Development of transnationally designed products, services, investment models and funding support instruments of business support centres, chambers of commerce, public administration and financing institutions • Development of strategies, schemes and tools for improving creativity and innovative approaches in the whole spectrum of the society including education, social services health, volunteer organisations and social enterprises • Building up transnational network for the transfer of knowledge among Public Administration on technological solutions	Indicative actions should be more targeted towards the needs: • Some of the indicative actions are merely covering the same or similar kinds of projects and could be merged • It would increase the value added if specific innovation fields would be targeted with the indicative actions. More project examples would help the focus.

	Justification	Indicative actions	Assessment of SO and interventions related to needs
PA2	Relevant to TO 6	SO2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area	
SO 2.1	- High cultural and environmental resources in ADRION regions threatened by human activities - High pressure of tourism activities and urbanisation, especially in the coastal areas of the ADRION regions ((sustainable tourism) - Increased pressure on natural resources due to the combination of human activities and environmental changes (especially climate change) - Increased pressure on water resources from a quantitative and qualitative point of view	- Creation of transnational networks and working groups for the definition of the principles of ADRION sustainable valorisation and tourism and the development of an ADRION brand - Creation of transnational networks and working groups for the identification of challenges and trends in the tourism sector including marketing, management of increased tourist flows, including joint analysis of tourism, trends and their potential impact, joint access to new tourism markets, business opportunities and dissemination of new technologies and know-how - Development of actions for raising competencies/skills cultural heritage preservation on sustainable tourism and tourism management of the stakeholders specially focusing on the involvement of actors from small tourism locations and facilities - Formulation of implementation strategies, set up and test of clusters and models to better preserve capitalize and innovate cultural and natural heritage and either combine them with tourism or maintain them for their intrinsic value by enterprises, research institutions, NGOs and local population using exchange of experiences, mutual learning and pilot activities - Building up of transnational networks and working groups and development of tools and pilots to monitor, evaluate and mitigate the environmental and social pressures and impacts and the risks for and by tourism - Set up, test and implementation of negotiation, mediation, participation and conflict resolution models in the context of tourism, culture preservation, local needs and aspirations and economic growth in the context of cultural and natural heritage, especially for land uses in coastal zones - Organisation of knowledge transfer, exchange of good practice examples, networking and development of innovations concerning also the immaterial cultural heritage and related to the creative industries - Development of distinct and diversified tourism products such as transnational thematic tourism clusters and routes (e.g. monasteries routes, ancient heritage, wine routes, ADRION area routes etc.); seasonal variations of tourism offer (e.g. off season arrivals for	The SO does reflect the needs of the region. Indicative actions are very broad however in order to improve the following suggestions are given: - Some of the indicative actions are merely covering the same or similar kinds of projects and could be merged, - Possible project examples would help the focus.

	Justification	Indicative actions	Assessment of SO and interventions related to needs
		spring and autumn tourism for elder groups also in the context of climate change); offers for special interest groups (e.g. sailing, diving, mountaineering, history hobbyists, attracting visitors to inland destinations etc.); use of IT applications to generate interest on the heritage and Adriatic-Ionian Region; development of an integrated and coordinated approach to heritage and cultural tourism • Development of sustainable tourism models focusing on low carbon, low ecological footprint, "slow food", involvement of young people and volunteers and other alternative offerings in line with the natural and cultural heritage in line with the ADRION brand • Small scale investments and demonstration projects for the provision of innovative services and products in the touristic sector, for specific forms of tourism, like cultural tourism, thematic tourism, elder citizens' services, etc.	
PA 2	Relevant to TO 6	SO2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area	
SO 2.2	• High environmental resource in the ADRION regions threatened by human activities • Pressure on the biodiversity and development of invasive species • Pressure on water quality with direct consequences on the biodiversity • Crucial role of the environment in the attractiveness and economic development of ADRION regions	• Formation of transnational frameworks and platforms for the interoperability of existing databases, promotion of data availability, observatory functions and the integration of management approaches (hazard and risk assessment, planning methodologies, management plans, sustainability and adaptation assessments etc.) • Development of implementation strategies, set up models and test pilot activities and transnational, regional and intercommunity cooperation of risk management (risk assessment, risk communication, risk managing measures and hazard prevention) and climate change adaptation in terrestrial and aquatic environments • Implement research and evaluation activities through the development of a common monitoring and assessment reference framework and the deployment of advanced tools for mapping, diagnosing, protecting and managing terrestrial and maritime landscapes and habitats including awareness-raising and environmental education • Formation of transnational networks and working groups for increasing marine knowledge in order to ensure a sound basis for related planning actions and implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, including Deep Sea Resources Monitoring & Surveillance and Management and Mapping of threats to coastal and marine biodiversity	The SO does reflect the needs of the region. Indicative actions are very broad however in order to improve the following suggestions are given: • Some of the indicative actions are merely covering the same or similar kinds of projects and could be merged, • More project examples would help the focus. • References to previous projects where a follow up would be of added value would be an improvement

	Justification	Indicative actions	Assessment of SO and interventions related to needs
		• Formation of transnational networks and working groups for the development of transnational Special Spatial Plans (e.g. on RES, on tourism, on agriculture and forestry), Maritime Spatial Planning, Multiannual Fishery Management Plans and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans and Procedures • Formation of transnational networks and working groups for the development of transnational terrestrial and maritime protected areas and habitats and integration thereof in the tourism product of the ADRION area • Development of transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems for identifying, managing and preventing localised and diffuse pollution from various sources (oil spills from maritime transport and marine litter in general, coastal industries and discharges, accidents, nitrates from agriculture, organic load from aquaculture, noise, light- and wastewater-pollution from tourism hotspots, landfills, soil contamination etc.) • Development of transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems for forecasting, managing and preventing natural and manmade hazards (forest fires, sea and river floods, industrial accidents, droughts, storms, algal blooms, earthquakes erosion and etc.) • Formation of transnational frameworks and platforms for the harmonisation and enforcement of national laws and EU legislation (e.g. implementation of the EU Flood directive (2007/60), with special attention on coastal urban areas and trans-boundary issues, the joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response and interoperability of civil protection mechanisms and organisations • Formation of transnational frameworks and platforms for the exchange of best practices, the experimentation and piloting with new innovative and integrated approaches (e.g. integrated and sustainable management of protected areas with cultural heritage as a powerful asset for inclusive economic development) approaches and the evaluation of existing and perspective methods and procedures in order to develop an ADRION environmental protection knowledge base and promotion of the topics in the society and especially among the youth.	

	Justification	Indicative actions	Assessment of SO and interventions related to needs
PA 3	Relevant to TO 7	SO 3.1 Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area	
SO 3.1	• Need to reduce the environmental impact of transport by increasing multimodality and shift to most appropriate environmental friendly modes of transport • Need to collect information and improving procedures for waste management and pollution created by so-called "environmentally friendly" transport modes, such as inland and maritime navigation. • Need to improve the logistic chain of all import-exports transport activities • Need to improve the border cross point transit for all the non EU borders where administrative and organization bottlenecks produce substantial delays in the travel scheduling • Need to invest on ICT management for all freight transport activities • Need to enhance the water –rail intermodal platform both for maritime ports and inland waterway port • Need to reinforce the ICT application for making open and easier the access to info transport and implement all the intermodal opportunities for the passengers mobility	• Setting up of transnational frameworks, platforms and networks for the identification of existing potentials and obstacles in the fields of integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality (mapping of resources, studies, pilots and strategies, market demand e.g. for freight routes and product development assessments, prerequisites and "soft" factors for implementation and the ex-ante assessment of the maturity and the anticipated socioeconomic and environmental impacts and the monitoring of the outcomes of integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality nodes • Development of research to administration networks and cooperation structures for the development of joint approaches and instruments in the field of maritime transport such as a modern ship reporting system in the Adriatic Sea (Common Adriatic-Ionian Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System ADRIREP), motorways of the sea, and related port infrastructures and ITS (Intelligent Transport System) • Building up of networks and working groups for the standardisation of legal requirements, technical specifications and capacity building in the field of planning and environmental impact assessment of intermodal transport investments and related operation and logistics services along with related communication activities • Formation of networks and working groups on relevant issues for the design, coordination and operation of integrated environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality structures especially in Metropolises, Functional Urban Areas and in areas of land use pressure (e.g. coasts) • Support the transfer and uptake of existing local/regional solution and instruments and shape a framework for capitalisation of on-going technological innovation for a more sustainable organisation of environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality nodes and new technologies applications • Study, design and test operational, technological and funding models for the preparation of infrastructure investments for environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality	The SO does reflect the needs of the region. Indicative actions are very broad however in order to improve the following suggestions are given: • Some of the indicative actions are merely covering the same or similar kinds of projects and could be merged • References to previous projects where a follow up would be of value added would be an improvement

	Justification	Indicative actions	Assessment of SO and interventions related to needs
		Development of transnational platforms for the coordination of environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and infrastructures taking in account the possibilities offered by modern technologies, environmental and seasonal constraints and the synergies of the demand by tourism, resident population and economic operators	
PA 4	Relevant to TO 11	SO 4.1 Facilitate the coordination and implementation of the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities.	
SO 4.1	- Need to ensure good governance of the EUSAIR and to coordinate other existing and future macro regional - Need to put in place good and stable governance mechanisms and support to national coordinators. - Need to ensure involvement of the stakeholders from all levels in capacity building for the strategy implementation (national, regional, local), - Need to strengthen the capacity for territorial analysis based on solid data collection through a common platform, need to accompany project ideas to become projects, e.g. via a common platform and to identify new joint projects. - Need for identification and coordination of all possible funding sources for joint projects, as the stakeholders tend to lack knowledge about the different funding sources.	- Establish an operational tool for the EUSAIR governance: the Facility Point based in coastal region of Slovenia and its network of Liaison points in partner countries. - Provide operational support to the key EUSAIR governance actors and stakeholders in their respective roles, which may include: - Assisting the governing board and thematic steering groups in their day to day roles - Facilitating the development and functioning of the stakeholders platform - Ensuring communication, information, visibility, awareness raising - Facilitating policy debates and sharing of experiences - Supporting of the building of the knowledge base - Supporting the preparation of strategic macro-regional projects in coordination with the Steering groups - Facilitating a dialogue with bodies in charge of implementation of programmes/financial instruments on alignment of funding for implementation of the Pillar projects	The SO does reflect the need of the regions. Indicative actions are very broad however and tentatively formulated and in order to improve the following suggestions are given: - Some of the indicative actions are merely covering the same kind of projects and could be merged - There should be a clear distinction between this PA and the technical assistance PA, as there are considerable similarities in their respective indicative actions.

Findings and recommendations:

- Table 1 of the CP (“Justification of the selection of TO & IP”) does not fully reflect the challenges and needs listed in the table headed “Summary of the main challenges and needs of the ADRION area” in the territorial analysis. There has to be a consistency between the two lists of needs and challenges.
- Establishing a clear and logical path linking the needs and SWOT analysis to the strategy (PAs and SOs) is essential.
- Some of the indicative actions are merely covering the same or similar kinds of projects and could be merged.
- Possible project examples have been included, in line with the recommendations of the interim ex-ante report, and more examples could be incorporated in the list of indicative actions to sharpen their focus.

2.2 Assessment of the external coherence

Transnational cooperation programmes are ‘policy catalysts’ and ‘policy developers’, and linkages and synergies with national and regional programmes are crucial. Therefore, it is important to assess the ‘degree of coherence’ and furthermore signpost potential operational links among the ADRION and other policies and programmes operating on the same territory in 2014 – 2020 period.

Main evaluation questions:

- How does the programme contribute to transnational and national strategies?
- Are there any overlaps and duplication with other policy instruments?
- To what extent the formulated intervention logic secures that the selected measures will contribute to the achievement of the regional, national and EU goals?

The evaluation is structured at two levels:

- Coherence with Partnership Agreements and National Strategies
- Coherence with other strategies and programmes.

2.2.1 Coherence with Partnership Agreements and National Strategies

A key consideration is the coherence of the CP strategy with national strategies represented in the case of EU Member States with the Partnership Agreements for the 2014-2020 period.

