

## BRAND NEW ADRIATIC - European Management Skills for Newcomers

Project ID ITHR0400375

### Deliverable 2.2.1 BNA CLUSTER Action Plan:

## BNA Action Plan

Municipality of Spoltore

Version.2 – December 9<sup>th</sup> 2024

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Version	Date	Comments/re views
Version.2	December 9 <sup>th</sup> 2024	

## PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

BNA project aims to strengthen the skills on European call design among the staff members of public authorities and public managers in order to create a strategic network of professionals and partners to increase their participation to European projects call for proposals.

The BNA project aims to focus about the challenges for Small institutional and organization of the Partner Rural territories are facing great difficulty to enter in the European project design. Lack of network, poor resource for training and under-skilled staff represents the reason behind the missing of opportunities.

Four main gaps have been identified in the partner territorial governance that the project want to tackle:

1. Information gap Information;



2. Capacity gap (Ability to act) Insufficient scientific, technical, and infrastructural capacity of local actors;
3. Administrative gap;
4. Accountability gap.

Territorial Public Governance need to reduce skills gap in their staff related to multi-level governance, design, administration, accountability and communication issues. A cross border capacity building on European project design that takes a cross border action can be useful to knowledge transfer between partners and territorial public governance because it gave the possibility to experiment in real working situation the difficulties and the critical action to be fulfilled for the proper management of European funding opportunity referring to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2030 and the Cohesion Policy for the 2021–2027.

The European Union (EU) is a complex political and economic entity that requires effective management and governance to ensure the successful implementation of its policies and programs. Public authorities at various levels—local, regional, and national—play a crucial role in this process. However, managing EU-related activities, such as applying for funding, implementing projects, and ensuring compliance with regulations, can be challenging due to the intricacies of EU governance and policies.

In response to these challenges, there is a pressing need for comprehensive training and capacity building programs aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of public authorities' employees. Such programs are essential to ensure that public authorities can effectively navigate the complexities of EU management, thereby maximizing the benefits of EU membership and funding opportunities.

### Action Strategy:

To have a positive impact on territorial public governance and relevant stakeholders several initiatives need to be implemented before start with a concrete capacity building about EU project design.



First is necessary a tailored analysis of different situation presents into the field. At that purpose the partners have organized 4 different G2G events to illustrate the project activities and emphasize the importance of cooperation among European territories to increase knowledge and common opportunities. During those events has been provided to participants a questionnaire developed by partners to have a concrete tool to measure and evaluate the state of the art in different territories.

Basing on those results a specific training tool has been developed to match the needs and evidence highlighted during the study phase.

A specific tailored training path has been developed to provide users specific knowledge and tools.

Analysis at the beginning and at the end of training course will also evaluate the coherence and potentiality of this instrument to face the difficulties highlighted in the previous phases, and giving suggestion for a proper implementation of the final version of BNA tools.

The training tool has been recorded, and the content will be available to all the stakeholders and interested bodies to the EU cooperation of the different territories involved.

The BNA project, in order to better promote the cooperation of the partner territories will also provide other tools, like, the stakeholder database, to promote networking and creation of partnership; development of further collaboration among cluster already existent in participating territories not directly involved with BNA project, etc.

In the next pages a detailed description of the different phases constituting the BNA strategy.



### *Analysis of questionnaire to set the training tool*

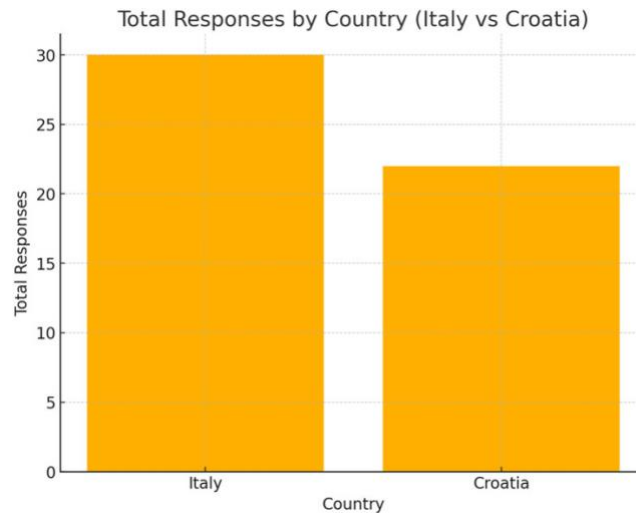
Before setting the training path a specific mapping has been carried out with participants involved into G2G events providing them a questionnaire developed into partnership.

