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An interregional cooperation project for improving natural and cultural heritage policies

Regional Action Plan

of the Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” Programme



Regional Action Plan

Policy instrument addressed	Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” 2014-2020
EPICAH partner involved in the Action Plan	Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Empolese Valdelsa (ASEV)
Country	Italy
NUTS2 region	Tuscany
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Annex 1 - Pilot Action

1. Introduction & Policy context

The purpose of this document is to provide proposals for the improvement of the Policy Instrument “Interreg VA Italy-France Maritime 2014-2020”. The proposals were developed and formulated as a result of the interregional learning activities and exchange of experience between the partners of the Interreg project EPICAH in reference to 7 co-respective policy instruments for cross-border cooperation.

1.1. General information about the policy instrument

The present Action Plan aims to impact	
Investment for Growth and Jobs programme	
European Territorial Cooperation programme	✓
Other regional development policy instrument	

Name of the policy instrument addressed	Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” 2014-2020
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The main objective of the Italy-France Maritime Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (here below referred as ‘Programme’) is the long-term contribution in order to strengthen the cross-border cooperation among the participating regions and to make the cooperation zone a competitive and sustainable zone in the European and Mediterranean landscape.

The Programme priorities includes:

1. Economic development and territorial strengthening.
2. Promotion of the environmental sustainability at the basin level.
3. Improvement of the border efficiency.
4. Promotion of the cultural dialogue and the local governance.

The Programme takes part in the UE Strategy 2020 and is focused on an “inclusive, intelligent, sustainable growth” characterized by high levels of cooperation, productivity and social cohesion. In this context, **valorisation of the cultural and natural heritage in the cooperation area represents a fundamental asset for the sustainable growth.**

1.2. Programme area

The territory interested by the Programme extends for about 56.372 km² and unifies two different nations - Italy and France - with the involvement of 21 NUTS3, among which 4 are French and 17 are Italian:

Country	NUTS 2	NUTS 3
Italy	Sardinia	Sassari, Nuoro, Cagliari, Oristano, Olbia-Tempio, Ogliastra, Medio-Campidano, Carbonia-Iglesias
	Tuscany	Massa-Carrara, Lucca, Pisa, Livorno, Grosseto
	Liguria	Genoa, Imperia, La Spezia, Savona
France	Corsica	Corse-du-Sud, Haute-Corse
	Provence-Alps-Côte d'Azur	the Maritime Alps, Var

There are two sub-regions: the Tosco-Ligurian upper Tyrrhenian arch and the Sardinian-Corsican axis. Both of them are characterized by the fact of being maritime areas and the sea itself can be interpreted in terms of territorial subdivision describing and delimiting it.

The whole cooperation area has relevant **natural and cultural heritage - a fundamental resource for its development.**

1.3. Characterization of the actual situation of the programme regarding the cross-border cultural, natural heritage management and tourism

The area of the Programme is characterized by a variety of habitat of terrestrial and, in particular, marine species. The territory is distinguished by a significant natural heritage and represents the richest faunal marine area in the whole Mediterranean Sea. Totally there are 499 sites of community interest (SIC) and Zones of special protection (ZPS), 144 of them are situated in French territory and the rest part -355- in the Italian one. The total surface included in the Natura 2000 network is about 3.057.734 Ha having 4743 habitat, distinguished in 114 different typologies.

The cultural and natural heritage of the area has a huge value in terms of cross-border identity and also as an economic resource linked to the tourism and productive activities at the base of the blue and green economy, which has to be developed and promoted in an innovative and competitive way.

However, the cooperation area is strongly vulnerable in relation to the climate change and to the natural catastrophes. There are regularly negative effects from the natural point of view of the floods and fires, which contributed to emphasize dramatically the vulnerability of the area from the environmental and economic points of view increasing weakness of the tourist economy, which is still based on the season time strongly.

The cross-border area presents an articulated framework, in which the tourist potentialities and those of economic development got through the immense naturalistic and regional cultural heritages combine with needs of the rediscovery and protection of traditions and popular costumes, being integrating part of a millennial culture.

The cooperation space is rich of natural and cultural heritage, biodiversity and represents a unique landscape at the European level though there is the risk of abandon or savage exploitation. In this area there is an elevated number of tourist destinations, cruise traffic,

tourist ports and consequently, the Programme considers the **sustainable tourism one of the main instruments for the growth**. This sector is an excellence in all the territories of the area, in particular concerning the following tourist products: bathing tourism; naval tourism; food and wine (gastronomy) tourism, cultural tourism.

The area contains some of the most important tourist destinations and is based on the attraction power of such brands like Tuscany, taking advantage of significant tourist international fluxes. In the years of crisis, the international tourism itself has been a resource for the economy of this area. The regions of the Mediterranean area have proposed themselves separately on the tourist market, because of the fact that they had acquired a huge notoriety in the past. However, the globalised context implies the confrontation with new more and more competitive tourist destinations and asks for management models different from those having got success in our territories. The key of a correct management of the factors determining the quality and the variety of the of the territorial offering (sustainability, business models and governance) is in the **information government and the capacity of giving fast, complete and accessible answers to different information and personalised needs of the tourist**.

Considering the main criticalities of the cross-border area of the Programme, which include, but are not limited by:

- Weakness of the integrated offers among the different regions of the area.
- Necessity of confrontation with new more competitive tourist destinations.
- The tourist economy that is still strongly based on the season time.
- Negative effects of natural and terrestrial anthropic risks, which contributed to emphasize dramatically the vulnerability of the area from the environmental and economic points of view increasing the weakness of the tourist economy.
- Environmental impacts of the tourist fluxes (water consumes, waste production, etc.).
- Characterization of the tourism as a not sensitive configuration, defined as “mass tourism”.

the challenges of the Programme, and in the same time the **potentiality for an “intelligent and sustainable growth”** concern:

Support for the competitiveness and attraction capacity of the area as an added value compared to the competitiveness of singular territories.
Valorisation of the cultural and natural heritage in the cooperation area.
Protection of the material heritage from the excessive exploitation (over-tourism phenomenon).
Protection of the traditions.
Encouragement of the development of thematic and integrated systems. In particularly, integration of the cultural heritage of the regions in a system of tourist promotion of the area.
Recognition of the strategic tourism role for the sustainable economic development, the territorial promotion and valorisation
Creation of new management models focused on the factors determining the quality and

the variety of the of the territorial offering (sustainability, business models and governance).
Development of interactive information technology platforms as a support to the tourist activities.
Support for the creation or increase of the connection through networks and relation sharing in order to implement the tourist destinations.

2. The background

2.1. Defining needs for improving the policy instrument

The project EPICAH by its activities pointes to support nature conservation and preservation of cultural heritage by making them accessible for tourism in a **sustainable** approach. Therefore, one of the main results that EPICAH intends to reach is to improve the **effectiveness of tourism activity** in managing the organization and valorization of cultural and natural heritage.

The first project activity was focused on the need analysis of each partner's Policy Instrument and previewed a preparation of one State of Art report by partner. The State of Art reports were based on the data of desk research and on the results of the specially created online Surveys that were distributed among the main stakeholders of the cross-border areas of each project partner.

The SWOT analysis of the IT-FR Maritime Programme done by ASEV in its State of Art report evidenced the existence of the following weaknesses of the Policy Instrument 2 concerning the main topics of the project EPICAH (sustainable tourism and natural & cultural heritage protection):

1. The Programme is focused more on the natural heritage protection compare to cultural heritage, moreover **there is an evident lack of appropriate attention to the tourism sector**.
2. **Lack of both horizontal and vertical integration of the projects** among them. For example, the outcomes of tourism projects are not integrated with other tourism projects. The projects dealing with cultural and natural heritage are not integrated in the system of tourism promotion of the area. The Programme finances both assets treated by the project EPICAH (Natural & cultural protection, and Tourism) but they are separated and one asset is not integrated with another. Sometime they even don't know about the outcomes and results of each other. As a consequence of the lack of integration there is a **low impact and sustainability of single projects** after their conclusion.
3. **Lack of a consultable database with a focus on the results / successful and transferable implementations of the past projects financed** by the Programme.
4. **General lack of commitment of cross-border partnership**, with poor participation by public and private stakeholders outside a defined strategic framework.

The stakeholders of the IT-FR Maritime Programme involved in the EPICAH online Survey highlighted that, according to their opinion, the principal cause of abovementioned weaknesses of the Programme arise to a **not sufficiently good promotion of the cooperation between projects** from the part of the Programme.

The first EPICAH project joint product (a Joint Report “How is being enhanced the border effect in the protection and development of natural and cultural cross-border heritage in Europe”), based on the National State of Art reports (which in their turn were based on desk analysis and on the online survey launched within the EPICAH project, targeting main stakeholders of the 7 border regions concerned) corroborates that improvements in the **effectiveness of tourism** sector of cross-border areas require among others:

- **Integration of tourist information** between border areas.
- **A continuous comparison of best practices** to identify the key replicable success factors.
- **Joint marketing strategies**.
- Packages with **joint cross-border offers**.

Since the overall fields of improvement identified in the EPICAH Joint Report were comparable to those spotted for the IT-FR Maritime Programme, the following ideas about the measures of improvement offered by the EPICAH Joint report were considered useful for the Policy Instrument 2 by the IT-FR LSG and the MA:

- ✓ In neighbouring borders it is necessary to seek cross-border tourism projects that represent positive trend towards further development of cross-border strategies and to learn from them in accordance to implement the best practices within the local environment.
- ✓ It is important within the tourism strategies to keep in mind to form some kind of an intermediate body - platform, that would help to mediate the contacts and link the tourism partners and projects together, and therefore improve cross-border cooperation between entities with different approaches. One of the most important reasons, why the cross-border tourism projects face difficulties, is the fact that the partners on different sides of the border do not know about each other, even if sometimes they are dealing even with the same issues. Or they are missing a platform/possibility to meet appropriate partners for the cross-border cooperation in tourism.

