

Citizens' Summary of the Final Implementation Report



The Final Implementation Report (FIR) of the Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia provides detailed insight into the programme's operation between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2024. The Citizens' Summary is a brief overview of this report.

The programme bodies – the Managing Authority/MA (Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade), the Serbian National Authority/NA (Ministry of European Integration, Republic of Serbia), the Joint Secretariat of the programme/JS, the Joint Secretariat Antenna/JS Antenna, the First Level Control/FLC bodies in Hungary and in Serbia, the European Commission representative and the Desk Officer in charge of the programme – contributed to the significant progress of the programme implementation in 2023/2024.

Besides the project implementation and project closures, the main task was the conclusion of programming and launch of the next financing period.

The last 9 projects concluded their implementation in 2023. The JS approved 26 final reports, by the end of May – which means that every project of all 3 call for proposals was successfully completed.

As the final decision in a Written procedure number 55, on 22.05.2023, the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) transferred the role to the Monitoring Committee (MC) for Interreg VI-A IPA Hungary-Serbia programme for the 2021-2027 perspective. Since the new MC has taken over the responsibilities of the JMC, there weren't any MC meetings that related exclusively to the 2014-2020 period, all issues were discussed within the new MC.

The Joint Secretariat (JS) coordinated the consideration and ultimately the approval of 1 addenda of subsidy contracts, checked and approved 11 other project changes. **The JS approved 47 project reports (PRs) in the value of EUR 5 300 634.83 (4 505 538.95 of IPA) and 33 TA reports in the value of EUR 1 051 906.62 EUR (894 120.57 EUR of IPA).**

By end of 2022, the INTERREG+ monitoring system fully replaced the old system IMIS 2014-2020 and since then, the previous IMIS 2014-2020 exists only in archive form.



I N T E R R E G +

Our programme had prominent success, active involvement and contribution to the Art of Cooperation annual conferences in Budapest in 2023 and 2024; In 2023 our programme held the programme closing event within Art of Cooperation where members of the JS also took part in panel discussions. The Programme was also involved in the Interreg Cooperation Day (aka European Cooperation Day) celebration in 2023 and 2024.

On the programme's operational side, sound and timely activities of the 7 JS staff (the head of the JS, the deputy head of the JS, 4 programme managers, 1 programme and financial manager) accompanied by the 2 JS Antenna (JSA) employees (2 programme managers; one of them is the head of JSA while the other took the role of communication manager for the programme), enabled the closing years of financial perspective to be a successful, despite the post-Covid overload and new Programme activities overlap. The following tasks of the reported 2023/2024 years can be considered as the most important ones:

- Project monitoring, administrative and technical assistance to projects, coordination of project implementation and project closures;
- Coordination of implementation of remaining projects;
- Information and communication activities;
- Audit and FLC measures;
- Successful conclusion of the programming process for period 2021-2027;
- Participating in the continuous development of the electronic monitoring system, the INTERREG+
- Flawless transition in decision making bodies from 2014-2020 JMC to the 2021-2027 MC of the Interreg VI-A IPA Hungary-Serbia programme

With the mentioned 47 final project reports approved, all 118 projects have successfully concluded their implementation by the end of May 2024!



In terms of projects contribution to the implementation of the Priority Axis, we can conclude:

PA1 - Improving cross-border water management and risk prevention systems

Validated costs in 2023 and 2024: EUR 0 since the last reports were approved already in 2022.

Validated costs total: EUR 17 555 998.89 of IPA which is 98.63% of the allocated amount.

In this PA, all projects concluded their reporting in 2022, while the programme reached the target values of all three Output Indicators

PA2 - Decreasing the bottlenecks of cross-border traffic

Validated costs in 2023 and 2024: EUR 1 791 186.52 (1 522 508.38 IPA).

Validated costs total: EUR 15 636 441.23 of IPA which is 98.70% of the allocated amount.

The projects of the 3rd CfP were vital, as they fully covered the 2 indicators that were still not reached previously: O/I 2.1 and 2.6. and with that **all targets of this PA were met with the conclusion of the projects.**

PA3 - Encouraging tourism and cultural heritage cooperation

Validated costs in 2023 and 2024: EUR 2 678 734.94 (2 276 924.33 IPA)

Validated costs total: EUR 17 174 873.18 of IPA which is 95.38% of the allocated amount.

Despite the delays brought on by the pandemic, the implementation of the PA went very well; **all targets of this PA were successfully met and surpassed by a large margin.**

PA4 - Enhancing SMEs' economic competitiveness through innovation driven development

Validated costs in 2023 and 2024: EUR 830 713.37 (706 106.24 IPA)

Validated costs total: EUR 6 253 200.23 of IPA which is 89.82% of the allocated amount.