Implementing the survey methodology involves a multi-faceted approach that aims to gather both quantitative data through a structured questionnaire and qualitative insights through semi-structured interviews conducted within focus groups. The objective is to comprehensively understand the Italian and Croatian stakeholders' perspectives on EU project management skills and identify areas for improvement. Area that will be addressed by BNA training course.

First of all, the questionnaire will be distributed electronically ([BNA Google Module](#)) to stakeholders, including public servants, project managers, and key organizational representatives and also spread to participants to G2G events. The questionnaire has been designed to assess their familiarity with EU project management principles, training experiences, and specific challenges encountered in project planning, financial management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and evaluation. This quantitative data will provide a broad overview of the participants' understanding and experiences in EU project management.

There were 53 total respondents to the questionnaire.



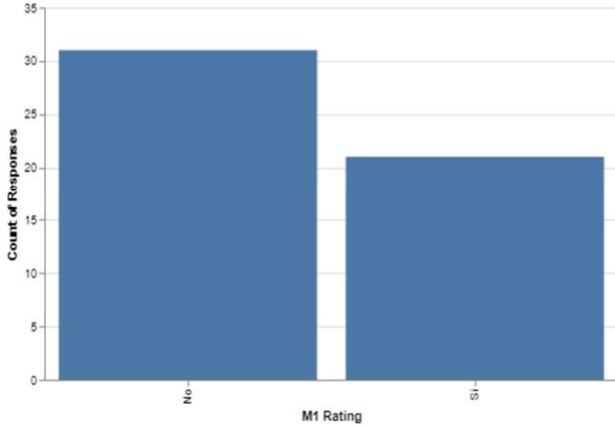


The research was interesting. The results show how there is a general understanding of the usefulness and operation of EU projects, but only from the perspective of managing the technical/procedural progress of activities, with nearly 2/3 of respondents never having formal training in EU projects. The majority have never written a financial European report for an EU project. The educational objective of the training then was to confirm on the activity of summarizing the conceptual scheme and also highlight the relationship between laws, and the importance of strengthening the writing activities of the project and cooperation activities between the two regions of the program.

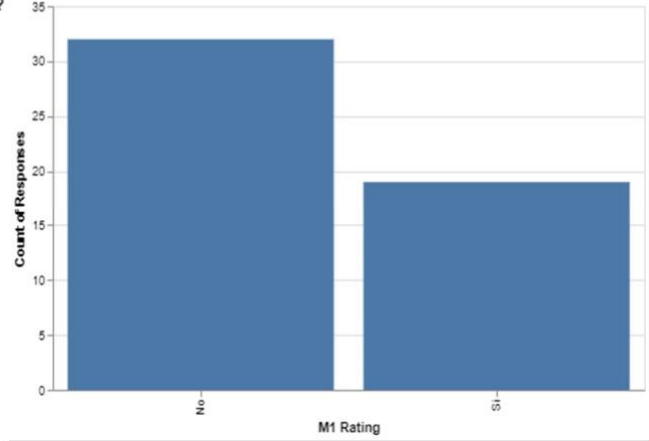
Italy – Croatia



Familiarity with M3 Have you ever written narrative and financial report for an European Project?



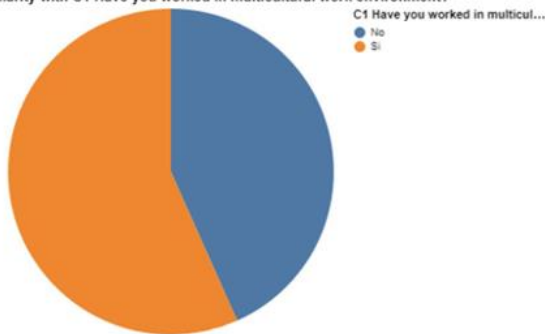
Familiarity with M2 Do you know what is a PIF?