There are variations as to how the Partnership Agreements address transnational cooperation and in their status (currently, only the Partnership Agreement for Greece has been approved). The Partnership Agreement for Italy presents a detailed annex of expected results that are of relevance to EUSAIR/ ADRION. The other Partnership Agreements express national priorities as reflected (or expected to do so) in the EUSAIR/ ADRION. Some of the Partnership Agreements (e.g. for Italy and Slovenia) also offer concrete examples of actions or results of common interest.

It is possible to establish an overall picture of thematic areas where national priorities and ADRION priorities coincide. Table 7 presents the TOs covered by the PAs and shows that they include the TOs selected by ADRION. In the case of Italy an analysis of the group of 14 regional operational programmes (ROP) of participating regions/provinces offers a more accurate input. TO 1 is covered by all ROPs and TO 6 by the majority of the ROPs. However, TO 7 is covered by only five out of 14 ROPs and TO 11 by seven ROPs (see Table 9).

The equivalent exercise for non-EU countries in Table 8 is based on tentative approximations of priorities defined in the Country Strategy Papers (CSP) to TOs and indicates a not good fit between ADRION and CSPs in the case of TO 3, TO 8 and TO 9.

Table 7: Coherence between national strategies of EU Member States and ADRION

Thematic objectives	Croatia	Greece	Italy	Slovenia	Assessment
TO 1	√	√	√	√	The selected TOs for the ADRION are highlighted in 'blue'. They are included in the TOs covered in the PAs of all Member States.
TO 2	√	√	√		
TO 3	√	√	√	√	
TO 4	√	√	√	√	
TO 5	√	√	√		
TO 6	√	√	√	√	
TO 7	√	√	√	√	
TO 8	√	√	√	√	
TO 9	√	√	√	√	
TO 10	√	√	√	√	
TO 11	√	√	√	√	

Table 8: Coherence between national strategies on non-EU countries and ADRION

Thematic objectives	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro	Serbia	Assessment
TO 1	√	√	√	√	The selected TOs for the ADRION are highlighted in 'blue'. There is generally no good correspondence with national priorities in TO 3, TO 8 and TO 9 (and TO 6 and TO 7 in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina).
TO 2					
TO 3	√	√	√	√	
TO 4					
TO 5			√	√	
TO 6	√		√	√	
TO 7	√		√	√	
TO 8	√	√	√	√	
TO 9	√	√	√	√	
TO 10					
TO 11	√	√	√	√	

Table 9: Coherence between Italian ROP and ADRION

Thematic objectives	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Sicilia	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Calabria	Regional Programmes ERDF Basilicata	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Puglia	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Molise	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Abruzzo	Regional Programmes ERDF Marche	Regional Programmes ERDF Umbria	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Emilia Romagna	Regional Programmes ERDF Lombardia	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Veneto	Regional Programmes ERDF/ESF Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Regional Programmes ERDF Bolzano	Regional Programmes ERDF Trento
TO 1	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1b	1a, 1b	1b	1a, 1b	1b	1a, 1b	1b
TO 2	2a, 2b, 2c	2a, 2b, 2c	2a, 2b, 2c	2a, 2b, 2c	2c	2c	2a, 2c	2a, 2b, 2c	2a, 2c		2a, 2b, 2c		2a, 2b, 2c	
TO 3	3a, 3b, 3c	3a, 3b, 3c, 3d	3a, 3b, 3c, 3d	3a, 2a, 2b, 2c	3b, 3c, 3d	3b, 3c, 3d	3b, 3c,	3b, 3c, 3d	3b, 3c, 3d, 3e	3a,3b, 3c, 3d	3a, 3b, 3c, 3d	3a, 3b, 3c, 3d		3a, 3c
TO 4	4a, 4c, 4g, 4e,	4c, 4g, 4d, 4e,	4a, 4b,4c, 4g, 4e,	4b,4c, 4d, 4e,	4b,4c, 4d, 4e,	4c, 4d, 4e, 4g	4a, 4b,4c, 4e,	4b,4c, 4d, 4e,		4c. 4e	4b, 4c, 4d, 4g, 4e	4c. 4e	4c. 4f	4b, 4c
TO 5	5b	5a, 5b	5a, 5b	5b			5b				5b		5b	
TO 6	6b, 6c, 6e, 6f	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6c	6c, 6d	6c, 6d,	6c	6c, 6e	6c		6c		
TO 7	7b, 7c	7b, 7c,	7b, 7c, 7d	7b, 7c, 7d	7b, 7c, 7d									
TO 8		8i, 8ii, 8v, 8vii			8i, 8v, 8vii									
TO 9	9a, 9b	9a, 9b, 9i, 9ii, 9iv, 9vi	9a, 9b, 9c	9a, 9b, 9d, 9i, 9i, 9ii, 9iv, 9vi	9i, 9v	9a				9b	9b			
TO 10	10	10	10	10	10									
TO 11	11	11	11	11		11	11		11		11			

Table 10: Coherence between Greek ROP and ADRION

Thematic objective	Ανατολική Μακεδονία, Θράκη (Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki)	Κεντρική Μακεδονία (Kentriki Makedonia)	Δυτική Μακεδονία (Dytiki Makedonia)	Θεσσαλία (Thessalia)	Ήπειρος (Ipeiros)	Ιόνια Νησιά (Ionia Nisia)	Δυτική Ελλάδα (Dytiki Ellada)	Στερεά Ελλάδα (Sterea Ellada)	Πελοπόννησος (Peloponnisos)	Αττική (Attiki)	Βόρειο Αιγαίο (Voreio Aigaio)	Νότιο Αιγαίο (Notio Aigaio)	Κρήτη (Kriti)
TO 1	1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1b	1a, 1b	1a, 1b	1b
TO 2	2c	2b, 2c	2c	2b, 2c	2c	2b, 2c	2b	2b, 2c	2b, 2c	2b, 2c	2b, 2c	2b, 2c	2b, 2c
TO 3	3a, 3d	3a, 3c, 3d	3a, 3d	3a, 3b, 3c, 3d	3a, 3b, 3c	3a, 3c	3a, 3c, 3d	3a, 3c, 3d	3a, 3c, 3d	3a, 3c, 3d	3a, 3b, 3d	3a, 3c, 3d	3a, 3c
TO 4	4a, 4c	4c, 4e	4b, 4c, 4f	4c, 4e, 4f	4c, 4e	4c	4b, 4c, 4e	4c, 4e	4c	4b, 4c, 4g	4b, 4c, 4e	4c, 4e	4c, 4f
TO 5	5b	5a	5b	5a	5a, 5b	5a, 5b	5a, 5b	5a, 5b	5a	5a, 5b	5a	5b	5b
TO 6	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6g	6a, 6b, 6c, 6e	6a, 6b, 6c, 6e	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e
TO 7	7a, 7b, 7e	7a, 7b	7a, 7b	7a, 7b, 7c	7b, 7c	7b, 7c	7a, 7b, 7c, 7e	7b, 7c	7b, 7c	7a, 7b, 7c	7b, 7c	7a, 7b	7b
TO 8	8iii	8ii, 8iii, 8v	8iii	8iii, 8v	8i, 8v	8i, 8iii, 8v	8i, 8iii, 8v	8iii, 8v	8iii, 8v	8iii, 8v	8iii, 8v	8i, 8iii, 8v	8iii, 8v
TO 9	9a, 9i, 9ii, 9iv, 9v	9a, 9c, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9c, 9d, 9i, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9d, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v	9a, 9c, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v	9a, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi	9a, 9i, 9ii, 9iii, 9iv, 9v, 9vi
TO 10	10	10a	10a	10a	10a	10a	10a	10a	10a	10a	10a	10	10
TO 11													

2.2.2 Coherence with other strategies and programmes

Coherence with macro-regional strategies and other ETC programmes

The ADRION, as a transnational cooperation programme, is clearly focused on supporting the corresponding transnational strategy, namely EUSAIR. The PAs and SOs of the ADRION refer to EUSAIR topics in section 4.4 of the CP. Therefore, the recommendations proposed in Table 11 of the 2nd ex-ante interim report have been incorporated in the CP.

Table 11: Comparison between EUSAIR pillars/topics and ADRION PAs/SOs

EUSAIR		ADRION	
Pillar	Topic	Priority Axis	Specific Objective
Blue Growth	Blue technologies Fisheries and aquaculture Maritime and marine governance and services	PA 1: Innovative Region	SO 1.1: Support the development of a regional Innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area
Environmental Quality	The marine environment Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	PA 2: Sustainable Region	SO 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area
Sustainable Tourism	Diversified tourism offer Sustainable and responsible tourism management		SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area
Connecting the Region	Maritime transport Intermodal connections to the hinterland	PA 3: Connected Region	SO 3.1: Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area
Cross-cutting aspects:	Capacity building for efficient implementation. Research and innovation to boost high-skilled employment, growth and competitiveness.	PA 4: Towards a better governance of the EUSAIR	SO 4.1: Facilitate the coordination and implementation of the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities.
		PA 5: Technical Assistance	SO 5.1: Actions to increase in efficiency and effectiveness the management and implementation of the cooperation programme
			SO 5.2: Actions to improve the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the programme implementation

Regarding other macro-regional strategies and transnational programmes, there are some significant territorial and thematic overlaps between the Adriatic-Ionian and Danube macro-regions and future ETC programmes. Most of the selected investment priorities under the draft Danube CP (five out of seven) have also been selected by the ADRIION (1b, 6c, 6d, 7c, 11). Since a majority of ADRIION partner countries (SI, HR, RS, BH, MNE) participate in both strategies and programmes, it would be possible for the same actions (e.g. flood safety, as indicated in Slovenia's Partnership Agreement, p. 156, for both EUSAIR and the EUSDR⁷) to be pursued by the same partnerships of beneficiaries under both programmes.

Again the ADRIION provides references to the EUSDR Priority Areas (see Table 12, below). The table does also indicate the relevance for the European macro-regional strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) which is not yet formulated and exists only as a draft with proposed thematic pillars.

Table 12: Relation between ADRIION, EUSDR and EUSALP

ADRIION		EUSDR	EUSALP
PA	Specific Objective	Priority Area	Thematic pillars
PA 1	SO 1.1: Support the development of innovation networks and clusters among regions, academia and enterprises in the ADRIION region	2: Energy 8: Competitiveness 9: People & Skills	Ensuring sustainable growth and promoting full employment, competitiveness and innovation by consolidating and diversifying specific economic activities with a view to reinforcing mutual solidarity between mountain and urban areas Promoting environmentally friendly mobility, reinforced academic cooperation, development of services, transports and communication infrastructures policy
PA 2	SO 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the ADRIION Region	2: Energy 3: Culture & Tourism 4: Water Quality 5: Environmental Risks 6: Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils	Promoting sustainable management of energy and natural and cultural resources and protecting the environment and preserving biodiversity and natural areas
	SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the ADRIION Region		
PA 3	SO 3.1: Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the ADRIION Region	1A Mobility Waterways 1B: Mobility Rail-Road-Air	Promoting environmentally friendly mobility, reinforced academic cooperation, development of services, transports and communication infrastructures policy

⁷ EU Strategy for the Danube Region

ADRION		EUSDR	EUSALP
PA	Specific Objective	Priority Area	Thematic pillars
PA 4	SO 4.1: Facilitate the coordination in implementing the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities.	10: Institutional capacity and cooperation	Not yet defined

This overlap is even more pronounced in the case of the MED Cooperation Programme. All but one of the ADRION partner countries are covered also by the MED CP (the exception being Serbia) and investment priorities selected under the MED CP (1b, 6c, 6d, 11) have also been selected by the ADRION. However ADRION is recognising the need for coordination between ADRION, Balkan Med, MED, and Danube in terms of objectives and results when implementing its capitalisation activities, strategic projects and in self-evaluation.

There is less of a risk of duplication between transnational and cross-border programmes due to the different nature of the actions that are typically supported. However, significant thematic and territorial overlaps may occur, as shown in Tables 5 and 6, which are using information from the draft Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA) CBC and ETC CBC programmes, as they became available in parallel with the preparation of the ADRION.