Furthermore, the Joint Report (in the section dedicated to the examples of EPICAH project partners’ Good Practices) offered other inputs in relation to the areas of intervention identified for the IT-FR Maritime Programme. IT-FR LSG members paid particular attention to the following Good Practices:

- a) “The Czech-Bavarian Cultural Platform Treffpunkt. “Treffpunkt” is the Czech-Bavarian Cultural Platform and joint project of Pilsen 2015 (Czech) and the city of Regensburg (Bavaria). The main activity is **networking**. Its objective is to network cultural actors and organizers on both sides of the border. Through networking meetings and exchange channels, participants have the opportunity to meet, exchange ideas and explore their partners.
- b) European cultural routes. European Cultural Routes are examples of cross-border cooperation joint development strategies and actions as they represent **networks of territories that “exploit” and develop natural and cultural share assets in a coherent and**

sustainable way. Their development is based on the establishment of a common and participated governance structure funded in strict principles regarding the preservation, management and promotion of the heritage. They create/develop a common identity (and also a common brand) based on the uniqueness of the assets and resources territories share. At the same time, such development and consolidation normally generates a stronger feeling of belonging and shared ownership. By definition (Council of Europe, 2006), the European cultural routes are “networks of interactions and economic exchange based on culture and creativity that incorporating principles of sustainability, fairness and inclusion based on” cooperation and on cross-border cooperation, making of them also good practices for the promotion of the objectives of the European Union Cohesion Policy. Nowadays, the main cultural European route is the Way of Saint James that also represents one of the main thematic of cross-border tourism projects in the Spain-Portugal borders and Spain-France borders.

- c) NecsTour Network. The European NECSTOUR network, project of which Tuscany is the promoter region with Catalonia in Spain and PACA in France, is an instrument for the exchange of a route of actions among a group of regions, local autonomies, member states and European Commission, but also with the industrial, social and consuming universe. **NECSTOUR proposes itself as a permanent debate lab, a platform of exchange of good practices, experiential exchange, experimentation of shared models of measurement of phenomena and social dialogue.** The common element is the will of confrontation on the one hand, about the analysis and the exchange of good practices and on the other hand on the application of the sustainable objectives of the Agenda 21 in the regions and the tourist realities.
- d) Eixo Atlantico strategy to boost tourism at border between Galicia (ES) and North Portugal. Likewise, the strategy followed by the Eixo Atlántico in the field of tourism is focused mainly (although not exclusively) on the promotion of local tourism, valorizing the internal market of 7 million inhabitants that the Euroregion Galicia-North of Portugal has. Thereby, **the strategy is oriented to promote mutual knowledge**, the creation of wealth in the territory and to avoid as much as possible the phenomenon of seasonality. To implement the strategy, several key-elements are used, among which “Seminar to Exchange Experience”. Once a year, Eixo Atlántico organizes a meeting between its members tackling tourism. At this seminar, cities discuss around a central theme, being invited to think about common strategies and having the opportunity to present their news in the field of tourism promotion. **The creation of cross border tourism strategies is a way to create synergies between territories and capitalize important tourism assets.**

At this point the EPICAH Joint Report, as well as single State of Art reports of EPICAH partners and online Survey results, gave a rich input for discussions during the IT-FR LSG meetings. The conclusion of these discussions, that also took into consideration the weaknesses of the PI2, evidenced the necessity to improve:

-
- non-infrastructureal networks,
 - communication and networking between the projects of the same sector/asset in order to make them aware about the outcomes of each other and to find ways of the results use,
 - communication and networking between different sectors of the Programme (tourism with natural & cultural heritage protection) in order to facilitate joint/common strategies for development,
 - complimentary tourism offers through the exchange; integrated offers among the different regions of the area, as well as among different projects. This, by the way, could also help to solve another weakness of the area regarding the tourist economy that is still strongly based on the season time (Development of an integrated system to enhance heritage is an opportunity for tourism deseasonalisation),
 - accessibility to the generated knowledge for the project in course or other future projects, or even for the beneficiaries of the area.

These needs translated in objectives were further confirmed by the EPICAH learning activities of 2017 that took place in Italy. The EPICAH project partners feedback and assessment of the IT-FR Thematic seminar, GPs and State of Art evidenced that the PI2 had the following main weakness: “here is a great number of projects proposing itineraries & joint action plans, however most of them did not manage to be sustainable and capitalized after the finalisation”; and opportunity: “transfer of know-how and good practices in the field within cross-border and transnational projects”.

The EPICAH project partners gave to IT-FR Maritime Programme stakeholders some recommendations and ideas about the measures to adopt to implement the needed improvements, namely:

- to pay more attention to issues related to projects’ transferability, by analysing in what way the transferability of the results can be ensured;
- to consider some actions aiming the exchange of knowledge and good practices with other already developed cross-border initiatives;
- to establish a proper organisational form during the implementation to ensure the sustainability of the project results;
- to use the projects results to increase the cross-border cooperation within the policy instrument territory mainly by organizing the same project activities;
- to assure closer participation of the programme bodies in the implementation of the approved projects;
- to assure the capitalisation of the results in a very practical way.

The IT-FR LSG members analysing the EPICAH partners and experts considerations related to PI2, concluded that “it would be necessary to **develop coordinated synergies and partnerships in the fields of tourism, culture and the environment at both strategic and operational level to efficiently exploit tools and resources for the sustainable tourism promotion of cross-border areas**, while

valorising, and highlighting their cultural environmental resources. **The use of innovative, smart and easy-to-use tools for this purpose is a basic requirement”.**

Summarising abovementioned information, the following activities and documents provided input for defining needs and measures of improvement of the IT-FR Maritime Programme:

Activity /document	Input
The Joint Report “How is being enhanced the border effect in the protection and development of natural and cultural cross-border heritage in Europe”	Requirements for improvements in the effectiveness of tourism sector of cross-border areas
	Measures of the improvement
	Suggestion on the possible areas of intervention by providing examples of the GPs of cross-border areas of the EPICAH project partners.
The State of Art and Online Survey results	Recommendations about the areas of intervention
EPICAH partners’ feedback and assessment forms for the Thematic Seminar and Study Visit in Italy	Recommendations and ideas about the measures to adopt to implement the needed improvements

The meetings with the MA of the PI2 stated that the most convenient method to front the weaknesses of the PI2 and to reach the objectives proposed by the EPICAH LSG members (mentioned above) was to **influence effectiveness of the programme management and organization through the improvements of the capitalization**, which is the only part of the Programme activities that directly implies the processes and issues in point. Capitalization is an activity that involves the program bodies and the beneficiaries of the projects in a common path of valorisation and dissemination of experiences and it permits maximize the positive impact of the projects through the cluster approach – an approach that consists in uniting/grouping similar projects and initiatives in a network to exchange positive experiences and to learn one from other or even simply act and work together.

It is necessary to precise that the capitalization as a process had already being previewed by the IT-FR Maritime Programme in its previous programming period (2007-2013). However, since there are still some lacks, highlighted by EPICAH and connected with this process, it is obvious that there are some weaknesses in the methodology that imply a necessity to revise and reorganize the process of capitalisation. One of such weaknesses, related to the limitation already mentioned in the SWOT analysis of the IT-FR Maritime Programme done by ASEV in its State of Art report, regards **lack of a tourism cluster** inside of the Programme process of capitalisation. During the previous period of programming, the PI2 previewed grouping the projects in various clusters (by definition homogeneous internally and heterogeneous among them) which shared the same thematic area and which therefore had similar or complementary activities and aims. However, among four clusters there were no one dedicated to tourism.

A deep analyses conducted by the PI2 MA and ASEV permitted to define a first draft of measures to improve the process of capitalization:

1. Create thematic poles on the theme of sustainable tourism and cultural&natural heritage.
2. Create a methodology for the management of clusters / poles in the different phases: from planning, through implementation to evaluation.
3. Organise programmed and guided/facilitated meetings between the clusters members: having the opportunity to present their outputs in the field of tourism and cultural&natural heritage.
4. Create a database with the outputs of the Programme, which can be useful as input in the phase of programming/implementing of the new projects, to improve access to the information and results.
5. Point to the community of exchange and integration between projects related to different programs.
6. Use the knowledge acquired in the projects for the planning phase of the future cooperation program (post 2020).

The annual event of the cross-border Cooperation Programme Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” of November 2017 and, organised in concomitance, the first cross-border workshop of EPICAH announced the new plan of capitalization, which, taking into consideration the input of EPICAH, proclaimed the creation of the thematic clusters (from projects funded on the cross-border Call 1 - launched in January 2017 and those funded on Call 2 – approved in July 2017), among which one cluster of sustainable tourism (uniting the partners of 18 IT-FR cross-border maritime projects) and one cluster of natural & cultural heritage protection.

The intention to improve the process of capitalization was announced, the tourism cluster was created, however it was still needed to structure the process of improvement better.

2.2. Lessons learnt

In the 3rd semester Italian partner with help of the external expert and the LSG members analysed the good practices presented during the study visits and thematic seminars organised in Spain-Portugal region. Such projects as Ruta del Vino de Toro, Way of Santiago (Portuguese path) and Eurocity Chaves-Verín. Spa tourism, being focused on various tourism products developed to promote cross-border cultural and natural heritage, were selected as useful for the action plan in the area of PI2. Their approach to **integrate the projects with each other in an overall marketing and management strategy** in order to **create an integrated tourism product** represents exactly what the PI2 needs to concentrate on. The IT-FR Programme has a lot of good examples of single recovery interventions but it needs to move toward the projects that can create integrated tourism products (like the projects presented during the Study visit in ES-PT).

