

Implementation Report for IPA II Cross-Border

PART A

IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	1
KEY INFORMATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME FOR THE YEAR CONCERNED, INCLUDING ON FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS, WITH RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL AND INDICATOR DATA.....	4
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS.....	8
3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION	8
3.2 COMMON AND PROGRAMME SPECIFIC INDICATORS (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)	11
PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	11
TABLE 2: COMMON AND PROGRAMME SPECIFIC OUTPUT INDICATORS - 1.A.....	11
TABLE 1: RESULT INDICATORS - 1.A.1.1	12
TABLE 1: RESULT INDICATORS - 1.A.1.2	13
TABLE 2: COMMON AND PROGRAMME SPECIFIC OUTPUT INDICATORS - 1.D.....	14
TABLE 1: RESULT INDICATORS - 1.D.1.3	15
TABLE 2: COMMON AND PROGRAMME SPECIFIC OUTPUT INDICATORS - 2.C.....	16
TABLE 1: RESULT INDICATORS - 2.C.2.1.....	17
TABLE 1: RESULT INDICATORS - 2.C.2.2.....	18
TABLE 2: COMMON AND PROGRAMME SPECIFIC OUTPUT INDICATORS - 2.B.....	19
TABLE 1: RESULT INDICATORS - 2.B.2.3.....	20
TABLE 1: RESULT INDICATORS - 2.B.2.4.....	21
PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	22
3.3 TABLE 3: INFORMATION ON THE MILESTONES AND TARGETS DEFINED IN THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK	22
3.4. FINANCIAL DATA.....	23
TABLE 4: FINANCIAL INFORMATION AT PRIORITY AXIS AND PROGRAMME LEVEL.....	23
AS SET OUT IN TABLE 1 OF ANNEX II TO COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) NO 1011/2014 (MODEL FOR TRANSMISSION OF FINANCIAL DATA) AND TABLE 17 OF MODEL FOR COOPERATION PROGRAMMES UNDER IPA.....	23
WHERE APPLICABLE, THE USE OF ANY CONTRIBUTION FROM THIRD COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME SHOULD BE PROVIDED (FOR EXAMPLE IPA AND ENI, NORWAY, SWITZERLAND)	24
TABLE 5: BREAKDOWN OF THE CUMULATIVE FINANCIAL DATA BY CATEGORY OF INTERVENTION.....	25
TABLE 6: CUMULATIVE COST OF ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA	27
4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS.....	28
5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN.....	32
(A) ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND THE MEASURES TAKEN.....	32
(B) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, OTHERWISE IT WILL BE INCLUDED IN POINT 9.1. AN ASSESSMENT OF WHETHER PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS TARGETS IS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THEIR FULFILMENT, INDICATING ANY REMEDIAL ACTIONS TAKEN OR PLANNED, WHERE APPROPRIATE.	35
6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (ARTICLE 50(9) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)	38
7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (ARTICLE 46 OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)	39
8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (ARTICLE 101(H) AND ARTICLE 111(3) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(B) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013).....	40
8.1. MAJOR PROJECTS	40
TABLE 7: MAJOR PROJECTS.....	40
SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING MAJOR PROJECTS AND MEASURES TAKEN TO OVERCOME THEM	40
ANY CHANGE PLANNED IN THE LIST OF MAJOR PROJECTS IN THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME	40
8.2. JOINT ACTION PLANS	41
TABLE 8: JOINT ACTION PLANS (JAP)	42
SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND MEASURES TAKEN TO OVERCOME THEM	43
9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013).....	44
9.1 INFORMATION IN PART A AND ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)	44
9.2. SPECIFIC ACTIONS TAKEN TO PROMOTE EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN AND TO PROMOTE NON-DISCRIMINATION, IN PARTICULAR ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND THE ARRANGEMENTS IMPLEMENTED TO ENSURE THE	

INTEGRATION OF THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME AND OPERATIONS (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 2, (D) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)	45
9.3.SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 2, (E) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013).....	46
9.4. REPORTING ON SUPPORT USED FOR CLIMATE CHANGE OBJECTIVES (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013).....	47
9.5 ROLE OF PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 1, (C) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)	48
10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 1 (A) AND (B), OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013	49
10.1 PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION PLAN AND THE FOLLOW-UP GIVEN TO THE FINDINGS OF EVALUATIONS ...	49
10.2 THE RESULTS OF THE INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES OF THE FUNDS CARRIED OUT UNDER THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	51
11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 2 (A), (B), (C) AND (F), OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013).....	52
11.1. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL INVESTMENTS, SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME	52
11.2 PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS TO REINFORCE THE CAPACITY OF AUTHORITIES AND BENEFICIARIES TO ADMINISTER AND TO USE THE IPA.....	53
11.3 CONTRIBUTION TO MACRO-REGIONAL AND SEA BASIN STRATEGIES (WHERE APPROPRIATE)	54
11.4 PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL INNOVATION	55
13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH	56
14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN — PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013).....	57
DOCUMENTS.....	58
LATEST VALIDATION RESULTS.....	59

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Key information on the implementation of the cooperation programme for the year concerned, including on financial instruments, with relation to the financial and indicator data.

The progress in Programme implementation during the reference period is significant, both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

In 2019 all projects under the first Call have been contracted and are being implemented. They include 18 projects under Priority 1 and 22 Projects under Priority 2. The committed funds amount to € 15.6 mil. under Priority 1 and € 23 mil. under Priority 2.

The projects involve 82 Greek beneficiaries and 68 beneficiaries from the Republic of North Macedonia. Some beneficiaries are participating in more than one project. Therefore, the total number of project partners is 202.

A second Call for project proposals was launched in 2019. Following the allocation of Programme funds under the 1st Call, and the relevant recommendations of the Programme's external evaluators, the Call was targeted to Specific Objectives 1.1, 1.3 & 2.4. It was also restricted **to partnerships with competence and specialization in the above-selected objectives.**

The Call's published budget was € 6 million. The 'success story' of the 1st Call was repeated. It attracted 45 proposals, with a combined budget in excess of € 33 million. 158 potential beneficiaries were involved (79 from each country). The main Call Statistics are as follows:

Specific Objective 1.1 EMPLOYMENT

Submitted proposals under S.O 1.1: 15

Published S.O. 1.1 Budget: 1,800,000.00 € ; Requested total budget under S.O. 1.1: 10,951,031.66 €

Specific Objective 1.3 TOURISM

Submitted proposals under S.O 1.3: 24

Published S.O. 1.3 Budget: 1,400,000.00 € ; Requested total budget under S.O. 1.3: 15,367,985.98 €

Specific Objective 2.4 NATURAL DISASTERS

Submitted proposals under S.O 2.4: 6

Published S.O. 2.4 Budget: 2,800,000.00 € ; Requested total budget under S.O 2.4: 7,132,465.64 €

The approval of projects under the 2nd Call will take place in 2020 by the Programme's Joint Monitoring

Committee. The Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat (JS) closely monitor the overall commitments of funds in conjunction with the actual implementation of individual projects and proactively recommend the optimum allocation of funds.