Table 13: Coherence between Thematic Priorities in IPA-CBC programmes and ADRION *

Thematic priorities		AL-MNE	BH-MNE	RS-BH	RS-MNE	HR-RS	HR-BH-MNE	GR-AL	IT-AL-MNE
TP 1	Promoting employment, labour, mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border	√	√	√	√	√	√		
TP 2	Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
TP 3	Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures							√	√
TP 4	Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Thematic priorities		AL-MNE	BH-MNE	RS-BH	RS-MNE	HR-RS	HR-BH-MNE	GR-AL	IT-AL-MNE
TP 5	Investing in youth, education and skills								
TP 6	Promoting local and regional governance, planning and administrative capacity building								
TP 7	Enhancing competitiveness, business and SME development, trade and investment					√	√	√	√
TP 8	Strengthening research, technological development, innovation and ICT								

* Thematic priorities equivalent to TOs selected for the ADRION are highlighted in blue

Table 14: Coherence between ETC-CBC programmes and ADRION *

Thematic objectives	IT-HR	SI-HR**	IT-SI	GR-IT
TO 1	1b		N/A	1b
TO 2			N/A	
TO 3			N/A	3a
TO 4	4c, 4e		N/A	
TO 5	5a, 5b	5b	N/A	
TO 6	6c, 6d, 6f	6c, 6d	N/A	6c, 6d, 6f
TO 7	7c		N/A	7b, 7c
TO 8			N/A	
TO 9			N/A	
TO 10			N/A	
TO 11		11a	N/A	

* TOs selected for the ADRION are highlighted in blue

** Selection of TOs not finalised (provisional information).

2.2.3 Coherence with other ESI Funds programmes and other relevant policies and programmes

Besides the coherence with ESI Funds the contribution of the CP to other policies and instruments should also be assessed. Therefore the ex-ante evaluation lists the most relevant policies in Table 15 and assesses its recognition in the draft ADRION programme.

Table 15: Coherence with other relevant policies and programmes

Documents	ADRION				
	PA 1	PA 2		PA 3	PA 4
	SO 1.1	SO 2.1	SO 2.2	SO 3.1	SO 4.1
Horizon 2020					
Life					
COSME					
Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020					
Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020					
Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe					
Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050					
Danube Region Strategy					
Adriatic Ionian Strategy					

	Integration
	Acknowledgment
	Neutral
	Conflict

In section 6 of the ADRION it is described how other ESI Funds and other EU Funds are considered in the implementation of the programme. The coordination will be assured with the following measures:

- Applicants proposing actions with a focus on investment preparation will have to explain how to link to other national and regional programmes of the Investments for Growth and Jobs goal supported by the ERDF and ESF as well as with the Cohesion Fund, EAFRD (in particular with reference to the Leader initiative) and EMFF programmes
- National coordination committees (or other mechanisms/bodies as provided by national rules) supporting the Monitoring Committee (MC) members will involve representatives of institutions participating in the implementation of national and regional programmes supported by the ESI funds, seeking (to the possible extent) to achieve coordination at all stages of the programme's lifetime.
- The MA and the JS in cooperation with the ADRION network of national contact points will communicate outputs and results of ADRION operations through relevant tools and measures implemented both at the transnational and national levels as defined in the programme communication strategy.

The coordination with other than ESI Funds entails the following:

- When submitting proposals, applicants will have to describe the coherence and complementarity with other EU instruments of relevance for the topics addressed by the proposals, within the application form. Evidence of the added value brought by transnational cooperation has to be demonstrated in particular with regard to HORIZON 2020, COSME, LIFE+, the Connecting Europe Facility, Creative Europe and Erasmus for all. Multi-annual and annual work programmes as well as guidelines developed within these instruments shall be considered by applicants when submitting proposals.
- Exchanges with and advice from the Commission services and other European and national institutions involved in the management of Union instruments will be sought by the MA and JS in order to exchange good practice and to jointly spread information targeting common relevant stakeholders. A particular potential to activate synergies is seen with the Commission's thematic Directorates-General (especially in the fields of R&D, SME development and entrepreneurship, Tourism, Environment, Energy) and with European agencies
- Communication tools and measures will be set in place by the MA and the JS in cooperation with the network of national contact points to allow for communicating outputs and results achieved by ADRION operations in order to make them available to thematic stakeholders addressed by Union instruments. Where applicable, national points of contact of EU programmes (e.g. LIFE+, HORIZON 2020, etc.) will be directly involved in national and transnational information events organised by the Programme.
- The ADRION Facility Point to be set up under the PA4 "Supporting the governance of the EUSAIR" will play a key role in collecting data, sharing knowledge and networking all the potential funding instruments acting in the ADRION Programme area.

The ADRION Programme will seek coordination through the following measures:

- The ADRION Facility Point will make available outputs and results achieved by the funded projects to national and local stakeholders involved in IPA and ENI initiatives
- Managing authorities and joint secretariats of IPA and ETC CBC programmes will be addressed by the ADRION Programme improving exchanges of information on applications and approved operations, in order to activate synergies between complementary operations being implemented at the EU external border

The proposed procedure seems to be sufficient and in line with the requirements of the ETC regulation.

2.2.4 Main findings of the external coherence evaluation

Main findings and recommendations

- The TOs selected for ADRION are generally in line with the priorities included in the PAs/national strategies of most partner countries.
- Regarding ADRION's relationship with EUSAIR the recommendations proposed in Table 11 of the 2nd ex-ante interim report have been incorporated in the CP. ADRION also provides references to other macro-regional strategies (section 4.4. of the ADRION) according to the recommendation of the 2nd interim report.
- ADRION recognises the need for coordination with other transnational CPs with overlapping membership of partner countries. Nevertheless, it would be possible for some actions to be pursued by the same partnerships of beneficiaries under the ADRION and other programmes, notably EUSDR and MED.
- Other EU programmes have been taken into account in the CP and a methodology is provided for considering them in the programme implementation phase.
- A detailed description of the coordination procedures between different EU Funds (including HORIZON 2020, COSME and LIFE) should be given in the relevant implementation documents.

2.3 Assessment of the internal coherence

The evaluation of the internal coherence included the analysis of links between specific objectives of each priority axes and interrelations between priority axes. The evaluation assessed if the specific objectives are coherent and overlaps and duplications have been avoided. Furthermore specific objectives should not contradict each other.

The main evaluation questions are:

- How are specific objectives translated into actions and how do they affect the interventions foreseen under the other priorities?
- Who is not reached by any intervention, although identified as a relevant potential beneficiary? What kind of gaps are there? How can these gaps be filled?
- Do the measures serve the defined specific objectives relevant for the programme?
- How are different measures related to each other? Are there any overlaps or gaps?

The specific objectives are generally in line with the regulations however some suggestions of terminology is given in order to underline the difference between objectives and interventions. Some of the specific objectives are defined as interventions rather than objectives (see Table 16).

Table 16: Definition of the specific objectives

Specific objectives	Assessment	
SO1.1: Support the development of a regional innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area	The SO does not express an objective rather than an intervention. The SO should clearly define objectives which lead to a future result. (Suggestion: <u>increased</u> development of networks and clusters among regions, academia and enterprises forming a regional innovation system in the ADRION region on a sustainable basis) • In case of change of terms the SO does define a positive change • The SO does not target a specific sector • The SO does not specify a specific territorial dimension	
SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area	• The SO does not express an objective rather than an intervention and should be reformulated. The term 'promote' should be reconsidered in this respect. The expression valorisation needs to be clarified • The SO does not target a specific sector • The SO does not specify a specific territorial dimension	
SO 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area	• The SO needs to be redrafted in order to clarify its meaning and its result orientation. The SO refers to multiple objectives • The SO targets a specific sector • The SO does not specify a specific territorial dimension	
SO 3.1: Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area	• The SO expresses a clear positive change • The SO targets a specific sector • The SO does not specify a specific territorial dimension	
SO 4.1: Facilitate the coordination and implementation of the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities.	• The SO does not express an objective but an intervention. (Proposal: Successfully implemented governance of the EUSAIR Action Plan) • The SO targets a specific sector • The SO does specify a specific territorial dimension	

The assessment of internal consistence (see Table 17) shows an interrelation between priority axes 1 and 2 based on shared innovatory aspects of the two axes. PA 3 has an indirect and largely neutral relation to PA 2 and 4. The relation of PA 4 to the other PAs exists indirectly and is of an enabling nature.

Table 17: Assessment of the internal consistence

Impact		PA1	PA2		PA3	PA4	Σ 1	Σ 2	Σ 3
from	... to	SO 1.1	SO 2.1	SO 2.2	SO 3.1	SO 4.1			
PA1	SO 1.1		+	+	0	0	0	2	2
	SO 2.1	+		++	0	0	2	1	3
PA2	SO 2.2	+	++		0	0	2	1	3
PA3	SO 3.1	0	-	-		0	0	2	2
PA4	SO 4.1	+	+	+	+		0	4	4

(a) Priority Axes (PA), Specific Objective (SO)

(b) Σ 1 = Sum of the synergies between SO with other SOs of the same PA.

(c) Σ 2 = Sum of the synergies between SO with other SOs of other PAs.

(d) Σ 3 = Sum of the synergies between SO with all other SOs.

++ strong synergy

+ little synergy

0 neutral

- slight inconsistency

-- strong inconsistency

Findings and recommendations

- Specific objectives should be clearly defined according to the positive change intended, the specific sector and the specific area.
- PA 1 Innovative region: The PA could have better synergies with PA 2 and PA 3. However there is no conflict with the other PAs.
- PA 2 Sustainable Region: The PA has two specific objectives which are closely linked to each other. However overlaps between the two SOs are possible and should be reduced by a clear definition of different objectives and interventions. Synergies with PA 1 are possible and should be incorporated.
- PA 3 Connected Region: There are no synergies with other PAs but conflicts can reveal with PA 2. This should be avoided with better incorporation of the PA and definition of selection criteria avoiding conflicts especially concerning energy efficiency and safeguarding ecosystems.
- PA 4: There are synergies with all other PAs however these are currently not mentioned in the programme. It is necessary to closely link PA 4 with the other PAs of the ADRION.

2.4 Assessment of the intervention logic

The assessment of the intervention logic is based on the key question as to how the outcomes from the proposed measures contribute to the results defined.

Table 18: Assessment of the intervention logic

Justification	Specific Objective	Result	Intervention	Assessment of results and interventions
• Need to improve innovation capacities, competitiveness and internationalisation of SMEs confronted to international competition • Need to improve cooperation between actors of the quadruple helix, • Need to strengthen growth sectors representing important jobs potential • Need to support new innovation areas and approaches in a context of strong economic crisis and tight public budgets • Need to stimulate the adoption of innovation and technologies by the SME • Development of smart specialisation strategies by the use of RIS3 results; • Need to promote the Innovation management support	SO 1.1: Support the development of a regional innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area	• Common understanding among ADRION Partner States on the potential fields of transnational innovation actions and fostering diffusion and uptake of innovation • Enhancement of the competencies/skills of the stakeholders and involved parties • Improvement of the framework conditions (awareness and foresight, legal, economic aspects, innovation governance, organisational issues, policy solutions, technology impact assessments) • Mobilisation of stakeholders in the fields of research, innovation and utilisation in order to increase knowledge transfer between business, users, academia and administration actors (Quadruple Helix approach) • identification of emerging market opportunities in relation to the programme area's competitive advantages, the fields of the EUSAIR and the smart specialisation strategies of the regions in order to develop an ADRION "critical mass" • Better coordinated innovation policies and strategies, e.g. at the RIS level.	• Formation of transnational innovation networks • Analysis of the framework conditions for innovation • Development of framework structures related to the consultation on legal, intellectual property, technical and financial issues and provision of related services especially for SMEs • Development of actions for raising competencies/skills of the stakeholders • Development of platforms for knowledge sharing • Development of transnational "quadruple helix" clusters in common interest fields • Development of transnational models for the design, testing, up-scaling, comparison and evaluation of innovations • Development of transnationally designed products, services, investment models and funding support instruments • Development of strategies, schemes and tools for improving creativity and innovative approaches • Building up transnational network for the transfer of knowledge among public administration on technological solutions.	 • The specific objective does reflect the described results • Results are well defined and correspond with the interventions • The results do reflect the needs identified in the territorial analysis
• High cultural and environmental resources in ADRION regions threatened by human activities • High pressure of tourism activities and urbanisation, especially in the coastal areas of the ADRION regions ((sustainable tourism)	SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area	• Common understanding among ADRION' s Partner States on the potential fields of transnational cooperation in tourism and consensus on the content of sustainable valorisation and tourism under an ADRION brand	• Creation of transnational networks and working group • Creation of transnational networks and working groups for the identification of challenges and trends in the tourism sector • Development of actions for raising competencies/skills on sustainable tourism and tourism management	 • The specific objective does reflect the described results • Results are well defined and correspond with the interventions