Despite the delays in certain indicators, due to the timely reaction of the programme, the implementation of the PA was concluded very well; **all targets of this PA were met with the conclusion of the projects.**

PA5 - Technical Assistance (TA)

The priority represents **10% of the IPA funding** allocated to the programme.

The main results in 2023 and 2024 were sound and timely execution of all necessary measures by all the involved programme bodies.

There were 33 TA project reports approved during the programme in **2023 and 2024 in the value of 2 279 390.19 EUR (1 937 481.52 EUR of IPA).**

Validated costs total TA: EUR 5 899 349.50 of IPA which is 88.68% of the allocated amount.



Specifically, in the 7 years of our programme's implementation we've achieved the following results:

- 8 border crossing points were improved by our projects!
- 180 608 meters of improved water management systems!
- The number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions was 109 811 visits per years of implementation!
- Above 1 105 events contributed to the projects' and the programme's visibility and we've significantly increased the number of user entries to online communication tools developed!
- 226 enterprises cooperated with research institutions, 476 further organisations participated in knowledge platforms, moreover, the number of months spent in the institutions and companies on the other side of the border through scholarships was 386!
- 1.5 million persons of the region benefitted from flood protection measures!
- Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status summed up to 162 956.35 hectares!
- 4.53 km of roads and 26.87km new bicycle paths were built and 14 km of roads got reconstructed or upgraded by our projects!
- 5 strategic projects were concluded successfully, 118 normal projects implemented and 8 TA projects administered
- In terms of programme organisation and administration, we had 14 public events organised by the JS, 7 Joint Monitoring Committee conferences either in person or on-line due to Covid, we had 166 decisions by the Joint Monitoring Committee within those conferences or via 57 Written procedures.

Having in mind the results specified above, let's take a closer look on **several 2023-2024 outstanding cooperation** from different ends of the spectrum: construction focused projects, then culture and tourism and people-to-people partnerships dealing with culture, education and youth:

- **FREE CROSSING BAČKA**
Development of Hercegszántó-Bački Breg cross-border crossing with the necessary duties for freight transport facilities
- The **ELECTRA** project
Enhancing Long Evolution of Cosmos-inspired Tourist Regional Attraction
- **Rivers-2-Communities**
Reviving identity of river communities

FREE CROSSING BAČKA

Development of Hercegszántó-Bački Breg cross-border crossing with the necessary duties for freight transport facilities

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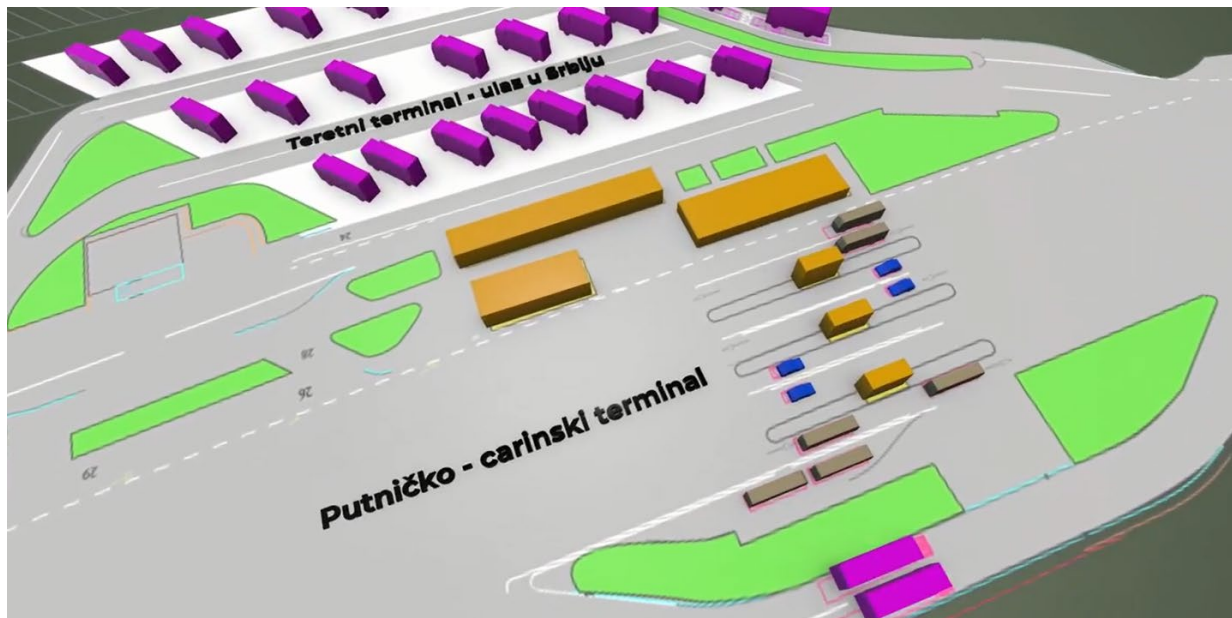