The “**smart tourism approach**”, which based on intelligent use of ICT and big data to improve the management of tourism to make it more sustainable and competitive (used in the projects Smart Heritage and Herit Data presented during the Thematic seminar in Spain) was also considered as interesting and useful for the improvement of the PI2.

In the autumn of 2018 the necessity to accelerate the process of capitalization (caused, on the one hand, by the insecurity about the future funding of the cross-border maritime programmes and sequent necessity to improve the current programme, and, on the other hand, by wish to include the experience and knowledge of the projects of the 1st call, the conclusion of which was planned for September 2019, in the process of capitalization) appeared and forced the PI2 to **concentrate the activities of capitalization on the use of the acquired knowledge now** and not in the planning phase of the future cooperation program (post 2020). During the meetings with MA, the focus was done to a tentative to define better the possible improvements to include in the “Action Plan of the Policy Instrument 2”. As mentioned before, the chosen improvement action for the PI2 intends to implement changes in the process of capitalization of the IT-FR Maritime Programme in order to improve effectiveness of the programme management and organization. In this regard, in the 4th semester, it was defined that the activities for improvement of the process of capitalization should concentrate themselves on obtaining such results that can yield to the projects already in progress (and those of the next and the last 4th call). In other words, the improvement of capitalization should try to give to the ongoing projects an added value, which will be able to reform or influence the final part of the ongoing projects (for example, from the point of view of the realizations and integration of results, as learned from the ES-PT good practices). In this context, in January 2019 the input of EPICAH arrived to the MA in form of the ideas about the first concrete actions of the improvement of capitalization process, which the MA then approved and started to take in practice in spring 2019.

During the Study visit in Czech-Bavarian area (late March 2019), another very useful Good Practice for PI2 improvement was learned by the IT-FR stakeholders: **DEPO 2015. It is an active venue combining culture and business, cultural and socially development projects. Its activities fulfil the function of a cultural cluster**, the common denominator in everything the DEPO 2015 does is openness, creativity and innovation. **The cluster approach** goal is networking of cultural actors and managers from Pilsen (CZ) and Regensburg (DE) and their surroundings. The target groups are involved in the networking meet-ups and exchange tours which give them an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas. The IT-FR LSG asked to deepen work DEPO 2015 activities and methodologies, the difficulties encountered and the results achieved in order to be able to apply them in their cross-border area. It was explained that the community building actions - the thematic networking actions - are mostly organized once a year and they are always focus on specific long-term topic (e.g. design for entrepreneurs, cross-border culture, innovation in education). However, often there is a **mix of results or good practices that regard also other topics**. During the meetings, the most successful concepts are TED or PECHA KUCHA. Another activity that works well is to take the stakeholders out to see the good practices with their own eyes. It is more time demanding, but definitely working better than traditional thematic conference. The main results include: new contacts, new cooperations and projects, new activities in the territory, new jobs. Among the difficulties of DEPO 2015 there were mentioned:

- searching for good practices to present real and physical results, what is the only way how to prove success for some people, is a time demanding activity and mostly it is not covered by specific job position;
- attracting new organization that are not used to cooperate this way (so it can happen, that all the networking actions are visited by the same subjects).

The IT-FR LSG meeting of April 2019, dedicated to the analysis of the Czech-Bavarian good practices, confirmed the orientation of the stakeholders toward the experiences/practices able to create integrated tourism products.

The Thematic Seminar, that took place during the Study visit in Estonia-Latvia crossborder area in June 2019, offered to ASEV a possibility to learn better (directly from the Head of Estonia-Latvia Programme Joint Secretariat, Mrs. Helena Jarviste) the Good Practice that regards the approach applied for the process of **capitalization of the Programme**. It was explained that the main problems that the Programme has to front in this regard are the following:

- no budget is previewed for capitalization process.
- There is a necessity to integrate the projects of different areas (assets), as well as their results among them.
- Everything is based on pure enthusiasm of the involved stakeholders since the capitalization it is not among the compulsory activities previewed by the Programme.
- Absence of any written methodology/guideline for capitalization.

Initially, the Estonia-Latvia cross-border Programme tried to carry out the capitalization by organizing meetings among the representatives of different projects of the same area with the aim to let them know each other, to present the results of their projects and to inform others about the planned activities. Such meetings were organised one–two times a year. However, since such approach was considered not sufficiently effective, in 2018 the Programme decided to change the methodology and tried to unite in one workshop the representatives of the projects of different areas (business, tourism...). During the workshop, the project representatives were divided in working groups and were asked to discuss and to find answers for the following questions:

- how they can integrate the products of each other?

and

- how they can cooperate one with others during the project activities planned for the next period?

They were given about one and a half hour for a discussion. After that, on the base of the results of the debate, all together under the guide of one facilitator they tried to define a common plan of actions (for example, on using the dissemination events of one project to involve other projects that have the same target...). This new approach in capitalization was evaluated as positive and effective by the participants. And it can also be very useful for the PI2.

The method of Estonia-Latvia cross-border Programme was considered useful to place in the base of the activities of capitalization of the PI2.

The following table summarises the input of EPICAH Good Practices for the improvement of the IT-FR Maritime Programme:

Cross-border area	Good practice name	Lesson learnt / Input
Spain-Portuguese	Ruta del Vino de Toro Way of Santiago (Portuguese path) Eurocity Chaves-Verín Spa tourism	These projects demonstrate an useful approach of integration of the projects in an overall marketing and management strategy in order to create an integrated tourism product .
	Smart Heritage Herit Data	Both these projects use the smart tourism approach based on intelligent use of ICT and big data to improve the management of tourism to make it more sustainable and competitive. Moreover, the Smart Heritage project teaches how to face the challenge of balancing conservation of natural and cultural heritage with tourism valorization.
	European cultural routes	An example of networks of cross-border territories that “exploit” and develop natural and cultural share assets in a coherent and sustainable way.
	Eixo Atlantico strategy to boost tourism at border between Galicia (ES) and North Portugal	An example of the strategy oriented to the promotion of mutual knowledge, the creation of wealth in the territory and to avoid as much as possible the phenomenon of seasonality. The creation of cross border tourism strategies is a way to create synergies between territories and capitalize important tourism assets .
	Czech-Bavarian	DEPO 2015
Estonian-Latvian	The approach used in the capitalization process by the Programme Interreg VA Estonia-Latvia	A very useful example of a new approach in capitalisation (experimented in 2018) applied by the PI Managing Authority to integrate the products of different projects and areas of the Programme , as well as to stimulate the cooperation between projects during and after their realization.

3. Improvement actions

3.1. Action 1

The analysis carried out above clearly showed that the main defect of the Programme is a lack of **both horizontal and vertical integration of the projects** given to the not sufficiently good promotion of the cooperation between projects from the part of the Programme, what leads to a **low impact and sustainability of single projects** after their conclusion and, as a further consequence, to the general weakness of the integrated offers among the different regions of the area which reduces the **potentiality for an “intelligent and sustainable growth”**.

The good practices of EPICAH partners, acquired during the interregional learning activities, demonstrated that creation of integrated products, systems and offers, as well as cross-border tourism strategies can be facilitated by combining different projects (cultural, business, tourism...) in a network, which then is need to be guided and supported in the process of development of coordinated synergies. The use of networks (meetings, seminars, platforms) in order to exchange ideas and GPs, to discuss the common strategies, to explore projects and partners, to develop natural & cultural share assets in a sustainable way, and to create cross-border tourism strategies benefits the capitalization of important tourism assets. In particularly, as showed by the great examples of the partners from other regions, such networks can exploit:

- smart tourism approach (like Spanish-Portuguese Smart Heritage and Herit Data),
- cluster approach (like Czech-Bavarian DEPO 2015).

Considering that the Italy-France Maritime Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 is at the end of the programming period, and that all four calls are closed and the ongoing projects are in the phase of implementation or conclusion, the only aspect of the Programme that can still impact the sustainability of single projects is the process of capitalisation. The possible improvement should permit to **concentrate the activities of capitalization on the results that can yield to the projects in progress**.