As such, an amount of € 3.2 million is expected to be contracted under Priority 1. It will be generated from 2. Call projects and reserve-list projects. The respective amount for Priority 2 is € 2.8 mil. The implied 'overcommitments' are a safeguard against lower absorption of funds.

As of 11.09.2020, the state of play regarding the financial implementation has markedly improved, as compared to 31.12.2019.

Total eligible expenditure declared (€, 31.12.2019. Table 4; Selected figures)

Priority 1:680.993

Priority 2:1.754.401

Priority 3: 608.547

Total:3.043.942

The respective figures for 11.09.2020 are:

Priority 1:1.848.212

Priority 2:3.468.570

Priority 3 939.834

Total: 6.256.616

Therefore, the Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries (as of 11.09.2020) is :12%, 15%, 21%, and 14% respectively.

Contracting rates stand at 100%. No contracts are pending. No further contracts are expected in 2020 (see also 'Synthesis of the evaluations').

Financial targets and projections

- a) The 2019 N+3 target was achieved.
- b) Declared expenditure, as of 11.9.2020: € 5.33 mil. (EU funds) ; € 6.26 mil. (total public expenditure).
- c) A further € 1.5mil (EU funds) has already been incurred.

Based on the current implementation figures, the following can be observed:

- d) The Financial projections for the year 2020 (submitted in July) can already be deemed achieved.
- e) N+3 target (year 2020) : € 7.99 mil. (EU funds).
- f) Required expenditure: € 1.16 mil. EU funds (e-b-c)

The JS monitors on a weekly basis: i) the expenditure declarations, and ii) the planned expenditure submission of the projects under implementation. Based on the available data, the Programme is expected to achieve the 2020 N+3 target.

Indicators Reporting methodology

In case of outputs, which are delivered once (e.g. fixed assets, equipment), reporting is made on fully implemented operations. Outputs may be reported in relation to partially implemented operations, if it is meaningful to do so. The following indicators are reported based on partially implemented operations: CO32,C034,CO36,O0101,O0103,O0104,O0204,RO101,RO102,RO103,RO104,RO204,RO205,RO206. The basic criteria for this type of measurement are present:

- a) The monitoring system is capable of capturing outputs delivered at a particular stage of the operation lifecycle. The MIS is fed with input from the projects bi-annually.
- b) The nature of the operations allows for reporting outputs at a particular stage of their lifecycle. For example, households which will benefit from energy efficiency measures can already claim secondary benefits from auxiliary activities. Similarly, projects affecting a population can generate partial benefits in the information / impact domain.
- c) the definition of the output indicator used for reporting allows reporting outputs delivered by operations at the particular stage of operation lifecycle. For example, the projects addressing the NATURA sites will deliver their core benefits upon project completion. In doing so, they will first contribute in risk assessments, SWOT analysis, mapping of the areas. The selected indicators are suitable to capture the gradual contributions.

Information and Publicity

The Programme has achieved its visibility objectives in 2019. The first implementation stage of the Communication Strategy has been fully implemented, while the second implementation stage is still ongoing. Efforts are made to communicate to the general public the results of the individual projects and their impact on the everyday life of the people.

Summary of communication activities during 2019:

The Programme actively contributed to EU initiatives, like RegioStars: project HEALTH INFO nomination

- Three projects (HEALTH – INFO, TRAP and ENPOL-EE) have been selected by DG REGIO to be included in the respective database of exemplary projects in late 2019
- Active participation of our Programme in a live debate organized by Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation on EU cohesion policy. Project EMPLOYOUTH presented as best practice in the category of Brain Drain
- Celebration of EC DAY- Basic Life Support (BLS) live hands-on demonstration for the community, delivered by certified instructors
- Participation in the 84th International Fair of Thessaloniki (300,000 visitors).
- Organisation of a seminar targeted only to communication managers of all 40 funded projects in July 2019.
- Publication of a 3-d brochure; The Programme in Full Swing. Four years On – Key facts and figures 2015-2019 (http://www.ipa-cbc-programme.eu/article/202_Brochure: The-Programme-in-Full-Swing)

In 2019 the ‘Prespa agreement’ between Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia entered into force. The Programme bodies arranged the change of the Programme’s title accordingly. The revised Programme was approved on 8.10.2019.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1	Development and Support of Local Economy	<p>Overview of implementation Contracted funds: € 15.694.422 Number of approved projects: 18 Number of contracted projects / (during 2019): 18 / (4) Total expenditure (as of 31.12.2019): € 680.993 Total expenditure (as of 30.06.2020): € 1.387.363</p> <p>Project List 1. Employouth 2. IBiSEAIT MIS 3. iCBA 4. HealthNET 5. Heart Safe Cities 6. Health-Info MIS 7. Cometech MIS 8. In4Child MIS 9. Quality Health 10. Cross4all 11. We Care 12. IpA Shield II 13. Connect 14. ToCulter 15. I-Tour 16. Terra Vino 17. Cineculture 18. Holy Water</p>
2	Protection of Environment - Transportation	<p>Overview of implementation Contracted funds: € 23.044.432 Number of approved projects: 22 Number of contracted projects / (during 2019): 22 / (1) Total expenditure (as of 31.12.2019): € 1.754.401 Total expenditure (as of 30.06.2020): € 2.930.305</p>