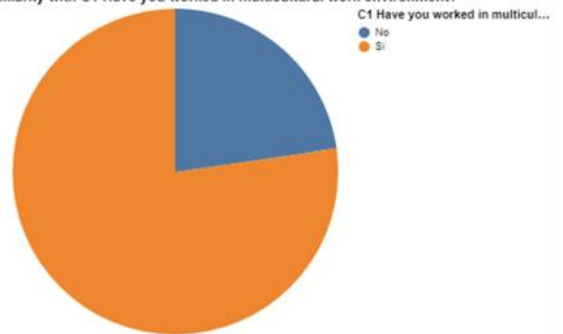
In terms of cooperation, more Croatian participants than Italian ones have already worked more in multicultural settings.

Comparison of Familiarity with C1 Have you worked in multicultural work environment? between IT and HR

IT Region: Familiarity with C1 Have you worked in multicultural work environment?



HR Region: Familiarity with C1 Have you worked in multicultural work environment?



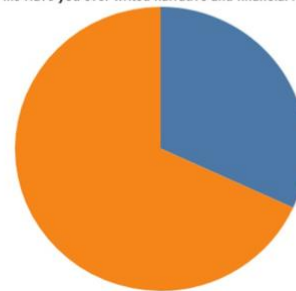
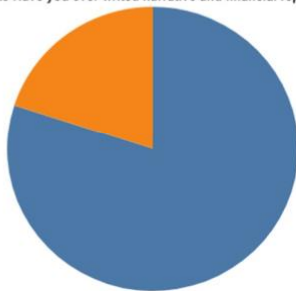
Italy – Croatia



Comparison of Familiarity with M3 Have you ever written narrative and financial report for an European Project? between IT and HR

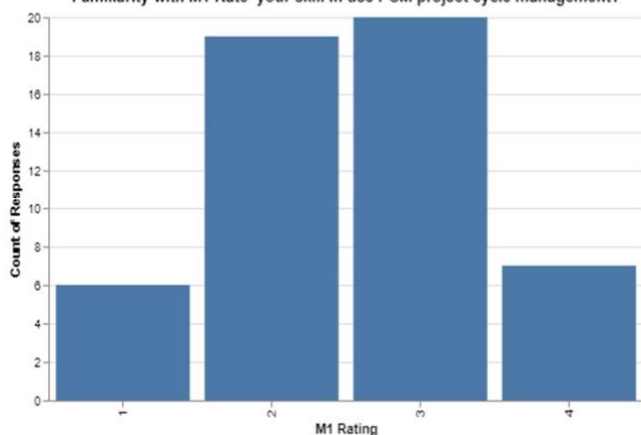
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HR Region: Familiarity with M3 Have you ever written narrative and financial report for an European Project?

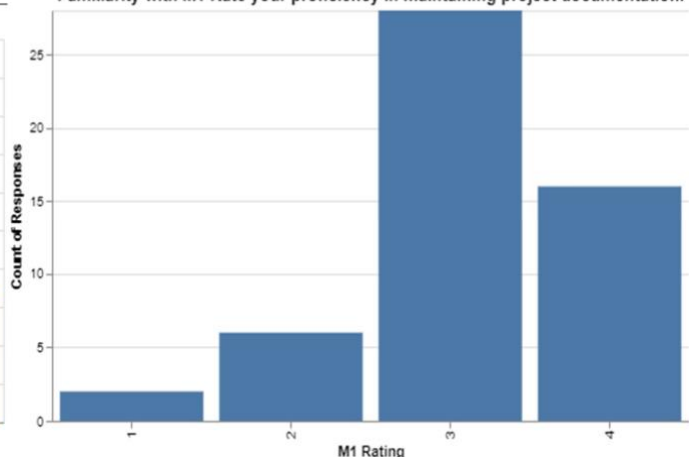


The Data seem to encourage the approach of getting hands-on design experience to consolidate skills that combined with those of management and documentation management, if also understood through institutional policy mechanisms can help cultivate diversity in finding solutions to problems. In fact, we have familiarity with PCM and maintaining the project documentation as good, but also with some balanced insecurity with PCM,

Familiarity with M1 Rate your skill in use PCM project cycle management?