Being inspired by the ES-PT and Czech good practices, as well as by the new methodology in capitalisation of Programme Interreg VA Estonia-Latvia used to integrate the products of different projects and areas of the Programme, and to stimulate the cooperation between projects during and after their realization, but considering also the detected imperfections of this methodology, the following specific action was defined for realization:

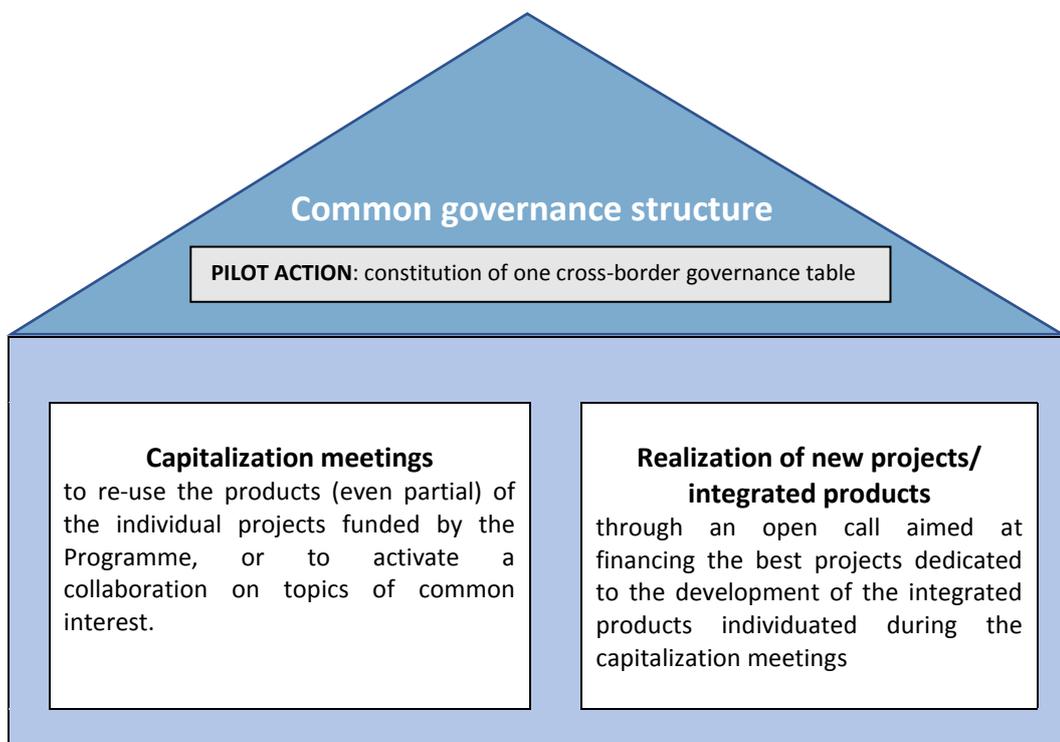
Action 1	Implement changes in the process of capitalization of the IT-FR Maritime Programme
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Action Plan type	
Type 1: Implementation of new projects	
Type 2: Change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance)	✓
Type 3: Change in the strategic focus of the policy instrument (structural change)	

Goals of the Action 1:

- improve effectiveness of the programme management and organization;
- valorize and maximize positive impact of single projects financed by the programme;
- encourage networking and integration between projects,
- facilitate and enhance dialogue and connections between different sectors of the Programme in order to foster joint/common strategies for development, and creation of complimentary tourism offers.

The identified improvement of the capitalisation process presumes **three possible levels**:



1. A basic level. It regards the activities of **implementation of the capitalisation meetings** among the representatives of two poles of the Programme: ‘Sustainable tourism’ and ‘Conservation, protection and development of natural and cultural heritage’. The purpose of the meetings is to identify possible capitalization actions and economies of scale among the ongoing projects, as well as possible integration of the project products. In other words: to re-use the products (even partial) of the individual projects funded by the Programme, or to activate a collaboration on topics of common interest.
2. An intermediate level. If at the basic level of capitalisation the single projects have the opportunity to re-use the results of other parallel ongoing projects (or those already ended), at this phase of capitalization, the projects (as a whole or parts of them, or partners of them)

are either put together to create a wider system project or completed/replicated in another area. This phase is focused on the **realization of new projects / integrated products** identified during the activities of the capitalization of the 1st level and connected to the necessity of additional financing from the side of the Programme.

3. The highest level. This level needs to be tested before the Managing Authority can decide if to apply it or not. It regards **establishment of a governance structure** to make the most important integrated products and achievements (developed during the activities of the capitalization of the 2nd level) endure in time.

The projects of the Programme that are dealing with/working on such outputs as: certifications, brands, cross-border networks of tour operators, networks of business support tools, memorandum of understanding for the enhancement, management and promotion of the cross-border sustainable tourism itinerary, are united in one working group called "Models of governance of destination". Working together during the implementation of the Action plan they will be able to help finding solutions for integration and sustainability of their outputs, they will be able to suggest and indicate the direction to take, but, given the nature of their outputs and therefor the nature of their integrated products, it will be out of their power (as well as out of the power of the Programme) to carry out/apply the defined models of governance in real life of the territory. Therefore, the **involvement and interest from the policy-makers and other institutions, authorities and stakeholders, that manage their respective areas and data, is essential** to obtain a long-term and substantial effect for the CB area.

3.2. Activities of the Action 1

	Activity	Period
1.1	<p>Development of the methodology on how to manage the activities of the poles 'Sustainable tourism' and 'Conservation, protection and development of natural and cultural heritage' as "thematic" learning communities and on how to integrate and reuse knowledge and results:</p> <p>1.1.1. Definition of the methodology 1.1.2. Finalisation</p>	<p>February – July 2019 January – June 2020</p>
1.2	<p>Identification of flagship projects (projects that do not finish on themselves, but involve other realities/projects and create networks):</p> <p>1.2.1. Definition of the concept and methodology 1.2.2. Identification and selection of the projects</p>	<p>September – December 2019 January – June 2020</p>
1.3	<p>Implementation of the capitalization meetings among the representatives of two poles: 'Sustainable tourism' and 'Conservation, protection and development of natural and cultural heritage'. The purpose of the</p>	

	meetings is to identify possible capitalization actions and economies of scale among the projects	March 2019 – January 2021
1.4	Implementation of the in-depth meetings among the projects of the poles aiming at assisting and emphasizing their orientation towards ‘quality’ results, deepen the operational and technical aspects of the possible interconnections and integration between the projects	October 2019 – April 2021
1.5	Ex post validation of the new approach and methodology for the capitalisation process to extend it to other 4 poles of the Programme.	June-July 2020
1.6	Specification of the improvements to apply to the ongoing projects and/or their outputs following the results of the capitalization process	February 2020 – June 2021
1.7	Creation of a library (database) with the realizations of the projects	July 2020 – June 2021
1.8	Publication of a call for expression of interest for projects (<u>a call without deadlines</u>) aiming at financing the best projects dedicated to the development of the integrated products, identified during the 1 st phase of capitalisation (described above: 1.1 – 1.6).	Starting from June-July 2020 until October 2021
1.9	Establishment of a cross-border tourism governance model: 1.9.1. Pilot phase: Constitution of one cross-border governance table. The pilot phase is needed to test a governance structure by constitution of <u>one</u> cross-border governance table opened to both private and public relevant regional stakeholders in order to increase the effect and durability of integrated activities and products of the cross-border area. The detailed description of the Pilot action is available in Annex 1). 1.9.2. Post-pilot phase: Extension of the piloted governance model to other Regions and other integrated projects/products of the sustainable tourism pole. 1.9.3. Possible formal integration of the governance structure in the capitalization process of the Programme	January 2020–December 2021 March 2020 – May 2021 June 2021 – December 2021 June 2021 – December 2021

All the activities are complementary and continuative. Some of them are periodic or repetitive. The activities 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 were started in 2019 and will continue their implementation in 2020. They were carried out by the MA of the PI2 following the input of ASEV (according to the results of the EPICAH activities, the lesson learned and the LSG meetings’ results). The activity 1.3 was implemented only for the projects financed under the calls 1 and 2 and in 2020 will be replicated for the projects financed under the calls 2, 3 and 4.

The activities were started in 2019 in order to involve in the capitalization process the projects of the 1st call, considering that they are closing in 2019. In February 2019 the MA with support of EPICAH created the draft Guide Lines (methodology) for the first capitalization meetings aimed to identify possible economies of scale between the projects of the **two** thematic clusters (Sustainable Tourism and Natural&Cultural heritage protection). Before the meetings, a request to fill in a summary presentation of the activities and outputs of each project was sent to the project coordinators. The collected documents were then forwarded to all participants by email. Thanks to this, the participants obtained a clear idea of the activities and outputs of other projects of both clusters, what made the meetings more focused and facilitated the discussion.

During the workshops, the participants (one-two representative for each project) were invited to reply to three questions:

1. (vertical integration) The first question was addressed to the representatives of the 1st call: “How can your outputs be reused by other projects, or included in their activities.”
2. (vertical integration) The second question was addressed to the representatives of the 2nd call: “How can the achievements foreseen in your project be shared among the thematic pole projects, so to be reused by other projects and / or integrated into their activities.”
3. (horizontal integration) The third question was addressed to the representatives of the 2nd call: “How could you **develop your activities in synergy with projects** with similar / output similar activities in order to **achieve common realizations among groups of projects.**”

Once the referents of the projects replied to the questions, the replies were read by the participants together and discussed in order to identify similar / complementary activities and outputs and to aggregate them by action / output affinity.

After the workshops the results were elaborated and the summary report, containing the synergies proposed between different project activities aimed at achieving economies of scale, was created. The achievements of the projects of two thematic poles were then grouped into four categories: paths / packages / offer mapping; business networks, territories; digital ecosystems / ICT tools; brands / certifications.

On the basis of four abovementioned categories the MA identified 3 thematic areas:

1. Strategies of co-marketing and promotion;
2. Digital ecosystems / ICT tools;
3. Destination governance models.

The division of the projects into three work groups was proposed, following the synergies between the outputs that emerged during the workshops. Therefore, each type of work has been associated with types of achievements to be integrated / to be made interoperable.

The next phase of implementation is aimed to deepen the operational and technical aspects of the possible interconnections between the projects, so to define the integration of the projects.

In order to proceed with the work it is necessary to elaborate the action plan matrix: one for each above group. Then to evaluate the work carried out in order to capture the actions to be carried out for the projects themselves and the necessary interventions, in other words, all three matrix will need to be discussed and validated by all the components of two poles.

In 2020, the whole process that includes the capitalisation meetings will need to be repeated for the projects of the 3rd and 4th call (with eventual participation of the projects of the 2nd call). The previously created Guide Lines (methodology) will help to minimize the confusion of new cluster members. To finance the new integrated projects and products identified during the capitalisation meetings, a call for expression of interest will be published by the Managing Authority in 2020.