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>Project List</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3Em MIS 5030794 2. We Cross Borders MIS 5032932 3. ENPOL-EE MIS 5033032 4. Benefit MIS 5032713 5. Green Inter-e-Mobility MIS 5048466 6. Symbiosis MIS 5030837 7. Less-Waste-II MIS 5030891 8. Bioreal MIS 5030941 9. aGROWchain MIS 5031850 10. Zefforos MIS 5032743 11. Sumbio MIS 5032938 12. Combine2Protect MIS 5030750 13. Aqua-M II MIS 5030774 14. Plan D.oiran MIS 5032673 15. Papeshe MIS 5032716 16. Wa-umbrella MIS 5032852 17. Conse-PP MIS 5032907 18. Trap MIS 5032912 19. SmartWaterSave MIS 5033054 20. Strass MIS 5033067 21. J-Cross MIS 5031015 22. Help MIS 5031757 <p>As part of a System Audit, the Audit Authority reviewed the declared expenditure of two projects. A combined expenditure of € 159.141 was audited. Zero amount was deemed ineligible.</p>
3	Technical Assistance	<p>In Greece, the total TA certified expenditure was € 434.162, as of 31.12.2019.</p> <p>The main cost driver was the staffing of the Joint Secretariat, which involved the cost of 6 people. At the end of 2019, the JS Coordinator was contracted with start of his engagement from January 2020.</p> <p>During 2019, important studies were completed, such as: the Final Implementation Report of the 2007-2013 Programme, the 1st interim evaluation report of the current Programme, and the development of a Methodology to monitor the Programme indicators, and the preparation of a targeted CfP.</p> <p>Communication Strategy: a new Programme logo has been designed, along with new templates and printed material. On the occasion of celebrating EC Day 2019, an open interactive event “Are you prepared to save a life?” took place in Thessaloniki</p>

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>with information and promotional material. Finally, a training seminar targeted to projects' Communication managers was held in Edessa.</p> <p>In the IPA country, total TA expenditure reached € 174,385, as of 31.12.2019. Main cost drivers: External Expertise, the management of the Antenna Office in Bitola. The FLC controllers are paid from the TA budget. The respective amount during 2019 is € 11,300. Main activities during 2019: Organization of the 5th JMC meeting. Project management activities Information and Publicity: The main objective was to highlight the European Union's participation in the IPA projects/ interventions, and to reach a broad audience in the Republic of North Macedonia. Main activities: EC Day 2019 campaign (Bitola & Thessaloniki) promotional video "EUROPE IS YOU?" (slogan of the EC DAY 2019) visibility activities to target audiences -E-newsletters -questionnaires for the evaluation of Com. activities</p>

3.2 Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Priority axes other than technical assistance

Priority axis	1 - Development and Support of Local Economy
Thematic Priority	a - Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of immigrants' communities and vulnerable groups; investment in public employment services; and supporting investment in public health and social services.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 1.a

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations
F	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	1,500.00	1,157.00	
S	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	1,500.00	5,000.00	The high projection reflects the relatively large number of approved projects (eight), which will report on this indicator. Their implementation started within the 2nd semester of 2018. The estimate is based on projections that cover the whole eligible area.
F	O0101	Number of participants in joint local cross-border employment activities	Persons	350.00	0.00	Due to the late start of the relevant projects, no implementation can be recorded.
S	O0101	Number of participants in joint local cross-border employment activities	Persons	350.00	330.00	The projection refers to year 2023. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all joint activities were cancelled in 2020. Therefore, the reporting for 2020 will demonstrate little progress, as compared with 2019.
F	O0103	Population covered by improved social services	Persons	500.00	403.00	
S	O0103	Population covered by improved social services	Persons	500.00	5,000.00	The high projection reflects the relatively large number of approved projects (eight), which will report on this indicator. Their implementation started within the 2nd semester of 2018. The estimate is based on projections that cover the whole eligible area.

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	O0101	Number of participants in joint local cross-border employment activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0101	Number of participants in joint local cross-border employment activities	330.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	O0103	Population covered by improved social services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0103	Population covered by improved social services	18,300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	1 - Development and Support of Local Economy
Thematic Priority	a - Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of immigrants' communities and vulnerable groups; investment in public employment services; and supporting investment in public health and social services.
Specific objective	1.1 - Create employment opportunities for educated graduates by exploiting comparative advantages of the crossborder area, preferably with the use of innovative tools and practices

Table 1: Result indicators - 1.a.1.1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
R0101	Highly educated in employment, including self employment 6 months upon leaving the project/intervention	Persons	47.00	2015	52.00	67.00		2019 Contribution: 20

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
R0101	Highly educated in employment, including self employment 6 months upon leaving the project/intervention	47.00		47.00		47.00		47.00	

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0101	Highly educated in employment, including self employment 6 months upon leaving the project/intervention	47.00	

Priority axis	1 - Development and Support of Local Economy
Thematic Priority	a - Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of immigrants' communities and vulnerable groups; investment in public employment services; and supporting investment in public health and social services.
Specific objective	1.2 - Improvement of preventive health care and social services of children and elderly population

Table 1: Result indicators - 1.a.1.2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
R0102	Population having access to health services	Persons living close to health centers	1,808,707.00	2015	1,826,794.00	1,872,428.00		2019 incremental contribution to the indicator: 63,721.
R0103	Population having access to social services	Persons living close to social services providers	1,260,163.00	2015	1,272,765.00	1,283,001.00		2019 incremental contribution to the indicator: 22,838.

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
R0102	Population having access to health services	1,808,707.00		1,808,707.00		1,808,707.00		1,808,707.00	
R0103	Population having access to social services	1,260,163.00		1,260,163.00		1,260,163.00		1,260,163.00	

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0102	Population having access to health services	1,808,707.00	
R0103	Population having access to social services	1,260,163.00	

Priority axis	1 - Development and Support of Local Economy
Thematic Priority	d - Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 1.d

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations
F	O0104	Number of enterprises participating in cross-border joint projects	Number of Enterprises	30.00	52.00	
S	O0104	Number of enterprises participating in cross-border joint projects	Number of Enterprises	30.00	52.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	O0104	Number of enterprises participating in cross-border joint projects	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0104	Number of enterprises participating in cross-border joint projects	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	1 - Development and Support of Local Economy
Thematic Priority	d - Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.
Specific objective	1.3 - Improve the attractiveness and promote tourism in the cross-border area to enhance employment in tourism

Table 1: Result indicators - 1.d.1.3

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
R0104	Jobs created in the tourism sector	Persons	3,250.00	2015	3,285.00	3,276.00		2019 contribution:26

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
R0104	Jobs created in the tourism sector	3,250.00		3,250.00		3,250.00		3,250.00	

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0104	Jobs created in the tourism sector	3,250.00	

Priority axis	2 - Protection of Environment - Transportation
Thematic Priority	c - Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures by, inter alia, reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 2.c