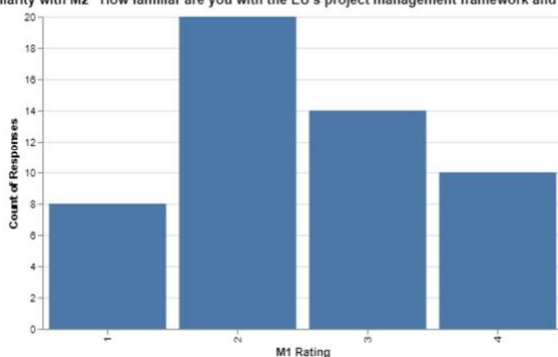


Familiarity with M1 Rate your proficiency in maintaining project documentation.

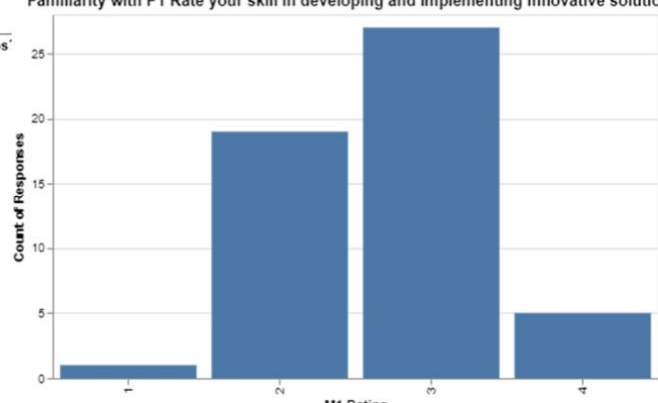


Major respondents say that for ensuring financial management, a regular reviewing and collaboration with procurement. Also pointed out that the 50 % is confident in most of the google drive and collaboration digital tools and environments. And there are good skills in excel. We want to maintain a module on Digital Skill for the alignment of those who are further behind on this type of skill and to reinforce basic skill.

Familiarity with M2 How familiar are you with the EU's project management framework and guidelines?



Familiarity with P1 Rate your skill in developing and implementing innovative solutions



Still EU management framework like regulation e.g regulation 2018/1046, regulation 2021/1060 so we still need training to explain multilevel governance and how to interact with this scheme and get information from the web looking at the website of programme and understand its functioning and opportunities of cooperation and problem solving, research possibilities for local authorities NGOs.

This G2G experience has been instrumental in shaping and refining the BNA Learning Models, providing valuable insights into the real-world challenges and opportunities that regional and local authorities face when engaging in EU-funded projects. Through these collaborative sessions, participants have highlighted the importance of first-hand experience, context-specific training that addresses not only technical skills but also the complexities of multi-level governance, cross-border communication, and sustainable project planning. By engaging directly with diverse stakeholders across different regions, the learning model has been tailored to emphasize intercultural awareness, adaptability,



and stakeholder engagement—skills that are essential for fostering productive collaboration in diverse project environments.

Reflecting on the outcomes of this experience, it is evident that a bottom-up approach, where local authorities actively contribute to curriculum development, enhances the model's relevance and impact. This iterative process has underscored the need to blend traditional learning with interactive methods like project-based learning, case studies, and simulations. By incorporating insights from the G2G meetings, the BNA Learning Models are better positioned to equip public authorities with the skills to navigate EU policies, manage complex projects, and engage meaningfully with international partners. Ultimately, this experience has enriched the learning models, ensuring that they are not only knowledge-based but also adaptable, practical, and deeply aligned with the real needs of EU project practitioners.

The learning material will present as corpus an exploration of European project planning and management, especially concerning the funding mechanisms and strategic initiatives within the European Union. It is structured to offer a thorough understanding of the EU's institutional framework, funding programs, strategic priorities, and the practical steps necessary for public authorities to engage effectively with these opportunities, and is structured in 3 different modules:

1. Multi-Level Governance and Governance for Capacity Building: Enhancing understanding of EU governance structures, laws, and policy development processes.
2. Digital and Operational Abilities: Developing essential digital skills and operational capabilities needed for efficient project management and implementation.
3. Management, Communication, and Reporting: Strengthening management and communication skills, with an emphasis on project cycle management, quality assurance, and reporting.

Analysis at the beginning and at the end of training course will also evaluate the coherence and potentiality of this instrument to face the difficulties highlighted in the previous phases, and giving suggestion for a proper implementation of the final version of BNA tools.