The highest possible step of the improvement of the capitalization process of the Programme regards the possibility to increase and enlarge the effect and durability of the already finalized integrated activities/products of the projects. It can be done by involvement of the regional and/or national authorities and other important private stakeholders in the process of capitalization by **establishment of the governance structure**. The goal of the governance structure is to make the most important integrated products and achievements (developed during the activities of the capitalization of the 2nd level) endure in time, or in other words: to design and adopt the agreements/decisions/measures that will let the already finalised Maritime Programme projects' results last in the future.

To test the governance structure, the constitution of one cross-border governance table opened to both private and public relevant regional stakeholders is planned. The pilot previews a formalization of the governance table of one project of the Programme, and a modelling of the governance structure by producing a Guideline on how to implement a cross-border structure for the governance of the integrated products of the projects related to sustainable tourism (*Annex 1*).

The pilot, in case of its success, will be followed by the extension of the piloted governance model to other outputs of the Program. In practice, the procedure described in the Guideline, produced during the pilot, will be applied to integrated products of the projects related to sustainable tourism.

Finally, a formal integration of the governance structure in the programme capitalization process can happen through a decision of the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. After the pilot, the Managing Authority will inform the Monitoring Committee of the Programme about its results, and in case they are positive, will propose to formally include the governance structure in the capitalization process in quality of a permanent feature.

The following table summarizes the contribution of the activities described in the action plan for improvement of the policy instruments addressed:

Activity	Expected result	Improvement of the Programme
Specification of the improvements to apply to the ongoing projects and/or their outputs following the results of the capitalization	Availability of a document that defines actions to be carried out for the projects themselves and the necessary interventions	The projects that are already underway are improved. Their impact is valorised and maximised.

process		<p>Inefficient use of the Program resources is reduced thanks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - re-use of the products of other parallel ongoing projects (or those already ended), - collaboration between ongoing projects on topics of common interest.
<p>Publication of a call for expression of interest for projects (<u>a call without deadlines</u>) aiming at financing the best projects dedicated to the development of the integrated products, identified during the 1st phase of capitalisation</p>	<p>New integrated projects and products are financed</p>	<p>The residuals of the Programme (underspending reported by the projects) are used efficiently and their use derives from the capitalisation process.</p> <p>Wider project systems created or completed/replicated in another Programme area.</p>
<p>Formalization of the governance table and Modelling of the governance structure (<u>this activity is a subject of the Pilot Proposal approval</u>)</p>	<p>Availability of a Guideline on how to implement a cross-border structure for the governance of the integrated products of the projects related to sustainable tourism (tourist itineraries, brands, marketing strategies, networks of intelligent destinations etc).</p> <p>The policy-makers and relevant institutions and authorities that manage the respective CB areas, issues and data are involved in the process of capitalization</p>	<p>A long-term and substantial effect and durability of the most important integrated products and achievements for the CB area is assured.</p>

3.3. Players involved

Development phase:

Besides the Agency for the Development (**ASEV**) the following actors were involved in the development of the action plan:

1. The **Managing Authority** of the Policy instrument 2 Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” 2014-2020.

2. A **Local Stakeholders Group** was formed at the beginning of the project EPICAH to:

- accompany different project activities,
- conduct periodic meetings analysing the lessons learned,
- debate on proposals for adopting these lessons to the territory.

Among the stakeholders that took part of the LSG of the PI2 there were: Tuscany Region, Liguria Region, Confesercenti Toscana (Confederation of Commercial and Tourist Operators), Province of Livorno, Parks of Val di Cornia S.P.A., Municipality of Massa, Petra Patrimonia Corsica and others.

The members of the LSG and the Managing Authority were involved in all project activities better described in the section 2 of the present document and favored the development of the action plan.

Implementation phase:

The following players will be involved in the second phase of the project - implementation of the Action Plan:

- Main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Programme: representatives of the projects financed by the Programme IT-FR Maritime under the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th calls. In particular, 18 projects of the 'Sustainable Tourism' pole and 5 projects of the 'Protection and development of the natural and cultural heritage' pole. They will participate to the capitalization and in-depth meetings (activities 1.3 and 1.4). They can also be benefited from the activity 1.8 in case they decide to apply for the call.
- Managing Authority of the PI2: it has the power and authority to influence the methods used and will be responsible for the organisation of the capitalization meetings and for ex post validation of the new approach and methodology, as well as for the library creation. The MA will design and finance the call (related to the Action 1) including its publication, evaluation, contracting, implementation monitoring etc.
- PP5-ASEV, will support the managing Authority of the IT-FR Maritime Programme in the following ways:
 - supporting the MA in the drafting and updating the methodology on how to manage the capitalisation activities of the poles.
 - Supporting the MA in the capitalisation and in depth meetings preparation and conduction.
 - Supporting the beneficiaries after implementation of the capitalisation meetings by providing insights concerning the supplementary actions to include in the ongoing projects.
 - Monitoring the indicators' achievement level.
 - Moreover, in case of the Pilot Proposal approval, all pilot activities will be under the PP5 responsibility, namely: definition of governance table to be implemented; definition of

4. Risk Assessment

<i>Nr.</i>	<i>Description of the potential risk</i>	<i>Proposed risk-mitigation measures</i>
1	Failure to carry out the activities of the Action Plan	Detailed time planning and constant monitoring from the side of ASEV in collaboration with the Managing Authority will assure the fulfilment of the activities.
2	Non-realistic time-planning	All deadlines were agreed with the Managing Authority. However, in case of necessity and any unexpected delays, some ongoing adjustment will be applied to the timeframe of the action in order to permit the conclusion of all the activities of the action within the end of the second period of the project EPICAH.

5. Monitoring

ASEV, as partner of the project EPICAH, will monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

It will:

- constantly check the execution of the activities of the action,
- periodically verify the achievement of the indicators,
- report the progress to the EPICAH coordinator in each semester.

6. Official Signatures

6.1. ASEV – Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Empolese Valdelsa

Date:	<i>19/03/2020</i>
Organization (Italian)	ASEV – Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Empolese Valdelsa
Organization (English)	ASEV – Agency for the Development of the Empolese Valdelsa
Name	TIZIANO CINI
Signature	<p>Sign and stamp of the organization</p>  <p>AGENZIA PER LO SVILUPPO EMPOLESE VALDELSA Via delle Flascaie, 12 50053 EMPOLI (FI) P.I. 05131410480</p>

2.1. Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” 2014-2020

Date:	31/03/2020
Organization (English)	Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” 2014-2020
Name	MARA SORI
Signature	Electronic signature

 DIKeIC - Esito verifica firma digitale

Verifica effettuata in data 2020-03-31 15:35:49 (UTC)

File verificato: C:\Users\s.nesi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\ZG801940\EPI\CAH_Action Plan_final.pdf.p7m

Esito verifica: **Verifica completata con successo**

Dati di dettaglio della verifica effettuata

Firmatario 1: SORI MARA
Firma verificata: OK
Verifica di validita' online: Effettuata con metodo OCSP. Timestamp della risposta del servizio 31/03/2020 15:00:40

Dati del certificato del firmatario: **SORI MARA:**

Nome, Cognome:	MARA SORI
Numero identificativa:	19194149
Data di scadenza:	19/11/2021 23:59:59
Autorita' di certificazione:	ArubaPEC S.p.A. NG CA 3, ArubaPEC S.p.A., Certification AuthorityC, , IT
Documentazione del certificato (CPS):	https://ca.arubapec.it/cps.html
Identificativo del CPS:	OID 1.3.6.1.4.1.29741.1.1.1

Fine rapporto di verifica



Request for pilot action

IMPORTANT: Before completing the template, the lead partner should first check the idea of a pilot action with their Policy Officer in the Joint Secretariat.

Pilot actions are implementation-related activities dedicated to testing a new approach. This usually refers to the transfer of existing practices between partner regions. But it can also relate to a new initiative jointly designed by the partner regions during phase 1 and jointly implemented in phase 2. As reflected in the present form, pilot actions are possible under Interreg Europe under strict conditions only, and the description provided in the form should be as detailed and as clear as possible.

A request for a pilot action must be submitted to the programme as soon as it is ready and by the end of phase 1 at the latest. It will then be assessed by the Joint Secretariat which may require further clarifications. In case the pilot action meets the programme’s requirements, the Joint Secretariat will recommend it for approval to the Monitoring Committee. If approved, the application form will be updated through a ‘request for change’ procedure. Further information can be found in section “4.2.2 Phase 2 – monitoring of the action plan implementation” in the programme manual.

Project Acronym:	EPICAH
Project Index (PGI):	PGI 02464
Title of the pilot action	Constitution of one cross-border governance table
Policy instrument(s) addressed:	Cooperation Programme Interreg VA Italy-France “Maritime” 2014-2020
Partner(s) concerned:	PP5
Country (countries):	Italy
Date of request:	19/12/2019

Pilot action summary (information to be published in case of approval):

Please summarise in one sentence the pilot action requested.



The pilot action is dedicated to testing a governance structure by constitution of one cross-border governance table opened to both private and public relevant regional stakeholders in order to increase the effect and durability of integrated activities and products of the cross-border area.