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations
F	CO32	Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings	Kwh/year	150,000.00	98,780.00	One approved project will contribute to this indicator. Their implementation commenced in 2nd semester 2018
S	CO32	Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings	Kwh/year	150,000.00	481,660.00	
F	CO34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG	Kilograms of CO2 equivalent/year	106.00	33.43	Three approved projects will contribute to this indicator. Their implementation commenced in 2nd semester 2018
S	CO34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG	Kilograms of CO2 equivalent/year	106.00	1,003.00	
F	O0201	Surface of improved cross-border road and infrastructure	Square meters	1,200.00	0.00	Four approved projects will contribute to this indicator. Although their implementation commenced in 2nd semester 2018, no output can be reported yet. The nature of the deliverables does not allow for a partial implementation. Outputs will be reported upon project completion.
S	O0201	Surface of improved cross-border road and infrastructure	Square meters	1,200.00	700.00	
F	O0204	Volume of solid wastes under improved management or recycling	Tonnes / year	1,725.00	343.00	Six approved projects will contribute to this indicator. Their implementation commenced in 2nd semester 2018
S	O0204	Volume of solid wastes under improved management or recycling	Tonnes / year	1,725.00	8,325.00	
F	O0205	Volume of liquid wastes under improved management or recycling	Cubic meters / year	158,775.00	0.00	Three approved projects will contribute to this indicator. Although their implementation commenced in 2nd semester 2018, no output can be reported yet. The nature of the deliverables does not allow for a partial implementation. Outputs will be reported upon project completion.
S	O0205	Volume of liquid wastes under improved management or recycling	Cubic meters / year	158,775.00	200,200.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	CO32	Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	CO32	Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings	481,660.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	CO34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	CO34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG	1,003.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	O0201	Surface of improved cross-border road and infrastructure	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0201	Surface of improved cross-border road and infrastructure	700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	O0204	Volume of solid wastes under improved management or recycling	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0204	Volume of solid wastes under improved management or recycling	8,325.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	O0205	Volume of liquid wastes under improved management or recycling	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0205	Volume of liquid wastes under improved management or recycling	200,200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	2 - Protection of Environment - Transportation
Thematic Priority	c - Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures by, inter alia, reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities.
Specific objective	2.1 - Upgrade public infrastructure to improve road travel time, safe border crossing and promote energy efficiency towards green transport

Table 1: Result indicators - 2.c.2.1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
R0201	Reduced travel time	Minutes	10,81 min/10 km	2015	10% improvement over 2015 value		10,81 min/10km	Two projects were originally approved. One has been withdrawn. The implementation has started. However, the nature of the deliverables cannot be counted on partially implemented projects. They will be reflected upon project completion.
R0202	Average border crossing travelling time	Minutes	101		20% improvement over 2015 value		101	Two projects were originally approved. One has been withdrawn. The implementation has started. However, the nature of the deliverables cannot be counted on partially implemented projects. They will be reflected upon project completion.
R0203	Energy efficiency awareness barometer	Value in a scale of 100	61.77	2015	20% improvement over 2015 value		61.77	Two projects were originally approved. One has been withdrawn. The implementation has started. However, the nature of the deliverables cannot be counted on partially implemented projects. They will be reflected upon project completion.

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
R0201	Reduced travel time		10,81 min/10km		10,81 min/10km		10,81 min/10km		10,81 min/10 km
R0202	Average border crossing travelling time		101		101		101		101
R0203	Energy efficiency awareness barometer		61.77		61.77		61.77		61.77

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0201	Reduced travel time		10,81 min/10km
R0202	Average border crossing travelling time		101
R0203	Energy efficiency awareness barometer		61.77

Priority axis	2 - Protection of Environment - Transportation
Thematic Priority	c - Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures by, inter alia, reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities.
Specific objective	2.2 - Sustainable management and recycling of biowastes

Table 1: Result indicators - 2.c.2.2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
R0204	Population served by improved waste management or recycling	Persons	17,885.00	2015	25,097.00	145,966.00		Six projects contribute to the indicator, that cover a wide geographical area. The baseline was set too low.

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
R0204	Population served by improved waste management or recycling	17,885.00		17,885.00		17,885.00		17,885.00	

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0204	Population served by improved waste management or recycling	17,885.00	

Priority axis	2 - Protection of Environment - Transportation
Thematic Priority	b - Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 2.b

(I)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations
F	CO20	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	200,000.00	0.00	Only one project has been approved (J-CROSS). As the project requires infrastructure interventions and the installation of equipment, the indicator will be measured once the project is completed.
S	CO20	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	200,000.00	15,000.00	
F	CO21	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measures	Persons	270,000.00	0.00	Only one project has been approved (J-CROSS). As the project requires infrastructure interventions and the installation of equipment, the indicator will be measured once the project is completed.
S	CO21	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measures	Persons	270,000.00	2,000.00	
F	CO23	surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status	Hectars	50,000.00	0.00	Seven projects were approved and will report contribute to this indicator. The projects started their implementation during 2018. The projects involve infrastructure interventions and installation of equipment. Therefore, the outputs and results will be realised once the project is completed.
S	CO23	surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status	Hectars	50,000.00	40,422.00	
F	O0207	Surface area of rehabilitated or with improved management ecosystems	Hectars	188,000.00	0.00	The same projects that contribute to indicator CO23 also contribute to CO207. Similarly, the indicator will be measured on fully implemented projects.
S	O0207	Surface area of rehabilitated or with improved management ecosystems	Hectars	188,000.00	5,850.00	
F	O0210	Number of participants in prevention actions	Persons	200.00	0.00	Two projects were approved and will report contribute to this indicator. The projects started their implementation during 2018. One project involves infrastructure and will be measured upon completion. The other project allows measurement under partially implemented operations. It will report in 2020.
S	O0210	Number of participants in prevention actions	Persons	200.00	300.00	

(I)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	CO20	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	CO20	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	CO21	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measures	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	CO21	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measures	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	CO23	surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	CO23	surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status	323,955.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	O0207	Surface area of rehabilitated or with improved management ecosystems	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0207	Surface area of rehabilitated or with improved management ecosystems	124,827.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	O0210	Number of participants in prevention actions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	O0210	Number of participants in prevention actions	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	2 - Protection of Environment - Transportation
Thematic Priority	b - Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.
Specific objective	2.3 - Sustainable management of protected areas, ecosystems and biodiversity