In the beginning of the training course, 12 participants evaluate the relevance of topics covered by the course very interesting and consider the content pretty fitting them work activities. A good rate considers the training could help increase the currently incomplete professional knowledge and improve professional skills.

Trainees strongly consider training intervention can well assist in identifying behaviors more suited to the current situation and support the transformation from old habits to new ones.

Almost all agrees about the consideration that the training activities should be able to, Exchange information, without necessarily following a strict step-by-step approach, Enhance mutual understanding and communication within the working group, not bound by rigid structures, Develop shared methods and tools that benefit the group, without adhering to a fixed process and Identify key and urgent issues within the group, allowing flexibility rather than a strict sequence.

In the average the participants consider the duration of the training a bit excessive and in the other hand consider very important to have a copy of training material used, provided by teacher well prepared and clear in presentation.

The majority of trainees consider the case studies and practical exercise the most useful instrument of teaching followed by the lecture presentations. Less interesting the group discussions, guess speaker and audio/video materials.

Once the course will be completed a new evaluation will be realized basing on the training knowledge acquired.

After the 17 lessons realized for between October, November and December 2024, 14 trainees filled in the post course questionnaire to evaluate the organization, tools and quality of the training offered.

The satisfaction evaluated is very good.



Trainees find to have benefited from the course content and think that information gained will be applicable to their professional activities. After the course most of them consider the initial knowledge they had not sufficient to grasp the topic discussed.

Also, the evaluation of the duration and depth of discussion of the topics is well evaluated, bringing more than 71% to admit the growth of their knowledge during the course has grown a lot. Only 29% consider the improvement on knowledge not relevant.

Regarding training facilities and tools provided during the course the participants consider the quality very good, as well as the overall organization of the course.

Very high is the evaluation about the teacher's expertise and ability in communicate the content presented during the course.

Interesting suggestions regards the people not yet familiar with the theme of the course. An initial warm up, to provide fundamental knowledge regarding the theme of the course, would be very useful to better understand the content discussed and improve the final result of the training.

### **BNA CLUSTER as tool for the new net and skills in European Territorial Cooperation**

During the project activities each partner has settled a database containing different stakeholders involved and informed about project activities.

The entities and stakeholders listed in the database would be contacted to verify their interest in joining the BNA Cluster. To be sure of them will be part of the BNA Cluster will be sent an official invitation to be part of the Cluster, defining opportunities and obligations of participants.

The members of BNA Cluster can use the tools developed during the BNA project lifetime, but also be supported by their direct territorial BNA partner, to be supported in different



activities linked with the European Territorial Cooperation, but also with European Funding opportunities in case of needs.

Among the others, the BNA Partners can provide to BNA Cluster Members, contact of other Cluster Members of different territories to develop partnerships to apply call for proposal; use the training tool developed by the BNA project; be informed through a periodical communication about the opportunities of funding available, etc.

Other new participants can join the BNA Cluster presenting an official request to the specific territorial Partner, and it will be inserted into the BNA CLUSTER. The procedure of updating of the Cluster Members will be realized each 2 months.

#### A) Partners' roles

1. Lead partner: coordinates the cluster and ensures compliance with guidelines.
2. Partner organizations: actively contribute to working groups and implement tasks.
3. Cluster coordinator: facilitates communication and oversees daily operations.

#### Decision-making process will be:

1. Consensus-based decisions: major decisions require consensus or majority vote.
2. Urgent decisions: danded via email, certified email (pec) or virtual meetings.
3. Annual review: reviews progress and proposes adjustments.

Other detail will be defined into the Memorandum of Understanding.

The **expected results** of the project are:

1. **European cross-border cluster BNA.** The cluster has its main achievements in building strong relationships across borders and establishing online institutional services for



promoting participation in European projects and networking. The cluster has the objective of participating with a partnership created internally in at least one international cooperation project financed by the Interreg Italia Croatia programme. The result is to activate a stable network of relationships for the identification of common objectives among local authorities and the activation of a permanent network of cross-border cooperation.

2. The **Memorandum of Understanding** signed by PPs will establish online technical assistance services, and the creation of a stable network of partners cooperating across the border with the aim to solve and limit obstacles blocking participation of local authorities and organizations coming from rural and inland areas in the European financed projects.