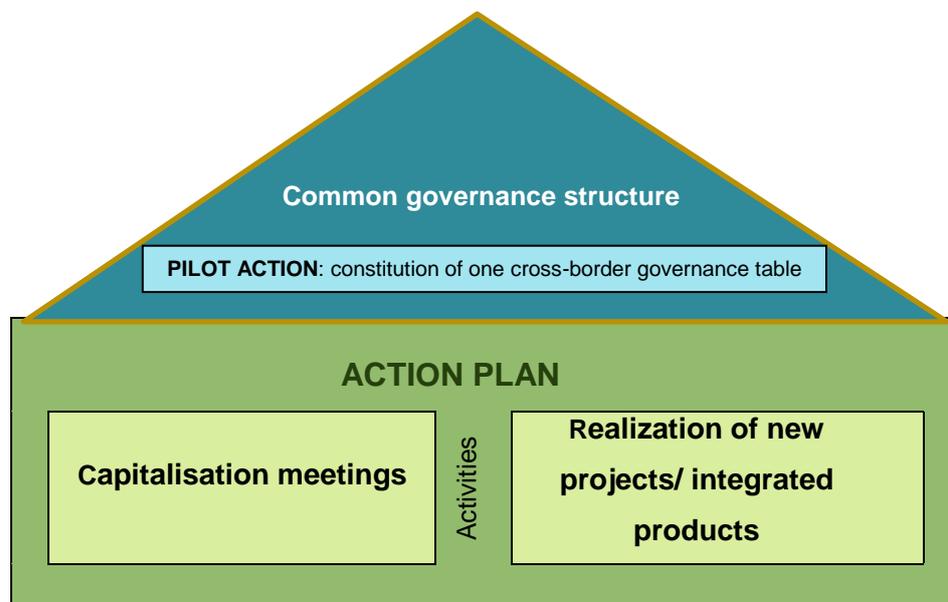
A. Relevance of the request

A.1 Nature of the pilot action

Please describe what will be tested in the region? What is the precise nature of the activities envisaged?

The pilot action is aimed at testing the possibility to **increase and enlarge the effect and importance of the integrated activities/products related to “Models of governance of destinations” for the cross-border area**, by involving in the process of capitalization the policy-makers and relevant institutions and authorities that manage the respective areas, issues and data.

It should be noticed that the identified improvement of the capitalisation process can presume three possible levels:



1. **A basic one.** It regards the activities (better described in the Action 1 of the IT-FR Action plan) of **implementation of the capitalisation meetings** among the representatives of two poles: 'Sustainable tourism' and 'Conservation, protection and development of natural and cultural heritage'. The purpose of the meetings is to identify possible capitalization actions and economies of scale among the ongoing projects, as well as possible integration of the project products. In other words: to re-use the products (even partial) of the individual projects funded by the Programme, or to activate a collaboration on topics of common interest.
2. **An intermediate level**, which, as previous one, has part of the IT-FR Action Plan. If at the basic level of capitalisation the single projects have the opportunity to re-use the results of other parallel ongoing projects (or those already ended), at this phase of capitalization, the projects as a whole (or parts or partners of them) are either put together to create a wider system project or completed/replicated in



another area. This phase is focused on the realization of new projects / integrated products identified during the activities of the capitalization of the 1st level and connected to the necessity of additional financing from the side of the Programme. The Programme is going to publish a call for expression of interest for projects (a call without deadlines) aimed at financing the best projects dedicated to the development of the integrated products, identified during the 1st phase of capitalisation (described above).

The idea is to publish the call within the first half of 2020. However, it is not definitive. It should also be noted that the call is not connected to the pilot, but is a part of the Action Plan.

The highest level needs to be tested (piloted) before the Managing Authority can decide if to apply it or not. It regards establishment of a governance structure to make the most important integrated products and achievements (developed during the activities of the capitalization of the 2nd level) function in time.

The projects of the Programme that are dealing with/working on such outputs as: certifications, brands, cross-border networks of tour operators, networks of business support tools, memorandum of understanding for the enhancement, management and promotion of the cross-border sustainable tourism itinerary, are united in one working group called “Models of governance of destination”. Working together during the implementation of the Action plan they will be able to help finding solutions for integration and sustainability of their outputs, they will be able to suggest and indicate the direction to take – by designing a **collaboration protocol between the involved regions**, for example, - but, given the nature of their outputs and therefore the nature of their integrated product, it will be out of their power (as well as out of the power of the Programme) to carry out/apply the defined models of governance in real life of the territory. Therefore, the **involvement and interest from the policy-makers and other institutions, authorities and stakeholders, that manage their respective areas and data, would be essential**, especially if we would like to obtain a long-term and substantial effect for the CB area. Considering the fact that the cross-border area of IT-FR Maritime includes five regions, extended in a vast territory, the number of authorities needed to be involved results to be quite big and the issue becomes even more complex.

The concrete identification of public and private decision makers and other stakeholders to involve in the governance table will be done during the set-up phase of the pilot (M3-4). The indicative list of institutions/authorities/policymakers that are intended to be included in the table is the following: regions of the cross-bordering area, Municipalities / Provinces, Councilors (tourism, work, mobility, culture), ANCI, UPI (and their French equivalents like AMF which is the association of mayors and Villes de France Association), business sector (in particular the companies most involved in tourism - first of all the hospitality structures and the associations associated with them), the tourist offices, national / regional parks, museums, important private actors on mobility, universities.

Summarizing, the pilot is needed to test the feasibility of involvement of the regional and/or national authorities and other important private stakeholders in the process of capitalization of the Programme in relation to the



projects that regard the topic “**Models of governance of destinations**”, as a way to increase and enlarge the effect and importance of the integrated activities/products of these projects for the cross-border area.

Who will be the main beneficiaries of the pilot action?

Direct beneficiaries:

- local administrations,
- regional authorities,
- all territorial subjects that create services around the output of the project in question.

Indirect beneficiaries:

- tourists,
- tourist operators,
- the whole cross-border area.

A.2 Compliance with the programme requirements

Please explain further how the pilot action complies with the programme’s requirements in terms of:

A.2.1 Policy relevance

How will the pilot action contribute to improving the policy instrument addressed in the action plan? (Pilot action must be part of the action plan of the concerned region)

In general terms:

The possibility to increase and enlarge effect and importance of the integrated activities and products related to “Models of governance of destinations” will **contribute to an intelligent and sustainable growth of the cross-boarding area** (one of the priorities the Programme IT-FR Maritime, that takes part in the UE Strategy 2020, is focused on), as well as to the **promotion of the cultural dialogue and the local governance** (another priority of the Programme). It can facilitate:

- integration of tourism information between border areas,
- development of complimentary tourism offers among different regions of the area,
- development of thematic systems, that integrate cultural and natural heritage of the regions in a system of tourism promotion of the cross-border area,
- creation of new management models focused on the factors determining the quality and variety of the territorial offers.

In concrete terms:

There are projects that came to define a protocol for governance but not implement the next step - that is the creation of a common structure for governance. The pilot action will be limited to constitution of **one cross-border governance table**. We will approach different organisational methods such as operating rules, methods for involving stakeholders, etc.

If the test works, model will be extended to other projects of the sustainable tourism pole.



The activities of pilot will include, among others:

- identification of needed level of capitalisation (local, state, programme),
- technical policy sharing,
- inclusive participation of **external stakeholders**.

In case the test achieves positive results,

- 1) as minimum, the results will be extended to other regions and can be applied to other identified integrated products/projects. Considering that the last activity of the pilot action is planned for January-February 2021, the extension of the model to other regions and to other projects of the sustainable tourism pole is expected by the end of 2021 (as a post-pilot activity included in the Action Plan), so it will definitely achieved during the lifetime of the Programme 2014-2020. Please note that the projects of the 4th call will start in 2020 and will continue in 2021, therefore we include 2021 in the lifetime period of the Programme 2014-2020, all the more so we are talking about the **capitalization of the results** that regard the projects of the Programme 2014-2020.
- 2) As maximum, if the pilot arrives to an agreement between the regions of the cross-border area, subsequently it will also be possible to think about a program agreement, as well as about formal including of the governance structure/collaboration protocol in the capitalization process, in quality of a permanent feature. The formal integration of the governance structure in the programme capitalisation process can happen through a decision of the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. After the pilot, the Managing Authority will inform the Monitoring Committee of the Programme about its results, and in case they are positive, will propose to formally include the governance structure in the capitalization process in quality of a permanent feature.

A.2.2 Durability

How will the results of the pilot action be evaluated? What are the measures envisaged to ensure its durability and / or generalisation in case of success? These actions should also be reflected in the work plan (section B).

The indicators of success of the pilot actions can be the following:

- 1) **formalization of the governance table for at least one project:** INTENSE (the project is promoting cycling and hiking tourism aimed at creating a new tourism product for the sustainable development of the cross-border area and enhancement of the natural-cultural heritage of the partner territories). It should be note that to verify the effectiveness and concreteness of the cross-border governance model, the pilot is addressed to a concrete case: INTENSE project. **INTENSE lends itself particularly well to being a pilot case** because infrastructure problems and technological solutions that require strategic cross-border agreements of various kinds (standards, services, infrastructures, mobility, user information) are concentrated on it: among them there are not only the ordinary permits for the construction of a cross-regional cycle path (subject of the project), but also the possible complementary services of tourist information, mobility and transport, construction of tourist packages by companies, security, hospitality, etc.



However, it should be further note that in order to increase the durability of the pilot action results, in addition to INTENSE, we will try to involve in the governance table one other project: SMART DESTINATION (the project aims to support and relaunch the competitiveness of transnational tourism chains by launching a process of integration of information flows and databases currently available to the public-private system with the territorial tourist offer).

Smart Destination and INTENSE are two complementary projects, because the tourist cross-border cycle path of Intense can be better promoted between regional tourist platforms thanks to the Smart Destination's products. The governance table that will involve also Smart Destination can have more importance for the territory concerning the durability of the products of both the projects.