Table 1: Result indicators - 2.b.2.3

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
R0205	Surface area of ecosystems or habitats with improved protection and conservation status	Hectars	1,369,578.00	2015	1,557,578.00	1,439,446.12		2019 annual contribution: 69,888.12

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
R0205	Surface area of ecosystems or habitats with improved protection and conservation status	1,369,578.00		1,369,578.00		1,369,578.00		1,369,578.00	

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0205	Surface area of ecosystems or habitats with improved protection and conservation status	1,369,578.00	

Priority axis	2 - Protection of Environment - Transportation
Thematic Priority	b - Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.
Specific objective	2.4 - Prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, risks and hazards

Table 1: Result indicators - 2.b.2.4

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
R0206	Population benefiting from risk / hazards prevention and natural disaster management measures	Persons	1,150,000.00	2015	1,620,200.00	1,280,000.00		2019 annual contribution: 130.000

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
R0206	Population benefiting from risk / hazards prevention and natural disaster management measures	1,150,000.00		1,150,000.00		1,150,000.00		1,150,000.00	

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0206	Population benefiting from risk / hazards prevention and natural disaster management measures	1,150,000.00	

Priority axes for technical assistance

3.3 Table 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	Final target (2023) total	2019	Observations
1	O	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	0	1,500.00	1,157.00	The achievement of indicators is evaluated in the dedicated sections of the report.
1	F	F011	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	1400000	18,188,028.00	680,992.96	Although financial implementation took off in 2018, the rate of incurred expenditure accelerated sharply during 2020. Relevant information and projections are given in chapters 2 and 3.
1	I	K0101	Contracted Projects	Number of Projects	13		18.00	
2	F	F0102	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	2000000	22,735,032.00	1,754,401.38	Although financial implementation took off in 2018, the rate of incurred expenditure accelerated sharply during 2020. Relevant information and projections are given in chapters 2 and 3.
2	I	K0102	Contracted Projects	Number of Projects	16		22.00	
2	O	O0207	Surface area of rehabilitated or with improved management ecosystems	Hectars	0	188,000.00	5,850.00	The achievement of indicators is evaluated in the dedicated sections of the report.
2	O	O0210	Number of participants in prevention actions	Persons	0	200.00	300.00	The achievement of indicators is evaluated in the dedicated sections of the report.

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
1	O	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	F	F011	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	355,875.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	I	K0101	Contracted Projects	Number of Projects	16.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	F	F0102	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	542,994.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	I	K0102	Contracted Projects	Number of Projects	21.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	O	O0207	Surface area of rehabilitated or with improved management ecosystems	Hectars	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	O	O0210	Number of participants in prevention actions	Persons	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

3.4. Financial data

Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level

As set out in Table 1 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 (Model for transmission of financial data) and table 17 of model for cooperation programmes under IPA.

Priority axis	Calculation basis	Total funding	Co-financing rate	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries	Number of operations selected
1	Public	18,188,028.00	85.00	15,694,421.58	86.29%	15,694,421.58	680,992.97	3.74%	18
2	Public	22,735,032.00	85.00	23,044,432.32	101.36%	23,044,432.32	1,754,401.40	7.72%	22
3	Public	4,547,006.00	85.00	4,547,006.00	100.00%	4,547,006.00	608,547.30	13.38%	2
Total		45,470,066.00	85.00	43,285,859.90	95.20%	43,285,859.90	3,043,941.67	6.69%	42

Where applicable, the use of any contribution from third countries participating in the cooperation programme should be provided (for example IPA and ENI, Norway, Switzerland)

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Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention

As set out in Table 2 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 (Model for transmission of financial data) and tables 6-9 of Model for cooperation programmes

Priority axis	Intervention field	Form of finance	Territorial dimension	Territorial delivery mechanism	«r.ir.etc.table5.thempridim»	Economic dimension	Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	The total eligible expenditure declared by eneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
1	075	01	07	07	a	24	EL126	671,710.74	671,710.74	0.00	1
1	075	01	07	07	a	24	MK	413,619.26	413,619.26	0.00	1
1	075	01	07	07	d	24	EL122	241,722.26	241,722.26	0.00	1
1	075	01	07	07	d	24	MK	268,132.74	268,132.74	0.00	1
1	092	01	07	07	d	24	EL122	459,587.51	459,587.51	26,226.26	1
1	092	01	07	07	d	24	EL124	316,112.30	316,112.30	0.00	1
1	092	01	07	07	d	24	MK	574,246.22	574,246.22	18,323.18	1
1	094	01	07	07	d	24	EL122	996,619.57	996,619.57	195,598.01	1
1	094	01	07	07	d	24	EL134	627,421.06	627,421.06	2,927.51	1
1	094	01	07	07	d	24	MK	698,543.71	698,543.71	6,830.85	1
1	102	01	07	07	a	24	EL122	1,017,059.98	1,017,059.98	39,311.89	1
1	102	01	07	07	a	24	EL123	134,161.56	134,161.56	21,252.36	1
1	102	01	07	07	a	24	EL124	89,441.04	89,441.04	14,168.24	1
1	102	01	07	07	a	24	EL126	174,886.14	174,886.14	27,703.49	1
1	102	01	07	07	a	24	EL134	55,010.07	55,010.07	5,117.99	1
1	102	01	07	07	a	24	MK	427,044.46	427,044.46	59,911.72	1
1	112	01	07	07	a	24	EL122	3,992,864.60	3,992,864.60	149,779.28	1
1	112	01	07	07	a	24	EL123	372,851.53	372,851.53	0.00	1
1	112	01	07	07	a	24	EL124	585,054.88	585,054.88	12,609.01	1
1	112	01	07	07	a	24	EL134	203,637.80	203,637.80	0.00	1
1	112	01	07	07	a	24	MK	3,374,694.15	3,374,694.15	101,233.18	1
2	013	01	07	07	c	24	EL122	468,190.00	468,190.00	11,560.36	1
2	013	01	07	07	c	24	EL124	424,950.08	424,950.08	40,792.47	1
2	013	01	07	07	c	24	EL126	286,475.16	286,475.16	18,400.75	1
2	013	01	07	07	c	24	EL134	807,045.32	807,045.32	42,581.68	1
2	013	01	07	07	c	24	MK	1,466,090.40	1,466,090.40	89,154.33	1
2	017	01	07	07	b	24	EL122	523,227.50	523,227.50	0.00	1
2	017	01	07	07	b	24	EL134	449,429.16	449,429.16	76,138.40	1
2	017	01	07	07	b	24	MK	972,656.67	972,656.67	76,138.40	1
2	017	01	07	07	c	24	EL122	1,069,006.30	1,069,006.30	35,685.56	1
2	017	01	07	07	c	24	EL126	642,596.22	642,596.22	0.00	1
2	017	01	07	07	c	24	EL134	1,023,666.24	1,023,666.24	168,425.23	1
2	017	01	07	07	c	24	MK	1,294,324.82	1,294,324.82	48,388.98	1
2	034	01	07	07	c	24	EL122	608,283.75	608,283.75	0.00	1
2	034	01	07	07	c	24	EL134	320,654.39	320,654.39	0.00	1
2	034	01	07	07	c	24	MK	796,443.06	796,443.06	0.00	1
2	044	01	07	07	c	24	EL122	321,793.68	321,793.68	25,175.24	1
2	044	01	07	07	c	24	EL123	160,896.84	160,896.84	12,587.62	1
2	044	01	07	07	c	24	EL134	320,654.39	320,654.39	0.00	1
2	044	01	07	07	c	24	MK	651,920.79	651,920.79	36,281.96	1
2	085	01	07	07	b	24	EL122	2,056,109.68	2,056,109.68	301,017.90	1
2	085	01	07	07	b	24	EL123	1,194,322.27	1,194,322.27	99,869.19	1
2	085	01	07	07	b	24	EL124	657,287.80	657,287.80	20,700.89	1
2	085	01	07	07	b	24	EL134	910,838.05	910,838.05	104,628.19	1
2	085	01	07	07	b	24	MK	3,776,626.73	3,776,626.73	407,930.31	1
2	087	01	07	07	b	24	EL122	645,821.88	645,821.88	46,933.82	1
2	087	01	07	07	b	24	EL126	271,665.99	271,665.99	25,931.26	1
2	087	01	07	07	b	24	EL134	187,077.94	187,077.94	10,501.28	1
2	087	01	07	07	b	24	MK	736,377.21	736,377.21	55,577.58	1
3	121	01	07	07		24	EL122	411,197.47	411,197.47	32,505.01	1
3	121	01	07	07		24	EL123	308,398.10	308,398.10	24,378.76	1
3	121	01	07	07		24	EL124	308,398.10	308,398.10	24,378.76	1