Justification	Specific Objective	Result	Intervention	Assessment of results and interventions
- Increased pressure on natural resources due to the combination of human activities and environmental changes (especially climate change) - Increased pressure on water resources from a quantitative and qualitative point of view		- Enhancement of the competencies/skills of the stakeholders and involved parties in the fields of sustainable valorisation and tourism - Enhancement of the "body of knowledge" through transnational research, pilots, tools and experimentation - Development of a distinct transnational identity and raising the awareness on common heritage in the Adriatic Ionian area as an orientation framework for individual actions - Improved involvement among tourism stakeholders, visitors and the society for the development of jointly agreed utilisation approaches - Preserved natural and cultural heritage and valorised within the programme area brand name - Diversification of tourism products along topic, season, target group and environmental and social impact.	- Formulation of implementation strategies, set up and test of clusters and models to better capitalize and innovate cultural and natural heritage - Building up of transnational networks and working groups and development of tools and pilots to monitor, evaluate and mitigate the environmental and social pressures and impacts and the risks for and by tourism - Set up and test the implementation of negotiation, mediation, participation and conflict resolution models - Organisation of knowledge transfer, exchange of good practice - Development of distinct and diversified tourism products such as transnational thematic tourism clusters and routes - Development of sustainable tourism models focusing on low carbon, low ecological footprint - Small scale investments and demonstration projects	The results do reflect the needs identified in the territorial analysis ☹️ However, interventions and results do not reflect the need for enhancing the awareness of protecting biodiversity It is recommended to interlink SO 2.1 and SO 2.2.
- High environmental resource in the ADRION regions threatened by human activities - Pressure on the biodiversity and development of invasive species - Pressure on water quality with direct consequences on the biodiversity - Crucial role of the environment in the attractiveness and economic development of ADRION regions	SO 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area	- Common understanding among ADRION Partner States for the need for transnational cooperation in the fields of environmental protection, ecosystem services and climate change adaptation - Enhancement of the competencies/skills of the stakeholders and involved parties. - Increased availability of data and information for delivering evidence-based responses through interoperability and systematic monitoring	- Formation of transnational frameworks and platforms for the interoperability of existing databases - Development of implementation strategies - Implement research and evaluation activities - Formation of transnational networks and working groups for increasing marine knowledge, for the development of transnational Special Spatial Plans - Development of transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems - Formation of transnational networks and working groups for:	😊 Interventions are very clearly described towards specific results and outcomes ☹️ However a better interrelation between SO1.2 and 2.2 would enhance the quality of the programme.

Justification	Specific Objective	Result	Intervention	Assessment of results and interventions
		- Increased transnational cooperation, exchange and communication among authorities and civil society organisations - Harmonised infrastructures, management structures and hazard/risk response mechanisms; - Increased number of "state of the art" management and planning tools.	- increasing marine knowledge - the development of transnational Special Spatial Plans - the development of transnational terrestrial and maritime protected areas and habitats - Development of transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems for: - identifying, managing and preventing localised and diffuse pollution - forecasting, managing and preventing natural and manmade hazards - Formation of transnational frameworks and platforms for: - the harmonisation and enforcement of national laws, the joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response and interoperability of civil protection mechanisms and organisations; - the exchange of best practices, the experimentation and piloting with new innovative and integrated approaches.	
- Need to reduce the environmental impact of transport by increasing multimodality and shift to most appropriate environmental friendly modes of transport - Need to collect information and improving procedures for waste management and pollution created by so-called "environmentally friendly" transport modes, such as inland and maritime navigation.	SO 3.1 Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area	- Common understanding among ADRION Partner States of the "status quo" and the potential in the ADRION area for multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services - Enhancement of the competencies/skills of the stakeholders and involved parties; - Increase in the implementation options for multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services	- Setting up of transnational frameworks, platforms and networks for the identification of existing potentials and obstacles - Development of research to administration networks and cooperation structures - Building up of networks and working groups for the standardisation of legal requirements, technical specifications and capacity building - Formation of networks and working groups on relevant issues for the design, coordination and operation of integrated environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services	 - The specific objective does reflect the described results - Results are well defined and correspond with the interventions - The results do reflect the needs identified in the territorial analysis

Justification	Specific Objective	Result	Intervention	Assessment of results and interventions
- Need to improve the logistic chain of all import-exports transport activities - Need to improve the border cross point transit for all the non EU borders where administrative and organization bottlenecks produce substantial delays in the travel scheduling - Need to invest on ICT management for all freight transport activities - Need to enhance the water –rail intermodal platform both for maritime ports and inland waterway port - Need to reinforce the ICT application for making open and easier the access to info transport and implement all the intermodal opportunities for the passengers mobility		- Enhanced involvement of tourism actors, residents and economic operators for investment in multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services - Harmonised and/or joint infrastructures, tools and management structures - Enhancement of the maturity and coordination of investments in multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services;	- Support the transfer and uptake of existing local/regional solution and instruments and shape a framework for capitalisation of on-going technological innovation - Study, design and test operational, technological and funding models for the preparation of infrastructure investments - Development of transnational platforms for the coordination of environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and infrastructures taking in account the possibilities offered by modern technologies, environmental and seasonal constraints and the synergies of the demand by tourism, resident population and economic operators.	 However it should be assured that results are sustainable and following the needs for protecting the eco-system of the region as well as considering climate change. Multimodal is not per se sustainable therefore specific interventions have to assure sustainability.
- Need to ensure a good governance of the EUSAIR and need to put in place good and stable governance mechanisms and support to national coordinators. - need to ensure involvement of the stakeholders from all levels in capacity building for the strategy implementation	SO 4.1 Facilitate the coordination and implementation of the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities.	Built up capacity of governance actors and of stakeholders to implement EUSAIR	- Establish an operational tool for the EUSAIR governance: the Facility Point based in coastal region of Slovenia and its network of liaison points in partner countries. - Provide operational support to the key EUSAIR governance actors and stakeholders in their respective roles, which may include: - assisting the governing board and thematic steering groups in their day to day roles - facilitating the development and functioning of the stakeholders platform	 - The specific objective and interventions do reflect the needs identified in the CP  - Only a highly generalised result is included in ADRION

Justification	Specific Objective	Result	Intervention	Assessment of results and interventions
• need to strengthen the capacity for territorial analysis based on solid data collection through a common platform, • need to accompany project ideas to become projects, e.g. via a common platform and to identify new joint projects. • need for identification and coordination of all possible funding sources for joint projects, as the stakeholders tend to lack knowledge about different funding sources.			- ensuring communication, information, visibility, awareness raising - facilitating policy debates and sharing of experiences - supporting the building of the knowledge base - Supporting the preparation of strategic macro-regional projects in coordination with the Steering groups - Facilitating a dialogue with bodies in charge of implementation of programmes/financial instruments on alignment of funding for implementation of the Pillar projects	• The interventions remain tentative and require fuller specification • The risk of potential overlaps with technical assistance (SO 5.2) has been reduced in the final draft CP through the differentiation of potential beneficiaries
	SO 5.1: Actions to increase in efficiency and effectiveness the management and implementation of the cooperation programme	• Ensuring an adequate management and control environment of the programme	• Setting up and managing of a Joint Secretariat supporting the Managing Authority and Certifying Authority and assisting the Monitoring Committee and, where necessary, the Audit Authority and the Group of Auditors in the implementation and day-to-day management of the programme; • Preparing and implementing calls for proposals, including the development of guidance documents setting out the conditions for the support of operations; • Setting-up and implementing procedures for the quality assessment, monitoring and control of operations implemented under the cooperation programme, also making use of external experts where necessary, and contributing to the reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries;	 • The specific objective and interventions correspond to the customary provision for cooperation programmes in line with the regulations

Justification	Specific Objective	Result	Intervention	Assessment of results and interventions
			- Collecting data concerning the progress of the programme in achieving its objectives, as well as financial data and data relating to indicators and milestones, and reporting to the Monitoring Committee and the European Commission - Drafting and implementing the programme communication strategy, including the setting up and implementation of information and communication measures and tools in line with Article 115 of the Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 (CPR) - Drafting and implementing the programme evaluation plan and follow-up of findings of independent programme evaluations - Setting-up, running and maintenance of a computerised system to record and store data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, in compliance with the applicable electronic data exchange requirements and contributing to the reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries - Setting-up a network of national financial controllers, coordinated by the MA/Joint Secretariat, with the purpose of exchanging information and best practices at transnational level - Setting up and execution of audits on the programme management and control system and on operations. - Training for MC members, MA, NCPs and FLC - Participation to international conferences	
		- Increased capacity of applicants and beneficiary to participate in the programme - Strengthened involvement of relevant partners in programme implementation	- Drafting of information documents for applicants and beneficiaries to guide them in the preparation of applications and the implementation, evaluation, control and communication of approved operations - Organising consultation, information, training and exchange events to strengthen the capacity of applicants	 The specific objective and interventions correspond to the customary provision for cooperation

Justification	Specific Objective	Result	Intervention	Assessment of results and interventions
	SO 5.2: Actions to improve the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the programme implementation		to develop applications directly contributing to the programme specific objectives and expected results • Organising trainings on specific implementation issues such as project and financial management, reporting, control, audit, communication and networking to strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries to implement approved operations • Organising monitoring visit to running projects performed by the JS aimed at carrying out, whenever needed, quality assessment of outputs/results, with the possibility to ask for improvements • Developing information and exchange tools (e.g. analytical documents, bilateral meetings, targeted events, etc.) and organisation of transnational and national events to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the implementation of the programme (also including authorities involved in the development or implementation of macro-regional strategies, joint legal bodies operating in the area (EGTCs...) and umbrella organisations at EU/transnational level) • Setting-up and coordinating a network of first level controllers • Setting up and coordinating a network of national Contact Points, supporting the Joint Secretariat in implementing at national level tasks related to the implementation of the programme. • Executing studies, reports and surveys on strategic matters concerning the programme that can contribute to the sustainability and take up of results and achievements into policies, strategies, investments or that are of public interest, making use of experts where and when necessary	programmes in line with the regulations • The risk of potential overlaps with SO 4.1 has been reduced in the final draft CP through the differentiation of potential beneficiaries

Findings and recommendations

- Regarding SO 1.1: The results do reflect the needs identified, are well defined and correspond with the interventions and the specific objective does reflect the described results.
- Regarding SO 2.1: Interventions and results do not reflect the need for enhancing the awareness of protecting biodiversity. It would be appropriate to interlink SO 2.1 and SO 2.2.
- Regarding SO 2.2: A better interrelation between SO 2.1 and 2.2 would enhance the quality of the programme.
- Regarding SO 3.1: It should be assured that results are sustainable and following the needs for protecting the eco-system of the region as well as considering climate change. Multimodal is not per se sustainable therefore specific interventions have to assure sustainability.
- Regarding SO 4.1: The formulation of results and interventions is still tentative and requires fuller development.
- Regarding SO 5.1 and 5.2: The specific objective and interventions correspond to the customary provision for cooperation programmes in line with the regulations.
- The risk of potential overlaps between SO 4.1 and SO 5.2 has been reduced, in line with the recommendations in the draft final ex-ante report, through the differentiation of potential beneficiaries.

3 Indicators, outputs and results of the programme

The 2014-2020 programming period puts greater emphasis on intervention logic and results orientation which consequently raises the importance of result indicators. The ex-ante evaluation assesses the indicators against the intervention logic, the appropriateness of the indicator system and the adequateness for monitoring and data collection.