In any case, the indicators of success will consider only the involvement of INTENSE, while the possible participation of Smart Destination can be an added value. The failure to involve Smart Destination will not influence on the evaluation of success of the pilot.

- 2) **Number of regions participating in the governance table.** At least 3.
- 3) **Number of private relevant regional stakeholders** (external bearers of interest) participating in the governance table. At least 2.

If all the above indicators are reached, the pilot action will be considered successful.

As specified above, in case the testing proves to be successful, the results will be extended to other Regions and projects in order to establish **a cross-border tourism governance model**. The extension of the model to other regions and to other projects of the sustainable tourism pole is expected by the end of 2021 (as a post-pilot activity included in the Action Plan).

A.2.3 Interregionality

How is the pilot action linked to the interregional exchange of experience process? How does it relate to knowledge / practices learnt from other project partners?

The pilot action derives from the interregional learning process of the phase 1. More precisely, from the good practices of the Spain-Portuguese cross-border area (mentioned in the Action plan), which used overall marketing and management strategy in order to create integrated tourism products. In fact, such projects as European cultural routes, Way of Santiago (Portuguese path), and Eurocity Chaves-Verin Spa tourism represent networks of cross-border territories that exploit and develop natural and cultural share assets in a coherent and sustainable way. Their example of cross-border cooperation and joint development strategies and actions through networks of territories is based on **establishment of a common and participated governance structure**, as well as on creation of a common identity (or common brand) focused on the uniqueness of the assets and resources that territories share.

Moreover, the networks of such project as Way of Santiago (Portuguese path), involve the **private sector**, too. Generally speaking, among the beneficiaries of the Program POCTEP 2014-2020 we can find, in addition to



public and similar bodies, private companies that are allowed to participate. According to the data of POCTEP, 33,3% of promoters participation is related to entities other than central and regional administration (24,6%), local administration (30%), Universities & Centres of R.D&I (12%).

More precisely, regarding the **Eurocity Chaves-Verin**, tourism is one of the strategic axis for this cross-border territory. It is included as such since the first strategic agenda for its development (defined as first step of the Eurocity constitution). This agenda was developed by a groups of external experts from Galicia and Portugal under a participatory model which included the organization of several round tables to discuss with all relevant stakeholder of Chaves and Verin the main topics the Eurocity should addressed. **There were meeting with all political parties representatives as well as with all the relevant institutions** (like schools, development agencies, associations of the social and economic fields - here included the main tourism entrepreneurs and hospitality associations - and health institutions, among others).

All the strategic documents and actions taken by the Eurocity requires the agreement of both Chaves and Verin municipal boards and of their general assembly.

For example, one current POCTEP project had been designed based on the conclusion of several focus groups with the main local (PT and ES) agents in each specific field tackled by the project. They **had a focus group with the tourism agents of Chaves and Verin and with the representatives of the local hospitality associations** where they addressed topics like: the main needs of the tourism sector, the mains fields of cooperation, the added value the cooperation for tourism development, main opportunities and constraints. So all the actions previewed in the application had the agreement of the eurocity tourism sector.

On the other hand, the Eurocity had developed several tourism deliverables that where **created with the support and participation of those agents** (through face-to-face/individual meetings, surveys or joint seminars) like **the hospitality guide** for example.

Regarding the **Saint James Way**, at the Spanish level, they are managed by the regional government through the XACOBEO. At the European level, they are developed and monitored through the European Federation of the Saint James Way. In Portugal there is also a national federation for the Portuguese paths of Saint James which is composed by all the municipalities crossed by the recognized paths (this recognition was made in a first stage by the Xacobeo and currently there are joint group in charge of it composed by the national tourism board and the ministry of culture (general directorate of cultural patrimony).

All of these institutions **had established common rules for the certification, signage and accommodation** for the way of saint James (with some – not relevant – differences) in their territories that both public and private agents should accomplish. All of them have also strategic development plans (linked between them). On the other hand, at the European level, cooperation actions between countries are mandatory to keep the label of first European cultural itinerary (normally developed with the support of EU programmes/funds).

Finally, among the good practices of EPICAH that inspired our pilot action there was the **Eixo Atlantico strategy for tourism**. Starting from some simple tourism actions, they managed to build an overarching strategy in order to coordinate efforts and messages. **What their kind of the governance table enables is to coordinate activities, especially when a new idea of product arises.** Therefore their governance table



is devoted to the strategic coordination of issues. Then, the products like for example strategy and brand are being implemented by Eixo Atlantico.

More in details: Eixo Atlantico established a working group on tourism. In this working group are included representatives of all their member cities. **This group meets regularly during the year in order to analyse opportunities for joint action and jointly prepare the main activities in the field of tourism that afterwards are implemented by Eixo Atlantico** (jointly with cities). Among the activities there are such as Expocities or definition of thematic for touristic guides.

The inflection point was when they arrived to the concept “**2 countries, 1 destination**”. This concept was born in some meetings held for the tourism issue between the regional government of Galicia at that moment, and the representation of the North Region in Portugal. All stakeholders agreed on the idea that this concept was the future of the work in tourism. From that moment on, all activities under the tourism area followed this concept. Further, this strategy was evolved in a common marketing strategy since common image, common promotional products, a label and a website for the product of “cross-border tourism” were created.

What it is important to understand is that new activities and ideas in the field of tourism consequently promoted by Eixo are initiated, defined and approved by the above referred group and, at the end, by the General Assembly of Eixo in which are represented all our city members at the maximum level.

Another point is that this strategy is applied not only for Galicia – North Portugal. Three years ago, and thanks to INTERREG V A programme, this concept was extended to the whole border between Spain and Portugal. In this case, the concept “2 Countries, 1 Destination” was enriched with the idea “Do not cross the border, go all over it!”. Within this project the main actors were not only the partners involved (representing all border territories); it counted on the representation of a high number of stakeholders in the tourism sector at the border area. Those stakeholders include public institution, academia, private sector and also some users representatives and they took part in all relevant actions: starting from the definition of the single strategy for tourism promotion at the border, through interviews, focus group and consultation process, to the validation of the common products, like for example, such interesting marketing products as comics about the border regions or the first touristic guide of the cross-border area Spain-Portugal as single destination. The concept and the strategy were presented and validated in a Forum of Tourism of Proximity, held in Braga in May 2019.

A.2.4 Additionality

Why can the pilot action not be financed by the policy instrument addressed or by other local / regional / national funds?

At this early stage, the regional government requires the concrete results in order to be able to decide whether to finance the establishment of a common governance structure. Such results can be obtained only during a dedicated pilot. To finance the pilot with the resources of the MARITIME, the MA would have needed to initiate procedures of public evidence that would require time and employment of personnel that the MA cannot afford. Moreover, 100% of the resources of the Programme are already employed.

It should also be noticed that the pilot requires involvement of time and experienced people. PP5 meets these requirements having followed the MA step by step in the capitalization path through EPICAH. Therefore the pilot could be carried out with the MA, but under the guidance of PP5 of EPICAH: this would greatly simplify



the internal procedures of the MA, which otherwise would have to take into account the sensitivities of all the regions of the cross-border area in every decision.

B. Planned activities

Please describe precisely the different activities to be implemented for the pilot action during each semester of phase 2.

PHASE 2	
Semester 1	
I. Conceptualisation phase (M1-M2):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- definition of governance table to be implemented to ensure there is adequate representation by the appropriate specialists with varying viewpoints and skillsets.	
<p>In order to decide on how the governance table should be built, the following elements will be defined:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">o aims,o size (the number of participants) and structure. It is important to choose a size that makes sense for the way the table is going to operate, with the right individuals participating.o responsibility (who is accountable for performing certain tasks). The roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and assign.o authority of the participants (who is in charge for what and who has been empowered with the decision-making ability and authority. Identifying authority level).o decision approach (it should be flexible enough to allow participants to react to decisions within an acceptable timeframe) and decision-making process. Decision process should be standardized to have a clear path for decision making so as everyone is aware of the steps.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- definition of functions and tasks to be assigned to the governance table for capitalization.	
<p>Among the envisaged tasks there are the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The analysis of the strategies developed by the project INTENSE for the sustainability of its results.▪ Definition of management measures to ensure the duration of the INTENSE products over time.▪ Identification of networks to support the INTENSE itinerary at cross-border level, including the entire cross-border tourist offer system linked to it.▪ Definition of a Joint Action Plan to implement (in the post-project years) the integrated marketing strategies necessary to support and promote the the cycle path INTENSE.▪ Signing of agreements (Collaboration Protocol) between regions and other subjects.	
<p>The external expert will be involved in the Conceptualisation phase in order to provide his input to the definition of the governance table and its functions by attending two Focus Group meetings expected to be organized for the pilot project's consortium.</p>	
II. Set-up phase (M3-M4):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- identification of public and private decision makers and other stakeholders to be involved. The process of identification and selection of the stakeholders will include the following steps:	



- An insight in the type of landscape elements needed to assure the durability and sustainability of the INTENSE project results in time. Specification of area and services INTENSE dealing with.
- On the base of the landscape elements, all potential demanders (based on interest in benefits), suppliers (current or future) and other external actors (that can be involved in the process for other reasons) will be listed.
- Then the stakeholders will be analysed and selected through the power-interest matrix. Prioritization of stakeholders will be done by using such criteria as: **level of interest** of a stakeholder in an issue (for the same level of interest the type of interest should also be considered); **level of power** or influence (formal authority, possession of resources, possession of knowledge...), the degree of impact of an issue on a stakeholder.
- On the base of the power-interest matrix, the stakeholders will be grouped according to common needs: key players, context setters, subjects...
- Relations between stakeholders will be analysed (potential conflicts and coalitions), as well as relations with other actors.
- Final selection of the stakeholders will be done also on the basis of the desired group size and clear identification of what is needed from the stakeholders.