Priority axis	Intervention field	Form of finance	Territorial dimension	Territorial delivery mechanism	«r.ir.etc.table5.thempridimen»	Economic dimension	Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	The total eligible expenditure declared by eneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
3	121	01	07	07		24	EL126	308,398.10	308,398.10	24,378.76	1
3	121	01	07	07		24	EL134	308,398.10	308,398.10	24,378.76	1
3	121	01	07	07		24	MK	848,997.47	848,997.47	72,829.05	1
3	122	01	07	07		24	EL122	161,541.86	161,541.86	32,505.01	1
3	122	01	07	07		24	EL123	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	122	01	07	07		24	EL124	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	122	01	07	07		24	EL126	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	122	01	07	07		24	EL134	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	122	01	07	07		24	MK	380,441.86	380,441.86	72,829.05	1
3	123	01	07	07		24	EL122	161,541.86	161,541.86	32,505.01	1
3	123	01	07	07		24	EL123	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	123	01	07	07		24	EL124	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	123	01	07	07		24	EL126	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	123	01	07	07		24	EL134	121,156.40	121,156.40	24,378.76	1
3	123	01	07	07		24	MK	380,441.88	380,441.88	72,829.05	1

Table 6: Cumulative cost of all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area

1. Operation (2)	2. The amount of IPA support(1) envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations	3. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the IPA at programme level * 100)	4. Eligible expenditure of IPA support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority	5. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the IPA at programme level *100)
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(1) IPA support is the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.

(2) In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

No evaluation took place during the reference period. The first evaluation report captured the progress of the Programme until 30.6.2018. An update is foreseen to measure the progress until mid 2021.

The main findings of the first report are as follows:

As the financial implementation was zero at the time of the Report, the analysis was based on the projected values of the projects, that were approved under the 1. Call.

Approximately 55% of the Programme funds were made available under the 1. Call. Yet, the Programme structures committed 86% of the Programme budget (overbooking).

The Programme Objectives were adequately captured, except for Specific Objectives 1.1, 1.2 and 2.4.

The relevance of the Intervention Logic (including the selection of Result indicators) with the Programme Strategy was deemed satisfactory.

The Communication Strategy has been deemed effective.

The following recommendations were made:

Further activation of the under-performing Programme Objectives. The recommendation has already been adopted, by means of a Targeted Call for Specific Objectives (S.O.) 1.1, 1.2 and 2.4.

The preliminary observations of the Call can be summarised as follows:

- Well Balanced representation of the partner countries: 79 potential beneficiaries from Greece and 79 potential beneficiaries from the Republic of North Macedonia.
- 15 Proposals were submitted under S.O. 1.1 – Employment
- 24 Proposals were submitted under S.O. 1.3 – Tourism

- 6 Proposals were submitted under S.O. 2.4 – Natural Disasters

The contracting of the approved projects is estimated to take place within the 1st quarter 2021.

Other issues raised, concerning the Evaluation:

Motivation and support to beneficiary organisations to accelerate the procedures for payment and expenditures verifications.

Elaborated in chapters 5a and 5b of the report.

Incorporation of PRAG rules to accelerate the procedures for payment and expenditures verifications.

A Procurement manual has been issued to support the IPA partners. It has been in use since 2018.

Analysis of the planned contribution of the projects to the output indicators, to ensure that output indicators will reach the targets.

A relevant analysis has already been carried out, as part of the preparation of the 2. Call. It was supported by the Programme Evaluators.

Discrepancy for many output indicators between indicators' achievement level and contracted budget.

The Programme Authorities are monitoring the Programme implementation. If discrepancies are still observed, after the approval of projects under the 2. Call, corrective measures will be suggested.

Potential measures:

- Reallocation of funds between Priority 1 and 2.

- Approval of project(s) with sufficiently high score from the reserve list.

Potential measures taken to revise and/or communicate the methodology for indicators' estimation to the beneficiaries in case there were important discrepancies between project contributions.

Specific instructions have been provided with respect to the 2. Call.