Projekat sufinansira
Evropska unija

*Dobri susedi
stvaraju zajedničku
budućnost*



The **FREE CROSSING BAČKA** project has completed its activities, the design and documentation is ready for the upgrade of the Hercegszántó - Bački Breg border-crossing. Upon the construction is finalised, 13 tracks will operate and the border crossing point will be suitable for cargo transport as well! Implemented by the Hungarian National Infrastructure Development Private Company Ltd, Public Enterprise "Roads of Serbia" and the PE Urban and Spatial Planning Institute of Vojvodina, this project creates solid foundations for decreasing bottlenecks in the cross-border transport. The available EU contribution for this project was EUR 399 437. The project serves as the basis for the strategic project of Interreg VI-A IPA Hungary-Serbia Programme in the 2021-2027 perspective.



Culture and tourism have a significant role in connecting youth in the Programme area. During 2023/2024 the last 4 projects from our 3rd CfP have completed their activities in the Action 3.1 (Tourist products, services and attractions based on cultural and natural heritage), Action 3.3 (Cooperation in the fields of cultural and community events) and Action 3.4 (Cooperation in the fields of sport, leisure and minor actions related to nature protection). Thousands of people were involved, many new bonds created. Here is just a glimpse of what we experienced within our people-to-people projects:

The **ELECTRA** project

Enhancing Long Evolution of Cosmos-inspired Tourist Regional Attraction



This extraordinary project changed the perspective of how we think of our tourism offers, and made up look to the skies. The Hungary – Serbia cross-border region is still one of the less light-polluted areas in Europe, and the project partners decided to use this as an asset, focus on night skies as a touristic potential. Incorporating citizen science activities in planned project activities provided participation of different population groups and enabled equal opportunity for participation in events organized in the programme area such as: preparation and launch of meteorological balloons, investigation of night sky quality in terms of light pollution, study and promotion of history of science (astronomy and physics) in Hungary-Serbia border region and exhibitions of astrophotography at different locations in the programme area.



R2C – Rivers-2-Communities

Reviving identity of river communities



Within the contemporary culture and modern ways of approaching the target audiences in our Programme area, it's worth of mentioning the **R2C – Rivers-2-Communities** project. Led by the Cinema City association from Novi Sad, this project gathered five cultural operators from the Programme area, who all focused on strengthening the cooperation between Hungarian and Serbian contemporary cultural and creative scenes, by enhancing professional competencies, artistic production and transfer of knowledge between young cultural managers and artists through a series of educational, networking and cultural promo events. The project closing event, gathered dozens of professionals in the music business within 13 conference sessions and 9 major concerts from regional artists were organized.

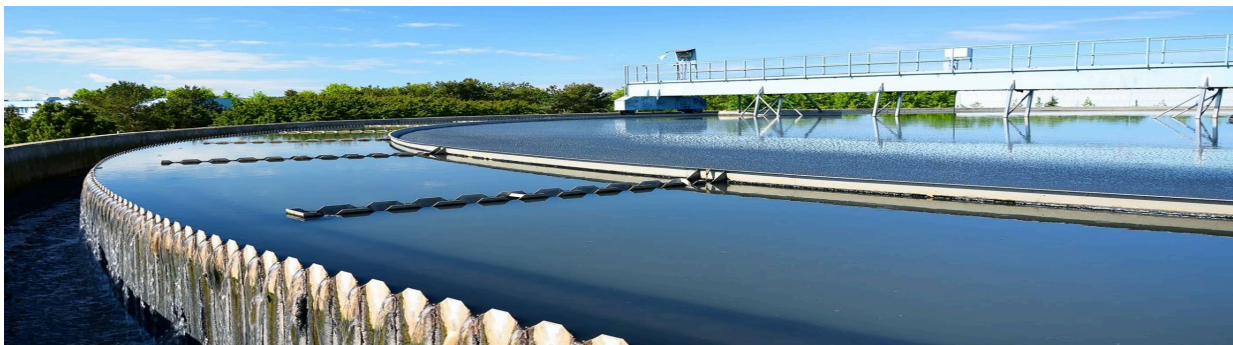


Strategic projects overview

In addition to the regular projects implemented, our Programme would like to underline the importance of 5 strategic projects implemented in the past 7 years:

- **BABECA** – The complex water management development of the area of the Baja-Bezdan Canal
- **WASIDCA** –
Water supply and water-infrastructure development in the boundary catchment areas
- **Kübekháza - Rabe** –
Development of a Road Border Crossing at Kübekháza (HU) - Rabe (SRB) area
- **Dream Railway** – Elaboration of Technical Documentation of Subotica-Baja Railway Line
- **ColourCoop** – Colourful Cooperation

Due to their large infrastructure character or investments that would be normally out of the financial reach of regional institutions, strategic projects enabled the harmonic development of the cross-border region and fostered the quality and safety of living of the local communities. The projects ranged from improving cross-border water management and risk prevention systems, decreasing the bottlenecks of cross-border traffic to encouraging cooperation in tourism and cultural heritage preservation.



The **BABECA** project helped at decreasing flood and potential flood hazards of the targeted territory, as well as restoring the water runoff capacity of the Baja-Bezdan Canal, by dredging of canal sections, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Bezdan Lock and the Šebešfok Lock and purchase of special equipment. The **WASIDCA** project added to the flood prevention, but rather in the Lower Tisza district and area of the municipality of Kanjiža, where new pressure pumps and movable barriers were purchased.

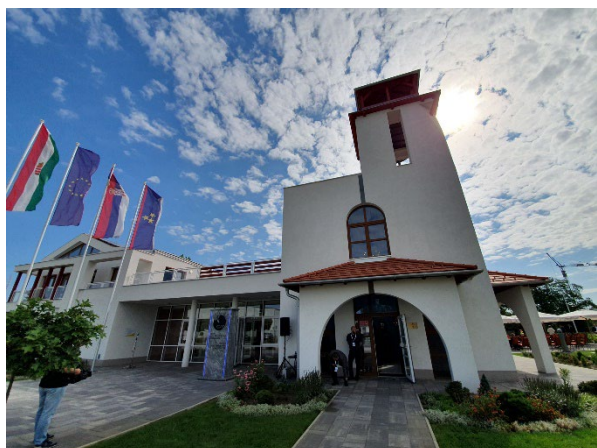
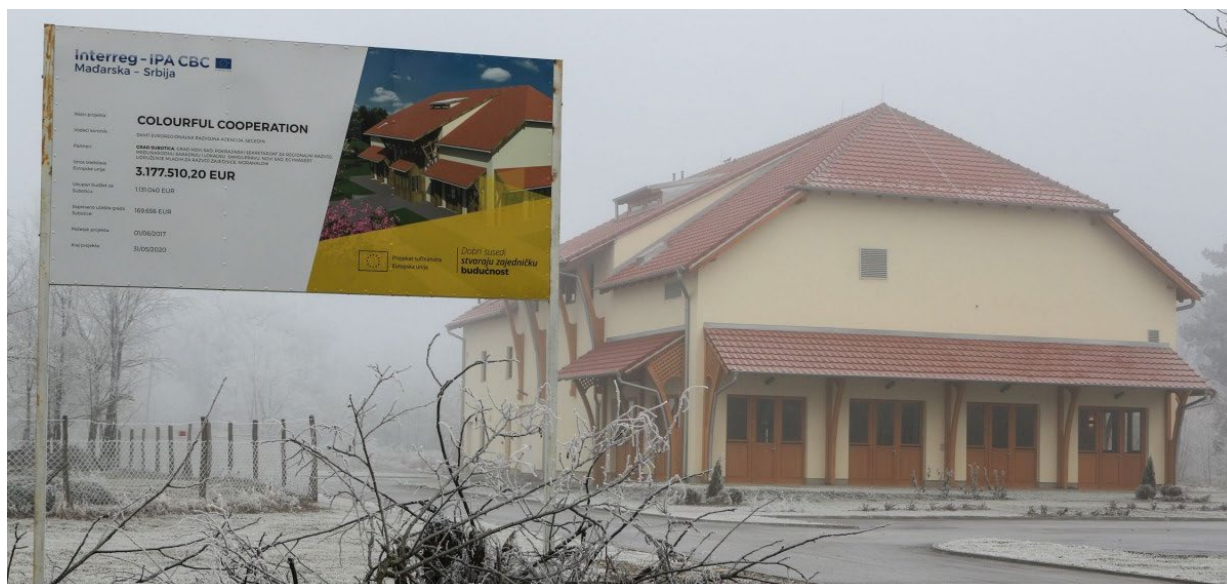