The external expert will be involved in this activity in order to give his input by **revising and commenting all documents** that will be produced by PP5 in connection with the identification of the stakeholders (for example: list of the potential demanders, suppliers and other actors; power-interest matrix etc.)

- planning strategies for involving decision makers and stakeholders.

A right plan to reach each identified group will be prepared. Different strategy of engagement for different groups will be used:

- inform (newsletters, emails, presentations),
- consult (obtain feedbacks on issues, surveys, focus groups),
- involve (workshops, email feedback, document sharing, semi-structured interviews, round-table discussions),
- empower (engaging and involving them from the beginning in the decision making).

III. Implementation of engagement strategies (M5-M6 - *estimated*)

Main outputs

- Two Focus Group meetings with the pilot project's consortium for identification of the organizational model of the cross-border governance table.
- A report identifying the decision makers and stakeholders to be involved.

Semester 2

IV. Functional tests of the governance table (M7-M10 - *estimated*):

sequence of technical sharing meetings of the governance table (data collection, analysis, negotiated outcomes should be sought, moving the process towards consensus on issues, values and policy. Dialogue and outcomes must be recorded)

The functioning test of the governance table will take place on the management and marketing of the cross-border tourist cycle path developed by the Intense project.

Examples of possible meeting topics:

- Management of tourist services related to the cycle path;
- Integrated marketing strategies between the regions to promote the cycle path.



The meetings will be organised following the methodology of co-design lab with a facilitator and will include:

- ✓ pre meeting phase: (via email) collection of the different points of view for the best focus of the governance problem to be addressed during the meeting
- ✓ meeting: presentation of the problem / brainstorming to identify solutions / discussion and aggregation of ideas / identification of the most convincing ideas
- ✓ post meeting: (via email) sending the report to the working group to gather further comments

The external expert will be involved in this activity by **acting as a facilitator during the Technical meetings** described above and by **revising and commenting the reports** that PP5 will prepare during the post meetings' phase.

- fulfilment of the tasks agreed by the governance table ([Private relevant regional stakeholders](#), [Regional authorities](#)).

V. Evaluation of the functioning of the table and fine tuning (M11-M12 - *estimated*) on the basis of the functions and tasks assigned to the table in the Semester 1.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the decision-making process related to the management and marketing of the Intense cycle track will be monitored.

Evaluation questionnaires will be sent to the members of the working group and a summary report (nr.1) of the results will be sent to everyone.

The participants will be also asked to verify the architecture, components and functionality of the governance table identified in phase 1 and evaluate necessary corrective or fine-tuning actions.

Questionnaires will be sent to the members of the working group to identify critical issues and any corrective actions.

Subsequently, a summary evaluation report (nr. 2) of the results will be sent to all involved parties.

At the end of the semester an evaluation workshop will be organized to discuss the 2 evaluation reports.

With the help of a facilitator, the following will be validated:

- architecture, composition, operating rules of the governance table, with the proposed fine-tuning actions.

The external expert will be involved in this activity by **revising the templates of the Evaluation questionnaires** and by **acting as a facilitator during the evaluation workshop** described above.

Main outputs

- At least two Technical Meetings of the governance table for capitalisation.
- Evaluation report of the performed activities and effectiveness of the governance table.

Semester 3



VI. Formalization of the governance table and Modelling of the governance structure (M13-14 - estimated)

Formalization of the governance table: On the basis of the results of the previous phase, the governance table will be formalized with the stakeholders involved in the working group. Possible formalization methods: signature of a collaboration protocol between the Regions involved.

Modelling of the governance structure: Based on the results of the previous phase, a Guideline on how to implement a cross-border structure for the governance of the integrated products of the projects related to sustainable tourism will be prepared to make it possible to extend the piloted governance model to all cross-border tourism outputs of the Program. The modeling **of the governance structure** will also address the issue of extending beyond the thematic pole of sustainable tourism, that is, the governance of the outputs of the other thematic poles of the Program (relating, for example, to the cultural and natural Heritage, safety at sea, etc.)

The external expert will be involved in this activity by **revising** (if necessary more times) **and providing his comments on the “Guideline** on how to implement a cross-border structure for the governance of the integrated products of the projects related to sustainable tourism” that is supposed to be produced by PP5.

Main outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>A Guideline</u> on how to implement a cross-border structure for the governance of the integrated products of the projects related to sustainable tourism (tourist itineraries, brands, marketing strategies, networks of intelligent destinations etc)
Semester 4
<i>No content related activities should take place in this semester. The last months of the project should be entirely dedicated to the project closure.</i>

C. State Aid

Funds used to implement pilot actions have to comply with state aid rules, in line with article 107 of the TFEU. Therefore, the JS has to assess if the pilot activities proposed by the project can be considered as state aid relevant. The activity carried out within the pilot could be state aid relevant if it has a commercial nature, is market related, it grants an economic benefit to the beneficiary that the beneficiary would not have received without the pilot and is thus able to distort the competition within the EU. If the proposed pilot action falls under state aid rules, the aid will be granted under the de minimis regulation¹. According to this regulation, an organisation cannot receive more than EUR 200,000 of de minimis aid in the last 3 fiscal years. This means that, if the pilot action is state aid relevant and the project partner will receive de minimis aid, there will be specific procedures to follow. If the pilot benefits directly the project partner, a self-declaration will have to be provided by the project partner. In cases where third parties receive benefits from the pilot, they will be considered as the recipient of state aid/de minimis and projects partners bear the responsibility to ensure that state aid /de minimis rules are respected by the third parties, by collecting such self-declarations from them. Further information on state aid can also be found in section “2.7.5 State aid” in the programme manual.

¹ 'Commission Regulation (EC) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid'



In order to allow the JS to assess whether the proposed pilot is state aid relevant, we kindly ask you to reply to the questions below.

- Can any of the pilot activities be considered as an economic activity, i.e. market relevant, profit oriented or likely to improve the financial situation of the partner? Please justify as much as possible your answer, and if applicable, please explain how the pilot action could improve the financial situation of the project partner.

No.

- Will there be a specific third party organisation or a selected group of third party organisations (other than the external experts sub-contracted in compliance with public procurement rules) involved in the pilot that could benefit from market related, or profit oriented activities, likely to improve their financial situation? If yes, please define the activities they will participate in and explain why you consider that they are market related and how they could bring an economic benefit to the third party.

No.

D. Partnership

Which partner(s) of the project will be in charge of the implementation of the pilot action?

Partner name:	Country:	Role in the pilot:
PP5	Italy	All pilot activities are under PP5 responsibility, starting from the conceptualisation and including the overall management, evaluation and delivery of the main outputs (specified in the section B).

Does the pilot action require the introduction of new partners in the partnership?

No

If yes, please specify (*)

Partner name:	Country:	Role in the pilot:

(*) In order to confirm the eligibility of the new partner(s) please fill in Annex 1 – Part B Partnership for each of the new partners joining the existing partnership.

Will other stakeholders be involved in the implementation of the pilot action?

Yes.



Partner	Staff costs	Office and administration	Travel and accommodation	External expertise and services	Equipment	Total partner budget
PP5	23,000.00	3,450.00	1,800.00	9,000.00	-	37,250.00
Total	23,000.00	3,450.00	1,800.00	9,000.00		37,250.00

The pilot action will be implemented in close cooperation and continuous coordination with the Managing Authority/JS, regional strategic partners and other stakeholders.

Representatives of two Maritime projects Smart Destination and INTENSE (among which Tuscany Region as a coordinator of both the projects) will be involved in the phases of conceptualisation, set-up and stakeholders' engagement, as well as in the technical meetings and evaluation of the functioning of the table.

Some of other stakeholders and regional authorities (better described in the section A1) will take part at the governance table, therefore they will be directly involved in the pilot activity called "Functional tests of the governance table". The identification of public and private decision makers and other stakeholders to involve in the governance table will be done during the set-up phase of the pilot (M3-4).

E. Budget (*)

(*) In addition to section E, please fill in the Excel file "Pilot Actions request template – section E budget"

Table 1 - Total pilot action budget							
Partner	Staff costs	Office and administration	Travel and accommodation	External expertise and services	Equipment	Net revenues	Total pilot action budget
PP5	23,000.00 €	3,450 €	1,800.00 €	9,000.00 €	- €	- €	37,250.00 €
	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €	- €
Total	23,000.00 €	3,450.00 €	1,800.00 €	9,000.00 €	- €	- €	37,250.00 €

F. Questions for the Joint Secretariat

Part to be completed by the Interreg Europe Joint Secretariat



1. JS clarifications

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2. JS final recommendations

State aid relevance		Yes	No
1/ Does the pilot action represent a service which allows to make profit and for which a market exists (i.e. is it considered as an economic activity in the meaning of the Commission notice on the notion of State Aid (n° 2016/C 262/01)?			X
2/ Could the financial situation of the concerned partner(s) improve as a result of the pilot (i.e. could the pilot action potentially distort the competition)?			X
3/ Will there be any economic benefit to third parties? (indirect state aid relevance)			X
Conclusion	Not state aid relevant		

Fulfilment of criteria?		Yes	No
1/ Relevance		X	
2/ Additionality		X	
3/ Interregionality		X	
4/ Feasibility (including finance)		X	
Final recommendation	Recommended for approval		