Name	Fund	From month	From year	To month	To year	Type of evaluation	Thematic priority	Topic	Findings
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5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN

(a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken

Land border Crossing Point at the Lake Prespa Area.

The ambitious project achieved some important milestones during 2019, but also faced serious hurdles that have stalled its realization.

A trilateral agreement between Albania, Republic of North Macedonia and Greece entered into force. It regulates several topics, relevant to the project.

The two sub working groups for the Greek Beneficiaries (one for the administrative procedures and one for the technical qualifications) specified their working arrangements and responsibilities.

Additionally, the project consortium was finalized with the inclusion of relevant institutions from both countries. As an indication, the administrative and technical maturity of the project was improved with the participation of experts from the Customs Authorities and Police Authorities of Greece.

Finally, the Managing Authority prepared the draft Terms of Reference for the financing of the project under the Programme.

The project's main constraints stem from the elevated regulatory requirements (mostly due to the new Entry-Exit System), and are aggravated by the specific geography of the area (very limited space, environmentally sensitive area). In response to the above, the project stakeholders are investigating to contain the scope of the project to the minimum compulsory requirements and to resolve administrative issues that were brought to light (e.g. land ownership clearance).

The project was initially conceived to fit within the limited scope and financial resources of the existing bilateral Programme. Yet, this approach can jeopardize the overall implementation of the Programme, and the achievement of its financial targets, in case of further delays. Therefore, the border crossing is now regarded as a strategic project, to be included in the planning of the 2021-2027 Programme. This approach will safeguard the necessary financial resources and sufficient time frame for its implementation.

Financing of activities in the Republic of North Macedonia.

During the previous Programming period, under centralized management by the Delegation of the EU, IPA project beneficiaries were eligible to receive the biggest share of the EU contribution upon signature of their grant contracts. This possibility could not be available under the current Programme modalities.

The limited fiscal space in the partner country in conjunction with the lack of Beneficiaries' own resources necessitated the adoption of a formula for the financing of project activities. As a remedy, the beneficiaries from Republic of North Macedonia are entitled to receive a pre-financing equal to 20% of the EU contribution,

following a clearance by the Programme's Certifying Authority.

Yet, only a limited number of beneficiaries could pay regularly the incurred expenditures and therefore a significant number of delays appears in the implementation of project activities, particularly with the NGOs and the municipalities who are in weak financial condition. It is recommendable, that the national authorities and other relevant stakeholders in Republic of North Macedonia establish a supporting financial mechanism, which will facilitate the project implementation and payment of incurred expenditures.

Changes in Administration in the Republic of North Macedonia

The presidential elections have affected the affairs in the MLSG (NA). The Head of NA of the Programme designated the new Operating Structure. Information on Designation under act ref. no 02-1758/2 from 23.08.2019 have been submitted to MA/JS on 19.09.2019.

This change implied a standstill in the ongoing affairs particularly in terms of effectiveness and efficient implementation of the TA action plan in 2019. Following the Ministerial Doc.no. 11-2287/1 dated 31.10.2019, new appointments were made and the relevant Units have been fully operational since 20.12.2019. Planning and execution of tenders and procurements are back in place.

Similarly, the MA/JS were introduced to their new counterparts as soon as possible, to ensure a smooth transition and cooperation.

Eventually, the newly appointed NA managed to endorse the letters of guarantee to IPA beneficiaries; the latter procedure is a precondition for the pre-financing of 20% EU contributions. The Ministry of Local Self Government issued in total 17 guarantee letters covering the project beneficiaries from private sector.

Since the beginning of the Programme, 89 co-financing agreements have been concluded with project beneficiaries from Republic of North Macedonia.

The following developments took place in 2020. They are covered in this year's report, following the Commission's relevant inquiries.

Inquiry 1: Delay in the development of the Greek integrated MIS

Background information: The setting up of an integrated MIS was prone to several challenges, within our organization and beyond. These have successfully been tackled and the system has been functional since 2018. A noteworthy improvement is the integration of FLC verifications into the MIS.

2020 developments

Following the system audit for the 5th Accounting Period, the Audit Authority recommended the monitoring of the Programme indicators via the MIS. In response, the MA/JS drafted detailed Identity Fiches for each indicator. The project officers are responsible to update the information of the fiches, based on the beneficiaries' periodic project reports. The fiches will be uploaded on the MIS.

Inquiry 2: Weaknesses in the FLC system

Background information: The FLC is decentralized both in Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia. Pools of Controllers have been established in both countries.

The National Authority (Operating Structure) is the responsible body for designation of the FLC controllers and for reviewing the relevant documentation, namely: table of expenditures, tenders, time sheets, Delivery Notes, Invoices & payment documents. During 2019, 40 Nominations for FLC checks of the project beneficiaries from Republic of North Macedonia were issued. In total 31 administrative and on-the-spot checks were performed at project partners, and the National Authority (as beneficiary of the Technical Assistance).

2020 developments

Following quality checks of the Managing Authority, it was decided that additional training activities of the Controllers in the Republic of North Macedonia were appropriate. Although specific dates were earmarked for this purpose, the sessions were cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. The MA proactively delivered an online training session on 23.6.2020. It covered topics in: planning of Verifications, the Manual of on-the-spot verifications, Reports of verifications (including their integration on the MIS), and supervision of Controllers by the competent authorities.

Further to the above, the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat cooperated extensively with the Operating Structure and the individual Controllers in the Republic of North Macedonia for the submission of the Annual Accounts.

(b) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, otherwise it will be included in point 9.1. An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate.

The Programme Authorities have planned the following arrangements to address the delays in financial implementation.

Measures to safeguard the timely validation of Expenditures

Currently, the average time to conclude a verification of expenditure for Greek Beneficiaries is 7 days.

The Managing Authority, which oversees the pool of Controllers for all Programmes, is proactively planning to address potential bottlenecks in the verification of expenditure during the peak workload of the last semester 2020.

Indicative actions:

- Notices of the JS to the partners regarding the procedures for the assignment of Controllers
- Revised instructions for the relevant procedures under the MIS
- Submission of planned verifications of expenditures of the MA's Programme Management Unit to the MA's FLC Unit.

A specific timeline for the verifications of expenditure has been adopted.

Financing of activities in the Republic of North Macedonia: Measures to facilitate the project implementation and payment of incurred expenditures.

The Programme Structures have identified the causes of delayed certification of expenditure.

- Expenditure corresponding to at least 20% of the beneficiary's budget need to be incurred, before a certification can be ordered.