Experience shows that the definition of reliable baseline indicators is a great challenge, often reflecting to the definition of a zero baseline. This also applies to the definition of operational result indicators. For these reasons emphasis is given to the formulation of the indicators ensuring a precise and unambiguous definition, a related measurement unit and a measurement method, and the satisfaction of the SMART principles. The ex-ante evaluator has to check that the indicators are clearly defined and useable. In this respect, it is important to ensure that the right number of indicators is introduced (and to prevent the programme using too many or not enough indicators). With this methodology the manageability and measurability of the indicators will be assessed. Subsequently, the relevance and feasibility of milestones is the final step in the assessment.

3.1 Indicator assessment

The ETC regulation 1299/2013 includes a list of common output indicators however these are output indicators more valid for ERDF operational programmes rather than ETC cooperation programmes. The ex-ante team strongly supports the definition of specific programme related output indicators. In the following tables the output and result indicators will be assessed along the following questions:

Evaluation questions:

- Are the programme-specific output indicators relevant to the actions to be supported?
- Are the programme-specific result indicators responsive to the policy?
- Do the programme-specific result indicators cover (one of) the most important intended changes?
- Do baselines for the programme-specific result indicators exist?

Table 19: ADRION output indicator assessment

TO	IP	Output Indicator	Unit	Clarity, relevance and suitability	C ⁸	R	M
TO 1	1b	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Number (target = 1000)	This indicator strongly overlaps with national and regional operational programmes and is therefore not clearly defined. Due to that fact the relevance as well as the suitability of this indicator has to be reconsidered The target value is highly unlikely if assumed that 2 million. Euro are spent on average for each project with around 5-10 partners with only a maximum of one third of them being enterprises. Only around 20 enterprises can be expected to participate. Furthermore it is highly unlikely that this will be the target of all the projects supported under this SO. If the indicator were to encompass enterprises cooperating with research institutions not directly involved as partners in ADRION projects it would furthermore be doubtful if this indicator could be measurable. We suggest deleting this indicator or at least setting a realistic target value.			
		Number of supported transnational cooperation networks and clusters	Number (target = 8)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention			
		Number of strategies and action plans developed by transnational innovation networks and clusters	Number (target = 12)	This indicator is relevant, suitable, clearly defined however it strongly overlaps with the other indicators.			
TO 6	6c	Number of supported transnational cooperation networks	Number (target = 20)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention, however, it is recommended to be more specific regarding the content of the network since it overlaps with other SOs.			
		Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of natural and cultural heritage and tourism	Number (target = 30)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention The target number might be too ambiguous			
		Number of small scale investments and demonstration projects	Number (target = 10)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention The target number might be too ambiguous			
	6d	Number of supported transnational cooperation networks	Number (target = 20)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention. However we would suggest being more specific regarding the content of the network since it overlaps with other SOs. We would suggest rephrasing this indicator. For example: ' <i>number of transnational cooperation projects, networks and platforms</i> ' in order to make sure that all kind of interventions are covered'.			

⁸ C: Clearness, R: Realistic, M: Measurable

TO	IP	Output Indicator	Unit	Clarity, relevance and suitability	C ⁸	R	M
		Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of environmental protection	Number (target = 15)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention The target number might be too ambiguous			
TO 7	7c	Number of supported transnational cooperation networks in the field of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems	Number (target = 6)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention, however, we would suggest to be more specific regarding the content of the network since it overlaps with other SOs. Therefore we would suggest to rephrase this indicator: For example: ' <i>number of supported transnational cooperation projects, networks and platforms</i> ' in order to make sure that all kind of interventions are covered'.			
		Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems	Number (target = 12)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention			
TO 11	11	Number of events and meetings of the governance structures to facilitate implementation of the EUSAIR targets	Number (target = 120)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention			
		No of EUSAIR key implementers receiving support from the EUSAIR Facility Point.	Number (target = 80)	This indicator is relevant and suitable for the intervention. We would suggest to be more specific as to the EUSAIR key implementers and the kind of support (<i>operational</i>) provided.			
TA		Calls for proposals successfully launched and closed	Number target = 2	These are too many indicators. Many of them are legal requirements or pre-requisites for the set-up and implementation of a CP. We strongly recommend to reduce the number of indicators to 2 or 3. For example: • <i>Number of projects committed</i> • <i>Number of consultation, information, training and exchange workshops for applicants and beneficiaries organised</i> • <i>Number of press releases</i>			
		Operations approved following calls for proposals	target = 50				
		Periodic progress reports of operations monitored and paid	target = 300				
		Programme communication strategy developed and implemented	target = 1				
		Independent programme evaluations implemented (ex-ante and during programme implementation)	target = 2				
		Programme e-Monitoring System developed and implemented	target = 1				
		Network of national controllers established	target = 1				

TO	IP	Output Indicator	Unit	Clarity, relevance and suitability	C ⁸	R	M
		Audits on programme management and control system and on operations	target = ?				
		Consultation, information, training and exchange workshops for applicants and beneficiaries organised	target = ?				
		Established national Contact Points	target = 8				

Table 20: ADRION result indicator assessment

TO	IP	SO	Result Indicator	Baseline value	Clarity, relevance and suitability; Policy relevance; Measureable	C	R	M
TO 1	1b	SO1.1: Support the development of a regional innovation system in the Adriatic-Ionian area	Level of capacity of key innovation actors to be effectively involved in transnational actions for the development of a regional innovation system	To be calculated	The indicator is clearly defined, relevant and suitable. The policy relevance to innovation and research is provided. For the measurement of the indicator a methodology was proposed by the drafting team in written form. The baseline value remains to be calculated based on a survey among thematic experts in the ADRION member countries.			
TO 6	6c	SO 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area	Level of capacity for the relevant stakeholders in the fields of natural and cultural heritage protection and tourism to sustainably valorise natural and cultural heritage as a growth asset.	To be calculated	The indicator is clearly defined, relevant and suitable. For the measurement of the indicator a methodology was proposed by the drafting team in written form. The baseline value remains to be calculated based on a survey among thematic experts in the ADRION member countries.			
	6d	SO 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area	Level of capacity of the relevant authorities to operate transnationally, providing service and management regarding environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and the safeguarding of ecosystems' services.	To be calculated	The indicator is relevant and supports the underlying policy. For the measurement of the indicator a methodology was proposed by the drafting team in written form. The baseline value remains to be calculated based on a survey among thematic experts in the ADRION member countries.			

TO	IP	SO	Result Indicator	Baseline value	Clarity, relevance and suitability; Policy relevance; Measureable	C	R	M
TO 7	7c	SO 3.1 Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area	Level of capacity of organisations in the field of transport and mobility to transnationally plan and implement sustainable and multimodal transport and mobility solutions	To be calculated	The indicator is relevant, clear and supports the underlying policy. For the measurement of the indicator a methodology was proposed by the drafting team in written form. The baseline value remains to be calculated based on a survey among thematic experts in the ADRION member countries.			
TO 11	11	SO 4.1: Facilitate the coordination in implementing the EUSAIR by enhancing institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities.	Satisfaction level of pillar coordinators with EUSAIR Facility Point support aiming at increasing their capacity to effectively implement their goals targets and key actions	0.00	The indicator is clear, relevant and supports the underlying police. We suggest defining the measurement unit more precisely: E.g. <i>scale of satisfaction according to evaluation reports and surveys</i>			

Findings and recommendations:

- The output indicators in general are following the principal logic of the programme. However in few cases they are too many and should be somewhat more specified to avoid overlapping with other Specific Objectives. This refers primarily to indicators regarding the number of transnational cooperation networks.
- It should always be assured that the indicators are specifically relevant for the cooperation programme, should relate to the actions supported and should be measurable. Since the cooperation programme does not have a high impact on absolute figures the ex-ante team recommended that the output indicators should concentrate on the amount of projects finalized in the transnational context related to the specific objectives. This recommendation was by and large taken into account.
- Target values of output indicators are in some cases too ambiguous and the ex-ante evaluation doubt that they are realistic.
- Regarding the result indicators these should concentrate on the transnational character of the programme. Accordingly, it was suggested by the ex-ante evaluation team that it would be sufficient to keep the result indicators at the level of ordinary scales and capacities. This recommendation was taken into account.
- Detailed recommendations/findings are listed in Table 19 and Table 20.
- It is not clear whether each ADRION country is able to provide necessary data for evaluation and monitoring (wherever applicable) however this could be overcome if the method proposed by the programming team for the collection of values for result indicators and their change in time is successfully implemented.

3.2 Performance framework

The performance framework provided in ADRION has is subject of a detailed analysis. The evaluation has to assess if the provided Milestones are SMART in terms of their quantitative figures. This means figures are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Assignable
- Realistic
- Time-related

The corresponding evaluation questions are:

Evaluation questions:				
• Are the quantified/qualitative target values of the indicators realistic? • Are the milestones which were selected suitable for the performance framework? • Are the chosen milestones adequately reflecting the nature and complexity of the programme? • Are the chosen milestones realistic in relation to the timing of the reviews? • Are indicators selected for the chosen milestones in each priority axis? • Have all the milestone indicators quantitative/qualitative target values? • Will the data be available for the milestones at the key review points?				

Table 21: Ex-ante evaluation of the performance framework

SO	Indicator	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Assessment
Priority Axis 1	Financial	13%	100%	The milestone value is realistic.
SO 1.1	Number of strategies and action plans developed by transnational innovation networks and clusters	3 (40%)	12 (100%)	The milestone is suitable. The value for the milestone and the target value seem to be reasonable.
Priority Axis 2	Financial	13%	100%	The milestone and the final target are realistic.
SO 2.1+2.2	Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of natural and cultural heritage and tourism	4 (13%)	30 (100%)	The milestone is suitable. The value for the milestone and the target value seem to be reasonable.
	Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of environmental protection	2 (13%)	15 (100%)	The milestone is suitable. The value for the milestone and the target value seem to be reasonable.
Priority Axis 3	Financial	13%	100%	The milestone and the final target are realistic.
SO 3.1	Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems	2 (16%)	12 (100%)	The value for the milestone and the target value seem to be reasonable.
Priority Axis 4	Financial	13%	100%	The milestone and the final target are realistic.
SO 4.1:	Number of events and meetings of the governance structures to facilitate implementation of EUSAIR targets	32 (26%)	120 (100%)	The value for the milestone and the target value seem to be reasonable. Use consistent wording concerning the source of data: Progress report (2.A.6.5) or NC progress report
	No of EUSAIR key implementers receiving support from the EUSAIR Facility Point	30 (37%)	80 (100%)	The value for the milestone and the target value seem to be reasonable. Use consistent wording concerning the source of data: Progress report (2.A.6.5) or NC progress report

Findings and recommendations:

- On average the expenditure targets seem adequate for the programme, however deviations at priority axis level due to differing absorption capacities in thematic areas are likely.
- Considering the fact that the output indicators chosen for the milestone do not necessarily reflect entire projects (some projects could encompass more than one action plan, in other projects a common developed strategy or action plan is only one project activity among others) the target figures for the outputs are realistic. It has to be made sure though that these indicators will be thoroughly monitored in the progress reports.
- Care has to be taken by the programme bodies, that outputs are achieved (closely monitor and accompany projects), progress reports are delivered in a timely manner and also that bottlenecks in First Level Control bodies are avoided so as to not endanger the financial milestones.

4 Consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme

According to Article 55 (c) of the CPR the ex-ante evaluation is required to evaluate the "consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme".

Evaluation questions:

- Do the financial allocations concentrate on the most important objectives in line with the identified challenges and needs?
- Do the financial allocations comply with the concentration requirements (Art. 16 CPR)?
- Is the technical assistance budget sufficient to manage and communicate the programme?

The overall programme budget of the ADRION comprises €117,917,379 of which €99,156,616 form the EU contribution (ERDF → of €83,467,729 and IPA→ €15,688,887).