The **Kübekháza - Rabe** project developed opportunities for opening of a new border crossing between Kübekháza and Rabe (Rábé) settlements, which significantly helped the economic, social, and cultural cooperation in the Hungary-Serbia border region. The Programme co-financed building of new connecting roads and renewal of the existing ones. On the other hand, the **Dream Railway** did not have construction works, but laid a solid base for further development and reconstruction of an important cross-border railway line: documentation necessary for construction of the Subotica-Bácsalmás-Baja section of the Szeged-Subotica-Bácsalmás-Baja railway line, relying on the existing feasibility study, has been developed and designed. As a result, just few years after the completion of this project, two participating countries invested in the Subotica – Szeged railway reconstructed, and today we experience a regular operation of 10 daily railway departures between these cities.



As for the cooperation in the field of culture and tourism, important funds have been dedicated to the **ColourCoop** project:

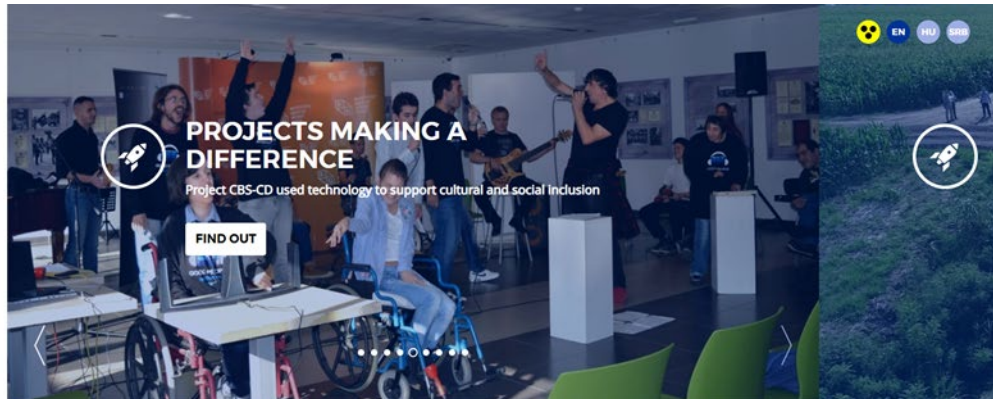
- A comprehensive cultural strategy for the entire Hungarian-Serbian border region has been developed;
- an online, information and news centre in Hungarian and Serbian has been launched;
- Serbian and Hungarian cultural centres in Mórahalom and in Palić have been built;
- Novi Sad, at that time the future European Capital of Culture and its surrounding region has been integrated into the cultural and touristic life of the Hungarian-Serbian border region.
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Programme Communication

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- Call for Proposals
- Programme
- First Level Control
- News
- Projects
- Partner Search
- Downloads
- Contact



The programme's website www.interreg-ipa-husrb.com remained the main communication hub of the programme towards the general public, the beneficiaries and other programme's stakeholders. It features information related to the calls for proposals, results of the calls, selected projects, the [summaries of the contracted projects](#) and the programme-related and EU-level news. Additionally, the website contains the photo and video content and [the infographics about the programme](#) and [the infographics about project implementation](#) that depict complex processes and information in a visual way that is easy to understand. Since the opening of the Programme's website in 2015, a total of 212 news articles and announcements were published, ensuring constant communication and availability for all interested parties. The website's back-office module served also for reporting on communication activities of the projects.

In 2023 and 2024, a full and successful transition to the website of the new Interreg IPA VI-A Hungary – Serbia programme was conducted. Nevertheless, the new website still has a links towards the 2014-2020 programme period data and projects.

The [programme's Facebook page](#) and [programme's page on LinkedIn](#) featured all programme- and project-related news and announcements, tips for the applicants and beneficiaries, the regional and the European-level news relevant to the Programme. The programme's social media surfaces, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, were continuously updated throughout 2023/2024 with various programme related information and advices. **In this period our social networks had a raise in reach of over 15.4K or 100%, 771 link clicks, 1.6K interactions, 11.1K unique visits and raise in the number of followers by 55.8%, reaching more than 1200 total followers of our social pages.**

The demographics data of our followers shows it consists of 63.1% of women and 36.9% of men, with top rated cities of origin mostly located in the programme area - Novi Sad, Subotica, Budapest, Belgrade, Szeged, Zrenjanin, Senta, Kragujevac, Kanjiža, and Baja.

Further programme details at www.interreg-ipa-husrb.com and www.hungary-serbia.eu

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