Potential measure: The lowering of the threshold for specific types of partners (e.g. small Municipalities with limited financial capacity).

- Five certifications are planned for each project beneficiary.

Potential measures: The lowering of the 20% threshold for some types of partners and/or the possibility to have

more than 5 certifications.

The average time to complete an expenditure certification (42 days) is long, because the pool of Controllers is small.

Potential measure: Assign Controllers with elevated priority to the Programme 'Greece-Republic of North Macedonia', over Programmes served by the same pool of Controllers.

State of Play: Pre-financing of the EU contribution in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The causes for the initial delays have now been addressed. As of 31.12.2019, the pre-financing has been paid to all IPA partners involved in 38 out of 40 projects. The pre-financing has been deliberately held back in two projects, that did not fulfil their obligations / contractual terms.

The observed low expenditure of TA can be justified as follows:

Significant expenditure is not charged to the Programme:

- Office rents and administration of both the MA and JTS are paid by the Greek National budget and not from the TA funds.
- The salary of the JTS Coordinator (new hire in 2019) is covered by Greek national funds.

Effects of the Covid-19 pandemic

Several events and meetings were cancelled, and large savings were realized. At the same time, the Programme Structures proactively held important events online. Also, Laptops were procured for JTS and MA staff at a cost of ca. € 10,000.

The implied TA underspending does not negatively affect the implementation of the Programme:

- The MA and JS are involved in project generation and selection for the 2.CfP.

-Support to actors involved in project implementation has been the core role of the Secretariat

-Monitoring, control, reporting, Programme management and steering are achieved at several levels by the designated Authorities. In most cases, these are public bodies. Sufficient funds have been earmarked for private entities.

-Communication activities are implemented on-line.

The Managing Authority will submit a proposal for the reallocation of Priority 3 funds in favour of Priorities 1 and 2.

6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (ARTICLE 50(9) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual and the final implementation reports shall be made public and uploaded as a separate file in the form of annex to the annual and the final implementation report

You can upload/find the Citizen's summary under General > Documents

7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (ARTICLE 46 OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)

8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (ARTICLE 101(H) AND ARTICLE 111(3) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(B) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)

8.1. Major projects

Table 7: Major projects

Project	CCI	Status of MP	Total investments	Total eligible costs	Planned notification/submission date	Date of tacit agreement/ approval by Commission	Planned start of implementation	Planned completion date	Priority axis / Thematic priorities	Current state of realisation — financial progress (% of expenditure certified to Commission compared to total eligible cost)	Current state of realisation — physical progress / Main implementation stage of the project	Main outputs	Date of signature of first works contract (1)	Observations
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(1) In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

Significant problems encountered in implementing major projects and measures taken to overcome them

Not applicable

Any change planned in the list of major projects in the cooperation programme

Not applicable

8.2. Joint action plans

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

Not applicable

Table 8: Joint action plans (JAP)

Title of the JAP	CCI	Stage of implementation of JAP	Total eligible costs	Total public support	OP contribution to JAP	Priority axis	Type of JAP	[Planned] submission to the Commission	[Planned] start of implementation	[Planned] completion	Main outputs and results	Total eligible expenditure certified to the Commission	Observations
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Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

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9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)

9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Priority axis	1 - Development and Support of Local Economy
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Priority axis	2 - Protection of Environment - Transportation
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Priority axis	3 - Technical Assistance
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9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of specific actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

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9.3.Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on sustainable development, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of the actions taken to promote sustainable development in accordance with that Article

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9.4. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

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9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the role of partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme

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**10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4),
SUBPARAGRAPH 1 (A) AND (B), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013**

**10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of
evaluations**

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Status	Name	Fund	Year of finalizing evaluation	Type of evaluation	Thematic priority	Topic	Findings (in case of execution)	Follow up (in case of execution)
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10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy

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11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 2 (A), (B), (C) AND (F), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)

11.1. Progress in the implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including integrated territorial investments, sustainable urban development, and community led local development under the cooperation programme

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11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the IPA

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11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

As stipulated by the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, recital 19, article 8(3)(d) on the "Content, adoption and amendment of cooperation programmes" and article 14(4) 2nd subparagraph (c) "Implementation reports", this programme contributes to MRS(s) and/or SBS:

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- EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)
- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)

11.4 Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation

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13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Information and assessment of the programme contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

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**14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN
— PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)**

Where the assessment of progress made with regard to the milestones and targets set out in the performance framework demonstrates that certain milestones and targets have not been achieved, Member States should outline the underlying reasons for failure to achieve these milestones in the report of 2019 (for milestones) and in the final implementation report (for targets).

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DOCUMENTS

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
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LATEST VALIDATION RESULTS

Severity	Code	Message
Info		Implementation report version has been validated
Warning	2.49.1	Annual value entered in table 1 exceeds the target value for priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, specific objective: 1.1, indicator: R0101, year: 2019 (67.00 > 52.00). Please check.
Warning	2.49.1	Annual value entered in table 1 exceeds the target value for priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, specific objective: 1.2, indicator: R0102, year: 2019 (1,872,428.00 > 1,826,794.00). Please check.
Warning	2.49.1	Annual value entered in table 1 exceeds the target value for priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, specific objective: 1.2, indicator: R0103, year: 2019 (1,283,001.00 > 1,272,765.00). Please check.
Warning	2.49.1	Annual value entered in table 1 exceeds the target value for priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, specific objective: 2.2, indicator: R0204, year: 2019 (145,966.00 > 25,097.00). Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 1,000.00% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, indicator: O0103, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 1,000.00% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: O0210, year: 2018. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 126.09% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: O0205, year: 2018. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 126.09% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: O0205, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 150.00% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: O0210, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 173.33% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, indicator: O0104, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 3,660.00% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, indicator: O0103, year: 2018. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 321.11% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: CO32, year: 2018. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 321.11% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: CO32, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 333.33% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, indicator: CO36, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 482.61% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: O0204, year: 2018. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 482.61% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: O0204, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 647.91% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: CO23, year: 2018. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 946.23% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: CO34, year: 2018. Please check.
Warning	2.52.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 946.23% of the total target value for "S", priority axis: 2, investment priority: -, indicator: CO34, year: 2019. Please check.
Warning	2.53.1	In table 2, the annual total value entered is 173.33% of the total target value for "F", priority axis: 1, investment priority: -, indicator: O0104, year: 2019. Please check.