Table 22: Budget allocation breakdown by PAs and contribution

Priority axis	TO	EU support	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority axis 1	1	19,831,323	3,499,645	23,330,968
Priority axis 2	6	45,612,043	8,049,184	53,661,227
Priority axis 3	7	17,848,191	3,149,681	20,997,872
Priority axis 4	11	9,915,662	1,749,823	11,665,484
Priority axis 5	TA	5,949,397	2,312,431	8,261,828
Total		99,156,616	18,760,763	117,917,379

Table 23: ADRION financing plan

Priority axis	EU Contribution in Euro	% of the overall budget
PA 1: Innovative and smart region	19,831,323 (ERDF and IPA)	20%
PA 2: Sustainable region	45,612,043 (ERDF and IPA)	46%
PA 3: Connected region	17,848,191 (ERDF and IPA)	18%
PA 4: Towards a better governance of the EUSAIR	9,915,662 (ERDF and IPA)	10%
PA 5 Technical assistance	5,008,063.74 (ERDF) 941,333.00 (IPA)	6%
Total	99,156,616 (ERDF and IPA)	100%

The main focus of the programme is placed on sustainable development and environmental protection with 46% of the budget allocated to PA 2. This is in line with the needs defined in the territorial analysis.

Much smaller (and roughly equal) allocations are made to innovation and intermodality. Although both thematic issues are in line with the needs defined, the volume of financial resources envisaged is likely to allow only for ten or fewer projects to be supported under each of PA 1 and PA 3. These projects are meant to achieve a significant number of results (six in each case) and therefore the interventions that will be selected during implementation will need to considerably spread out if all results are to be covered.

Regarding PA 4 the programme can only consider lessons learned from other transnational programmes mainly the previous South East Europe transnational programme (SEE). In this respect the budget division is in line with the lessons learned from the SEE. The ADRION programme clearly follows the thematic orientation of the former SEE. The main drawbacks have been seen in the IPA funding match, which has been stated in the SEE mid-term evaluations 2011.

Regarding PA 5 the establishment of the new programme management will require additional effort in order to follow up the sufficient programme management of the past.

The financial allocations for PA 4 and PA 5 broadly reflect the regional analysis and are in line with the EC country position papers.

Findings and recommendations:

- The financial allocation concentrates on the most important objectives in line with the identified challenges and needs which are the enhancement of innovation and the focus on sustainability and environmental protection. However, the allocations to PA 1 and PA 3 are rather modest and therefore the achievement of the full range of the expected results (although reduced in the final draft CP in line with the recommendations of the draft final ex-ante report) will depend on selecting a considerable spread of interventions under these PAs during implementation.
- The programme does comply with the concentration requirements of Article Art. 16 CPR requiring a concentration of the programme on 4 thematic objectives.
- The financial allocation is based on regional analysis and is in line with the EC country position papers. Thus it complies with the CPR.
- The technical assistance budget is sufficient to manage the programme.
- The probability of major overlaps in the interventions of PA 4 and PA 5 (highlighted in Chapter 2) has been reduced in the final draft CP by limiting the number of target groups and beneficiaries under PA 4.

5 Evaluation of the implementation provision

5.1 Human resources and administrative capacity for management of the programme

Evaluation questions:

- Is the implementation structure adequate in relation to the size and complexity of the programme?
- Is the human resources and administrative capacity adequate for the management of the programme?

The scope and the functions of the management, implementation and control system to be established by the 2014-2020 Programmes are laid in Article 8(4) of the ETC regulation 1299/2013.

Consequently Section 5 of the CP provides a description of the programme bodies and of their functions. More specifically the programme identifies the following:

- the programme authorities with the exception of the Audit Authority which is under discussion;
- the procedure for setting-up of the JS by the MA;
- the management and control arrangements;
- the description of the procedures for the generation, application, assessment, and selection of operations;
- the procedures for contracting and for the payments of funds;
- the provisions on monitoring (at project and programme level) and the provisions on programme-level evaluations
- the computerised exchange of data;
- the programme level information and communication activities;
- the approach for an apportionment of liabilities among the MS in case of financial corrections imposed by the MA or the Commission;
- the use of the Euro.
- the information that the Future Managing Authority (fMA) will in addition carry out the function of the Certifying Authority (CA)
- the designated body which carries out the function of the Audit Authority (AA)

The CP does not inform on

- the control and audit bodies in the Member States. The designated responsible bodies will be indicated in the Management and Control System Description to be adopted after the approval of the CP or in a Memorandum of Understanding.

Information on the number of staff (JS and MA, AA and CA) was provided as a basis for discussion at the 7th TF meeting and subsequently as a basis for discussion at the 8th TF meeting.

The overall number of human resources allocated to the JS (5.7 full time equivalents (FTE)/6 persons) and MA (3.45 FTE/5 persons) seems reasonable based on the described tasks and assumed effort required during the lifetime of the programme. Also the staffing of CA and AA will be sufficient enough to ensure a proper fulfilment of tasks during the programme's lifetime.

Findings and recommendations:

In general the description in Section 5 complies with the requirements of Article 8 (4) (a) and (b) of the ETC Regulation and also fulfils the content related expectations set out in the CP template version 5. The CP provides information on the location of the JS. Tentative Figures on the future staff involved in the MA and JS have been provided to the Task Force members and the ex-ante evaluation team in a written form as part of the preparatory material for the 7th and 8th TF meeting.

As for the final draft CP first evaluation question can be answered positively regarding the adequacy of the administrative structure.

The current figures referring to the number of staff (fulltime equivalent) in the programme bodies seem to be reasonable and allows for the proper management of the programme. However the following matters should receive particular attention:

- **Emphasis should be put on a well elaborated division of labour between the JS and the National Contact Points (NCP)** as well as on overall cooperation and communication processes to make the most efficient use of human resources available in the programme. Ideas provided by the fMA to the ex-ante evaluators are an adequate basis to work upon.
- Regarding First Level Control bodies the intended establishment of **a network of FLC bodies is an adequate step to enhance cooperation and streamline working processes** and it should be pursued upon the programme start. Well trained and interconnected FLC bodies play an important role in the financial progress of the programme.

However, the **names of the designated control and audit bodies are still missing** and **no indication in relation to the ETC experience** of the authorities has yet been provided. Therefore:

- **ADRION should capitalise as best as possible on the experiences gained through the SEE programme.**
- ADRION should be careful to **select ETC experienced JS staff for the starting phase of the programme** (set up of e-monitoring system, knowledge about data requirements ...).

5.2 Programme level arrangements for monitoring, data collection and evaluation

Evaluation questions:

- Are suitable preventive measures foreseen for possible bottlenecks?
- Are the foreseen monitoring procedures and time schedules likely to provide for timely collection of the data in order to feed into decision making, reporting and evaluations?
- Are the data sources and the data collection (including check and control of data) defined?
- How is the proposed system established?
- Are adequate procedures in place to ensure the quality of the data? (e.g. a precise definition of the content and source of each indicator)
- Are adequate data to conduct an ongoing evaluation (to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact) defined?

The CP describes the arrangements concerning data collection to a limited extent with only general references to the monitoring tasks of the JS, or the source of data for result indicators in Section 2 of the final draft CP and the implementation of an e-MS for data storage and exchange.

Further information on the procedures foreseen was provided by the fMA so that the evaluation questions can be partly answered as positive (as regards the collection of monitoring data, checks and control of data, planned monitoring visits and the currently planned data sources and collection).

The territorial analysis indicates a lack of comparable data and the risk of outdated data. This led the ex-ante evaluators in previous ex-ante evaluation reports to the assumption that the data collection for future monitoring and evaluation will be of some challenge. A new set of result indicators was provided in the final draft CP, and a model for the establishment of baseline targets and the measurement of change was presented to the 7th TF meeting and agreed. The data for result indicators will be based on the outcomes of surveys. For the establishment of baseline data a first survey is currently being conducted.

Concerning adequate data to conduct an ongoing evaluation the methodological approach proposed by the drafting team including the possibility to measure the change of result indicators in a more detailed qualitative way over time is promising but yet unproven.

Findings and recommendations:

- Due to the requirements of the data collection an indication is required in the CP about previous experience with the monitoring of other ETC programmes in the respective authorities. Also in this regard the recommendations made under 5.1 apply: Capitalise as best as possible on the experiences gained through the SEE programme and be careful to select ETC experienced staff in the JS especially in the start-up phase of the programme when programme level arrangements for monitoring and data collection are fixed.
- **Preventive measures for bottlenecks:** Data on output indicators is based on the CP and other written information sources mostly derived from application forms and project progress reports. It has to be ensured that all programme bodies involved in the processing of progress reports before they reach the JS at central programme level can cope with working peaks.
- In order to be able to report on the result indicator values in the Annual Implementation Reports in 2017 and 2019 it has to be ensured that surveys are conducted timely enough for the collection of data.

5.3 Reduction of the administrative burden

The new programming period should dramatically reduce administrative burden and each programme is asked to describe the reduction of administrative burden. The ex-ante evaluation in this respect has the task to evaluate whether the proposed reductions are feasible and in line with the regulations.

The CP has taken into account lessons learned from past experience regarding the implementation of transnational programmes. The programme acknowledges:

- the need for learning from experiences gained in the previous programming period from all the other ETC programmes;
- the need for making use to the possible extent of simplified cost options available for the 2014-2020 period (if accepted and applied by national controllers);
- the need for making use of the Harmonised Implementation Tools developed by the INTERACT;
- that the programme should cooperate with other ETC programmes in order to simplify and streamline programme implementation among them;
- that actions planned to reduce administrative burden will primarily build on the implementation of a system for data exchange fully in line with e-cohesion requirements described in Section 5.

The actions cover all phases of the project cycle including the submission procedures.

The CP defines reduction of administrative burden by harmonising eligibility rules and improvement of monitoring project implementation. The measures are in line with the CPR and are based on lessons learned from the previous ETC programmes.

5.4 Involvement of partners

The ex-ante team assessed the involvement of partners in the preparation of the Cooperation Programme. In this respect the different steps of partner involvement have been taken into account.

This assessment addressed the following evaluation questions:

Evaluation questions:

- To what extent does the communication from the Managing Authority to the partners and to the wider public (particularly the potential beneficiaries) reflect the integrated approach and the concerted effort to reach the EU objectives?
- Are there stakeholders who are not sufficiently involved in programme design and implementation, although suggested as relevant partner?

The process of programme development involved two different levels of partner involvement:

- the public consultation of the programme via an online survey;
- the involvement of the Task Force members in a series of workshops and online consultations.

Online survey:

The invitation to the online survey, which was accessible from the 2nd to the 18th of July was sent to 2611 stakeholders in the participating countries. The return rate was 12%. The mailing list was compiled based on input by TF members, the database of the SEE programme and online registration.

Respondents were (ranked according their share in the return rate) from research and education bodies, from central/regional public authorities, local public authorities, development agencies/NGOs, chambers, unions and associations, profit oriented undertakings and respondents from outside the programme area. Survey questions related to the relevance of the Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities for the stakeholders as well as to the management of ADRION. The final selection of chosen TOs and IPs largely coincided with the results of the online survey.

Task Force meetings: Eight Task Force meetings have been held throughout the CP preparation process starting in April 2013 (see list in Annex 3).

Thematic workshops: Two thematic workshops have been held in 2014 with the participation of TF members and stakeholders from various institutions reflecting the thematic spectrum of the programme.

Findings and recommendations

The involvement of partners in the programme preparation process reflects the European Code of Conduct on Partnership and involvement of stakeholders in programme design and implementation and can be considered as sufficient.

6 Contribution to the horizontal principles

According to Article 55(3) (l-m) CPR the ex-ante assessment has to cover *'the adequacy of planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent any discrimination and to promote sustainable development'*.

The assessment of the horizontal principles relates to Section 8 of the CP, as well as to the different priority axes, including priority axis 5 (Technical Assistance), and Section 5 of the CP (Implementing Provisions).

Evaluation questions:

- Does the strategy ensure equal opportunities between men and women?
- Were the planned measures to prevent discrimination adequate?
- Does the programme explain how it will address environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience as well as risk prevention and management in the selection of operations?
- Are the planned measures to promote sustainable development adequate?

Section 8 describes a methodology on how to ensure sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as equality between men and women in the implementation of the ADRION. Under each sub-section concrete actions and measures at operation as well as programme level are described.

Environmental issues & Sustainable development: Section 8.1 of the CP outlines the general strategy as well as concrete steps for addressing environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management. It describes general requirements for the selection and monitoring of operations and encourages operations to integrate activities that tackle environmental concerns. The project evaluation is aligned along environmental criteria as well as sustainable guidance which should assure the consideration of resource efficiency, development of green infrastructure, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and skill development in the context of environmental protection. Project applicants are invited to take specific measures to reduce the impact of project implementation on the environment.

For priority axis 2 and 3 it should be kept in mind, that there may be a 'trade-off' necessary between PA 2 cultural and natural heritage protection and in PA 3 for intermodal development, and that therefore the environmental sustainability of all actions should be safeguarded.

By implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment, the ADRION adheres to the requirement of considering of the cross-cutting sustainable development principle in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the programme, including the selection of operation (i.e. operations, contracts, actions or groups of operations as defined in Article 2 (7) CPR).

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination: Section 8.2 of the CP describes the necessary involvement of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. A number of different aspects should be considered in connection with this principle. In the programme preparation process the territorial analysis has been considering equal opportunity but this is not incorporated in the text of the strategy. The programme also states that equal opportunity will be assured within the process of information dissemination as well as in the field of evaluation and monitoring.

In order to support the principle during the proposal selection one guiding question should be whether the operation is contributing to the promotion of equal opportunities. Furthermore the project selection will be based on quality criteria including equal opportunity. The programme however does not enforce equal opportunity and therefore guiding principles and monitoring criteria remain the only tools for implementing the principle.

Equality between men and women: In general the CP does provide the same approach to equality like it does to non-discrimination. However the intervention focuses on collecting monitoring data of participation of women and men as well as the level of benefit for each of the two groups.

The CP also proposes that in project selection should take into consideration the different starting position of various target groups and the equality between men and women in the project implementation. It is not clear how this will be achieved.

Findings and recommendations:

- As part of the preparation of the programme a SEA was conducted and therein made recommendations which have been taken into account in the programme. By implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment the CP adheres to the requirement of considering the cross-cutting sustainable development principle (defined in Article 8 CPR).
- Furthermore a sustainable development of the Adriatic Ionian territory is promoted through the programme strategy.
- ADRION programme proposes concrete interventions in all three horizontal principles, regarding monitoring and evaluation, as well as in the project selection phase.
- The most compelling selection criteria are on sustainable development. Selection criteria on equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as well as equality between men and women, are mostly of a “recommending” character.
- It is recommended to position the non-discrimination and equality principle in the strategy part of the CP

Annexes

Annex 1. Documentation of CP revision according to ex-ante major queries, findings and recommendations in ex-ante interim reports and the draft final report

Key:

✓ Recommendation taken on board in previous CP revision

! Action required until submission of Cooperation Programme

*Findings and recommendations included in interim ex-ante reports or the draft final ex-ante report

If a field in the right column is left blank it means that recommendations made in the present final ex-ante report for the programme implementation which cannot yet be assessed positively.

Consistency of the programme strategy	Taken on board in CP revision
The smart growth goal of Europe 2020 is covered in SO 1.1	✓
SO 2.1 and 2.2 can make an indirect contribution to the sustainability goal of Europe 2020	✓
SO 3.1 can indirectly contribute to the Europe 2020 targets	✓
SO 4.1, 5.1 and 5.2 are indirectly linked to all Europe 2020 targets	✓
The ADRION does not directly refer to the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy although it contributes at least to three of them. Therefore, it is recommended to include direct references to the flagship initiatives.	
Contribution to the needs of the region	
Challenges and needs reflected in Table 4 of the 3 rd interim report should be considered in the ADRION strategy.*	✓
The territorial analysis and the CP acknowledge to a large extent the specific needs of the region.	✓
Challenges and needs should be oriented along the choice of thematic objectives to be more comprehensible	
Needs concerning PA 4 are not defined in the territorial analysis but, in line with the recommendations of the draft final ex-ante report, are covered explicitly in the Final Draft of ADRION.	✓
Regarding TO 4 it should be described and justified why TO 4 (which was previously incorrectly included as "selected" in Table 1 of 3 rd Draft ADRION) has been excluded from the programme.*	!
Table 1 of the draft CP ("Justification of the selection of TO & IP") does not fully reflect the challenges and needs listed in the table headed "Summary of the main challenges and needs of the ADRION area" in the territorial analysis. There has to be a consistency between the two lists of needs and challenges.	!
Establishing a clear and logical path linking the needs and SWOT analysis to strategy (PAs and SOs) is essential	!
Needs for example refer to the development of RIS which is not reflected by the indicative actions.*	✓
Some of the indicative actions are merely covering the same or similar kinds of projects and could be merged.	

Possible project examples have been included, in line with the recommendations of the interim ex-ante report, and more examples could be incorporated in the list of indicative actions to sharpen their focus.	
Assessment of the external coherence	
The ex-ante team does not know what kind of documents have been taken under consideration a list of documents are required to be send to the ex-ante team. *	✓
The TOs selected for ADRION are generally in line with the priorities included in PAS/national strategies of most partner countries.	✓
Regarding ADRION's relationship with EUSAIR the recommendations proposed in Table 11 of the 2 nd ex-ante interim report have been incorporated in the draft CP. ADRION also provides references to other macro-regional strategies (section 4.4. of the ADRION) according to the recommendation of the 2 nd interim ex-ante report.	✓
ADRION recognises the need for coordination with other transnational CPs with overlapping membership of partner countries. Nevertheless, it would be possible for some actions to be pursued by the same partnerships of beneficiaries under the ADRION and other programmes, notably EUSDR and MED	
Other EU programmes have been taken into account in the CP and a methodology is provided for considering them in the programme implementation phase.	✓
A detailed description of the coordination procedures between different EU Funds (including HORIZON 2020, COSME and LIFE) should be given in the relevant implementation documents.	✓
Assessment of the internal coherence	
Specific objectives should be clearly defined according to the positive change intended, the specific sector and the specific area.	
PA 1 Innovative region: The PA could have better synergies with PA 2 and PA 3. However there is no conflict with the other PAs.	
PA 2 Endowed Region: The PA has two specific objectives which are closely linked to each other. However overlaps between the two SOs are possible and should be reduced by a clear definition of different objectives and interventions. Synergies with PA 1 are possible and should be incorporated.	
PA 3 Connected Region: There are no synergies with other PAs but conflicts can reveal with PA 2. This should be avoided with better incorporation of the PA and definition of selection criteria avoiding conflicts especially concerning energy efficiency and safe guarding ecosystems.	
PA 4: There are synergies with all other PAs however they are currently not mentioned in the programme. It is necessary to closely link PA 4 with the other PAs of the ADRION.	
Intervention logic	
Regarding SO 1.1: Results in final draft of ADRION do reflect the need for transnational RIS 3 development.*	✓
Regarding SO 1.1: The results do reflect the needs identified, are well defined and correspond with the interventions and the specific objective does reflect the described results	✓

Regarding SO 2.1: Interventions and results do not reflect the need for enhancing the awareness of protecting biodiversity. It would be appropriate to interlink SO 2.1 and SO 2.2.	!
Regarding SO 2.2: A better interrelation between SO 2.1 and 2.2 would enhance the quality of the programme.	
Regarding SO 3.1: It should be assured that results are sustainable and following the needs for protecting the eco-system of the region as well as considering climate change. Multimodal is not per se sustainable therefore specific interventions have to assure sustainability.	!
Regarding SO 4.1: The formulation of results and interventions is still tentative and requires fuller development.	!
Regarding SO 5.1 and SO 5.2: The specific objective and interventions correspond to the customary provision for cooperation programmes in line with the regulations.	✓
The risk of potential overlaps between SO 4.1 and SO 5.2 has been reduced, in line with the recommendations in the draft final ex-ante report through the differentiation of potential beneficiaries.	
Indicator assessment	
It should always be assured that the indicators are specifically relevant for the cooperation programme and should be measurable. Since the cooperation programme does not have a high impact on absolute figures the output indicators should concentrate on the amount of projects finalised in the transnational context related to the specific objectives. *	✓
The output indicators in general are following the principal logic of the programme. However in few cases they are too many and should be somewhat more specified to avoid overlapping with other Specific Objectives. This refers primarily to indicators regarding the number of transnational cooperation networks.	!
Regarding the result indicators these should concentrate on the transnational character of the programme. To keep the result indicators at the level of ordinary scales and capacities would therefore be an adequate way to go. *	✓
Result indicators do not always reflect the listed results which should be achieved according to the 2 nd draft CP. This should be better aligned.*	✓
It is recommended to keep the results indicators clearly linked to the specific objectives.*	✓
Baseline values and target value for result indicators should be clearly defined and realistic. Currently there are no values defined. *	!
Are the ADRION countries able to fulfil the indicator target for Indicator 1?	!
It is not clear whether each ADRION country is able to provide necessary data for evaluation and monitoring (wherever applicable) however this could be overcome if the method proposed by the drafting team for the collection of values for result indicators and their change in time is successfully implemented.	
Performance framework	
Most of milestones and target values have not been provided yet.*	✓

On average the expenditure targets seem adequate for the programme, however deviations at priority axis level due to differing absorption capacities in thematic areas are likely.	
Considering the fact that the output indicators chosen for the milestone do not necessarily reflect entire projects (some projects could encompass more than one action plan, in other projects a common developed strategy or action plan is only one project activity among others) the target figures for the outputs are realistic. It has to be made sure though that these indicators will be thoroughly monitored in the progress reports.	
Care has to be taken by the programme bodies, that outputs are achieved (closely monitor and accompany projects), progress reports are delivered in a timely manner and also that bottlenecks in First Level Control bodies are avoided so as to not endanger the financial milestones.	
Consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme	
The financial allocation concentrates on the most important objectives in line with the identified challenges and needs which are the enhancement of innovation and the focus on sustainability and environmental protection.*	✓
However, the allocations to PA 1 and PA 3 are rather modest and therefore the achievement of the full range of the expected results (although reduced in the final draft CP in line with the recommendations of the draft final ex-ante report) will depend on selecting a considerable spread of interventions under these PAs during implementation.	
The programme does comply with the concentration requirements of Article Art. 16 CPR requiring a concentration of the programme on 4 thematic objectives.	✓
The technical assistance budget is sufficient to manage the programme.	✓
The financial allocation is based on regional analysis and is in line with the EC country position papers. Thus they comply with the CPR.	✓
The probability of major overlaps in the interventions of PA 4 and PA 5 (highlighted in Chapter 2) has been reduced in the final draft CP by limiting the target groups and beneficiaries under PA 4.	✓
Human resources and administrative capacity for management of the programme	
In general the description in section 5 complies with the requirements of Article 8 (4) (a) and (b) of the ETC Regulation and also fulfils the content related expectations set out in the CP template version 5. However from reading section 5 it is not clear where the JS is located and the amount of staff involved in the MA and JS. Therefore the current 2nd draft CP can only answer the first evaluation question positively regarding the adequacy of the administrative structure.*	✓
Tentative Figures on the future staff involved in the MA and JS have been provided to the Task Force members and the ex-ante evaluation team in a written form as part of the preparatory material for the 7th and 8thTF meeting.	✓

The ex-ante evaluation can at this stage only provide a partial and tentative answer as to the question whether the human resources and administrative capacity are adequate for the management of the programme. The names of further designated bodies (CA, AA and control bodies) are still missing as is any indication in relation to the ETC experience of the authorities. *	Partly✓
The names of the designated control and audit bodies are still missing	Information will be provided in DCMS
Emphasis should be put on a well elaborated division of labour between the JS and the NCPs as well as on overall cooperation and communication processes to make most efficient use of human resources available in the programme. Ideas provided by the fMA to the ex-ante evaluators are an adequate basis to work upon.	
Regarding First Level Control bodies the intended establishment of a network of FLC bodies is one adequate step to enhance cooperation and streamline working processes and it should be pursued upon the start of the programme. Well trained and interconnected FLC bodies play an important role in the financial progress of the programme.	
As no indication in relation to the ETC experience of the authorities has yet been provided ADRION should capitalize as best as possible on the experiences made by the SEE programme.	
As no indication in relation to the ETC experience of the authorities has yet been provided ADRION should be careful to select ETC experienced JS staff for the beginning phase of the programme.	
Regarding the results from the consultation it should be described how the decision has been changed regarding TO 4. In general the subsection should be shortened and better explained how decisions have been achieved towards the existing choice of TOs.*	✓
All Task force meetings as well as thematic workshops should be listed in order to show the involvement of partners.*	✓
Programme level arrangements for monitoring, data collection and evaluation	
Due to the requirements of the data collection an indication is required in the CP about previous experience with the monitoring of other ETC programmes in the respective authorities. *	!
Also in this regard the recommendations made under 5.1 apply: Capitalize as best as possible on the experiences made by the SEE programme and be careful to select ETC experienced staff in the JS especially in the beginning phase of the programme when programme level arrangements for monitoring and data collection are fixed.	
It is recommended to describe measures to handle data bottlenecks as well as to describe the sources of data for monitoring as well as for evaluation. The programme should also indicate the system and data collection procedure.*	✓ partly

Preventive measures for bottlenecks: Data on output indicators is, based on the CP and other written information sources, mostly derived from application forms and project progress reports. It has to be ensured that all programme bodies involved in the processing of progress reports before they reach the JS on central programme level are to cope with working peaks.	
In order to be able to report on the result indicator values in the Annual Implementation Reports in 2017 and 2019 it has to be ensured that surveys are conducted timely enough for the collection of data.	
Reduction of the administrative burden	
What are the measures in the individual countries to reduce administrative burdens for applicants?*	✓
What are measures at the MA and JS to reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries?*	✓
Involvement of partners	
The involvement of partners in the programme preparation process reflects the European Code of Conduct on Partnership and involvement of stakeholders in programme design and implementation and can be considered as sufficient.	✓
Contribution to the horizontal principles	
As part of the programme preparation stage a SEA was conducted and therein made recommendations which have been taken into account. By implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment the CP adheres to the requirement of considering the cross-cutting sustainable development principle (defined in Article 8 CPR).	✓
Furthermore a sustainable development of the Adriatic Ionian territory is promoted through the programme strategy.	✓
ADRION programme proposes concrete interventions in all three horizontal principles, regarding monitoring and evaluation as well as in the project selection phase.	✓
The most compelling selection criteria are based on sustainable development. Selection criteria on equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as well as equality between men and women are mostly of a "recommending" character.	✓

Annex 2. List of documents

Backgrounds documents
EUSAIR Action Plan (June 2014)
Thematic Guidances of DG Regio
Studies To Support The Development Of Sea Basin Cooperation. In The Mediterranean, Adriatic/Ionian And The Black Sea. CONTRACT NUMBER MARE/2012/07 - Ref. No 2 Report 2
A Study Of Environmental Conflicts And Issues In South-Eastern Europe: Possible Collaboration Between CSOS And Ecological Economists (2009)
Overview Of Ex Ante S.W.O.T. Analysis- Integration To The Evaluation Plan (Operational Plan) On-going Evaluation Of The Adriatic IPA CBC Programme (October 2011). Ecosfera
IPA Adriatic CBC Programme 2007-2013 First Operational Evaluation Report (2011, Ecosfera)
Evaluation of South East Europe Programme 2007-2013, Final report (November 2013, Ecorys)
Other ETC draft CP (Med, Alpine space, Central Europe, Danube)
South East Europe2020 Strategy (SEE2020.RCC.INT)
The strategy for innovation in R&D in the Western Balkans http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/WBRIS%20Strategy10-21-13%20web.pdf
Country documents
Albania
Albania 2013 progress report; EC (2013)
IPA: Albania – country strategy paper 2014 – 2020; EC (2014)
Municipal waste management in Albania; European Environment Agency (2013)
The impact of tourism sector development in the Albanian Economy, Alba Kruya, Epoka University Albania (2012)
Studies to support the development of sea basin cooperation in the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Ionian, and Black Sea – Country Fish Albania, Eunetmar 2014
Statistical report, INSTAT, Albanian Institute of Statistics (2010 -2012)
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013 progress report; EC (2013)
IPA: Bosnia and Herzegovina – country strategy paper 2014 – 2017; EC (2014)
Country Sector Assessments, UNDP GoALWaSH Programme, Governance, Advocacy and Leadership for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; Volume 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2009)
Environmental Statistics - Public municipal transportation and disposal of waste; Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011)
Statistički Godišnjak/Ljetopis. Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine. Statistical Yearbook 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina FEDERAL OFFICE OF STATISTICS FZS (2012)
Statistički Godišnjak/Ljetopis. Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine. Statistical Yearbook 2012, Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina FEDERAL OFFICE OF STATISTICS (2013)

Croatia
Partnership agreement for the European structural and investment funds in the EU financial period 2014-2020 (official proposal_en_2014hr16m8pa001.1.1); Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds (2014)
Municipal waste management in Croatia; European Environment Agency (2013)
Position of the European Commission Services on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2014-2020; EC
Tourism 2011, Statistical reports, Croatian Bureau of Statistics DZS (2012)
Tourism 2012, Statistical reports, Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2013)
Greece
Position of the European Commission Services on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in Greece for the period 2014-2020; EC (2012)
Greek national reform programme; various Ministries (2014)
Greek Tourism Strategic Plan: 2021 Growth Roadmap, SETE (2014)
Italy
Position of the Commission Services on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in Italy for the period 2014-2020; EC (2012)
Economic and financial document 2014; Ministero dell' Economia e delle Finanze (2014)
Accordo Di Partenariato 2014-2020 Italia, DPS 2014
Strategia, approccio territoriale, priorità e strumenti di attuazione. Programmazione Dei Fondi Strutturali e di Investimento Europei (SIE). Regione Emilia-Romagna (2014)
Documento Programmatico Por Plurifondo Fesr-Fse 2014-2020, Regione Molise (2014)
Rapporto di Sintesi Della Strategia Regionale Unitaria 2014 -2020, Regione Veneto (2014)
Quadro di Riferimento Per La Programmazione 2014-2020, Regione Siciliana (2014)
Indirizzi per la definizione dei Programmi Operativi Regionali 2014-2020 a valere sui fondi strutturali. Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia (2014)
ERDF POR Region Marche (2014)
Statistiche varie sul turismo, ISTAT (2010- 2014)
Montenegro
Montenegro 2013 progress report; EC (2013)
National strategy of sustainable development of Montenegro; Ministry of tourism and environmental protection (2007)
Tourism Statistics, Statistical Office of Montenegro MONSTAT (2014)
Serbia
Serbia 2013 progress report; EC (2013)
Waste statistics and waste management in Republic of Serbia 2008 – 2010; Statistical office of Republic of Serbia (2012)
National priorities for international assistance (NAD) 2014-2017 with projections until 2020; (2014)
National plan for the adoption of the <i>acquis</i> (2013-2016); European integration office (2013)
Statistical pocketbook of the Republic of Serbia 2014; Statistical office of Republic of Serbia (2014)
Serbia Travel & Tourism. Development Potential 2011-2023, WTTCC (2012)

Monthly Statistical Bulletin, Statistical Office Of The Republic Of Serbia (2013)
Monthly Statistical Bulletin, Statistical Office Of The Republic Of Serbia (2014)
Slovenia
Partnership agreement between Slovenia and the European Commission for the period 2014-2020, version 1.0; (2014)
Position of the European Commission Services on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in Slovenia for the period 2014-2020; EC (2012)
Development Characteristics and Challenges of Tourism in Southeastern Europe, with Special Emphasis on Slovenia, Anton Gosar, University of Primorska, Slovenia (2007)
Slovenian Tourism in numbers 2010, Slovenian Tourist Board SORS (2011)
Slovenian Tourism in numbers 2011, Slovenian Tourist Board (2012)
Statistics
Eurostat on-line database
European environment agency on-line database
A Water Blueprint for Europe; EU (2013)
Discussion paper: Session III: Planning waste treatment capacities for biodegradable waste and sewage sludge, EEA, Copenhagen; authors: Birgitte Kjær and Leonidas Milios, Copenhagen Resource Institute (2013)
Energy, transport and environment indicators; Eurostat (2013)
Steps towards greening in the EU Monitoring Member States' achievements in selected environmental policy areas: EU summary report; EC (2013)
Eurostat news release on municipal waste generation and treatment (4.3.2013.)
EAA technical report: Assessment of cost recovery through water pricing; EAA (2013)
Environmental protection expenditure in Europe, 1995 – 2009 data; Eurostat (2011)
Study on Economic and Social Benefits of Environmental Protection and Resource Efficiency Related to the European Semester; group of authors (2014)
Tourism, Eurostat Regional Year Book (2013)
Tourism Statistics, Eurostat (2014)
Attitudes of Europeans towards tourism, Flash Eurobarometer 334, EC (2012)
Transport Connecting the Regions"
European Union
European territorial cooperation – Cohesion policy 2014 – 2020
Trade in goods with Western Balkans (6), 2013
Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs The Western Balkans in Transition", 2009
Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport Energy and transport figures, 2010
Draft thematic guidance fiche for desk officer transport: Relevant provisions in the legislation, version 3 - 14/05/2014
Sustainable multimodal urban mobility, version 2 - 28/01/2014
EU Commission Staff Working Document
Albania – 2013, Progress report
Bosnia and Herzegovina – 2013, Progress report
Montenegro – 2013, Progress report

Serbia – 2013, Progress report
Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010 – 2020 - A bridged version
Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions
The governance of macro-regional strategies
Maritime Dimension
RAM (Rete Autostrade del mare) 2012 – Adriatic Gateway
Studio Ambrosetti – Il rilancio della portualità e della logistica italiana, 2013
NAPA - Market study on the potential cargo capacity of the North Adriatic port system, MDS, London – 2012
Maritime Policy: Commission launches new strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
The potential of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean Sea Case study report The Adriatic Sea
ESPON
Project TERREVI (Territorial evidence), South East Europe - November 2012
Project ESaTDOR European Seas and Territorial Development, Opportunities and Risks, Mediterranean sea, 2013
Multiple ESPON thematic maps
Project ACROSSEE, Interreg IV B, SEE
Maps from Rail Road Transport Model elaboration for SEE
World Bank
National roads network per country
National rail networks per country
Eurostat
Energy, transport and environment indicators
EUSAIR
Connecting the Region - Thematic Workshop 2, 2014

Annex 3. Task force meetings

- 1st TF meeting, Bologna: 11/04/2013
- 2nd TF meeting, Bologna: 16/09/2013
- 3rd TF meeting, Zagreb: 01/04/2014
- 4th TF meeting, Beograd: 23/05/2014
- 5th TF meeting, Bologna: 21-22/07/2014
- 6th TF meeting, Ancona: 4/09/2014
- 7th TF meeting, Brussels: 19/09/2014
- 8th TF meeting, Thessaloniki: 09-10/10/2014

Annex 4. Stakeholders involved in public consultation of CP

Countries	2611
Albania	56
Bosnia and Herzegovina	83
Croatia	264
Greece	184
Italy	984
Slovenia	289
Serbia	216
Montenegro	275
Other	260

Categories	2611
Central/Regional PA	874
Local PA/In-house	310
Research and Education	586
Dev agency/NGO	438
Chambers, Unions, Associations (economic interest)	212
Undertaking profit oriented	130
Other	61

Annex 5. Consultation comments

1 st consultation phase ending 1.8.2014		
MS and organisation	Date	Remark by the consultant
Slovenia Tanja Rener Sekretarka Republic Of Slovenia Government Office For Development And European Cohesion Policy	30.7.2014	incorporated
Croatia Mislav Kovač Sector for Territorial Cooperation Directorate for Management of Operational Programmes Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds	31.7.2014	incorporated
Albania Anisa Sërbo Expert - CBC Unit Department of EU Programming Assistance Ministry of European Integration	1.8.2014	No comments – report accepted
Greece Eleni Katsiyianni, “Adrlon” TF Member, Head of Unit A' - Monitoring of Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes Ministry for Development and Competitiveness, Leoforos Georgikis Sholis 65, GRC-570 01 Pilea, Thessaloniki,	6.8.2014	Comments incorporated

2nd consultation phase ending on 1 September 2014		
MS and organisation	Date	Remark by the consultant
Greece Eleni Katsiyianni, "Adrlon" TF Member, Head of Unit A' - Monitoring of Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes Ministry for Development and Competitiveness, Leoforos Georgikis Sholis 65, GRC-570 01 Pilea, Thessaloniki,	11.9.2014	Comments incorporated
3rd consultation phase ending on 30 September 2014		
MS and organisation	Date	Remark by the consultant
Task Force Members	11.10.2014	Comments incorporated