

**Interreg**



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**Italy – Croatia**

# MAIN DECISIONS 9<sup>TH</sup> MONITORING COMMITTEE

21<sup>st</sup>–22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025,  
Hybrid mode – Rovinj (HR)

## SUMMARY

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The meeting addressed recent EU regulatory developments, project assessments, eligibility results, and approval of projects for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Calls for Proposals. It also provided updates on the Mid-Term Review of ongoing projects and the closure of the 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposals, as well as on the projects' start-up phase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call. In addition, the MC reviewed progress in evaluation and communication activities, ongoing technical assistance activities, the closure of the 2014–2020 Programme, post-2027 programming discussions, and recent innovations in artificial intelligence.

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### ITEM 0 – WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

**Chair:** Ms. Stella Arneri (Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds)

**Head of the Italian Delegation:** Mr. Massimiliano Angelotti (Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia)

**Head of the Croatian Delegation:** Mr. Perica Gabrić (Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds)

**Representative of the European Commission:** Mr. Beniamino Brunati

*The quorum is confirmed and the members present declare no conflicts of interest.*

### ITEM 1 – INFORMATION FROM DG REGIO

The Monitoring Committee (MC) **acknowledges** the update from Mr. Brunati (DG REGIO, European Commission), introducing Regulation (EU) 925/2025, which establishes the Border Regions' Instrument for Development and Growth (**BRIDGEforEU**). This new instrument aims to **improve cross-border cooperation** by addressing **administrative, legal, and infrastructural obstacles** through dedicated contact points and a European database. Mr. Brunati also highlights how the **B-Solutions initiative** will complement BRIDGEforEU by offering practical cases and best practices in removing cross-border barriers.

### ITEM 2 – 3<sup>RD</sup> CALL FOR PROPOSALS – SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS QUALITY AND STATE AID ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The MC **approves**:

- The **quality assessment results** for the **3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals (CfPs)** for **Small-Scale projects (SSPs)** and the ranking list. 18 projects (1 S.O. 2.2; 7 S.O. 4.1 and 10 S.O. 5.1) met the required thresholds for funding, while 4 private partners will be replaced in the Condition Clearing (CC) phase due to inadequate financial capacity;
- The **shift of the originally allocated budget** from S.O. 2.2 to S.O. 4.1 and 5.1, as well as the increase of the allocation of Priority 4.



## Italy – Croatia

Moreover, the MC **acknowledges** that the assessment provided for in art. 22.4(i) of Reg (EU) 2021/1059 (related to infringement decisions) involving National Delegations will take place during the CC phase, giving mandate to the Joint Secretariat (JS) to immediately initiate it with the Lead Applicants of the SSPs CfPs. The Managing Authority (MA) will inform the MC about **the fulfilment of the CC process** managed by the JS and then proceed with the contracting phase.

### ITEM 3 – 3<sup>rd</sup> CfPs – STANDARD PROJECTS ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK RESULTS

The MC **approves** the results of the administrative compliance and eligibility check for the 3<sup>rd</sup> CfPs Standard projects (SPs). 161 projects are declared eligible (with 8 ineligible partners) and 12 projects are not eligible.

The following **decisions are taken**:

- The Lead Partners of **ineligible applications** shall be **informed** by the MA;
- The MA will **publish** [the results of the administrative compliance and eligibility check](#) on the Programme **website**;
- The JS will immediately **start** the **quality assessment**.

### ITEM 4 – UPDATE ON 1<sup>st</sup> CfPs SSPs CLOSURE

The MC **acknowledges** the state of the art of 1<sup>st</sup> CfP SSPs: all **21 projects have been successfully closed**, with a 98% ERDF allocation completion rate, confirming strong implementation performance. Projects largely **met or exceeded expected outputs**, showing balanced impact across both Member States.



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### ITEM 5 – UPDATE ON 1<sup>st</sup> CfPs SPs MID-TERM REVIEW

The MC **acknowledges** the state of the art of 1<sup>st</sup> CfP SPs Mid-Term Review. Overall, project execution is **advancing according to plan**, with most projects on schedule. To streamline procedures and reduce administrative workload, the MA and JS have adopted a **new deadline system**. The **Mid-Term Review** confirmed overall **positive** performance across projects, assessing progress, cooperation, management, communication, sustainability, and risk management. Following discussions, the national delegations agreed that project **extensions** beyond 30 months will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. force majeure), pending full analysis by the JS and MA.

### ITEM 6 – UPDATE ON 2<sup>nd</sup> CfPs OSI PROJECTS START-UP PHASE

The MC **acknowledges** the state of the art for the OSI start-up phase. The **CC phase has been successfully finalised**, followed by an **OSI Lead Partner seminar** and a Citizen Engagement **training** held in Venice in September 2025. At the request of the Italian Delegation, the MA and JS will analyse the **coherence of OSI projects with the EUSAIR strategy** and present findings at a future meeting.

### ITEM 7 – UPDATE ON PROGRAMME EVALUATION

The MC **acknowledges** the update on external and internal evaluation activities:

- Regarding **external** evaluation, the contract was signed with **T33**. The external experts present outline their **multi-annual evaluation plan**, consisting of:
  - Integrated Evaluation Design (by end 2025);
  - First Operational Evaluation (2026);
  - Second Operational Evaluation (2027);
  - Impact Evaluation (2028).

Using a mixed-method approach, the evaluations will cover seven criteria: **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, transferability, and impact**.



## Italy – Croatia

- Regarding **internal** evaluation, the results of the 2<sup>nd</sup> operational evaluation (January 2024–September 2025) are illustrated, confirming **strong implementation progress and solid Programme performance**. Key analyses included **financial data, spending rates, applicants' profiles, and participation** trends across the first three CfPs. Lessons learned from previous procedures informed several improvements in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Call, such as simplified applications, enhanced partner search tools, and improved guidance materials.

### ITEM 8 – UPDATE ON PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION

The MC **acknowledges** the update on Programme communication activities for 2025 and 2026. Significant **progress in strengthening Programme visibility, stakeholder engagement, and youth participation** is noted, in line with Interreg communication standards.

Key **2025** actions included:

- Four Info Days for beneficiaries in Italy and Croatia (May 2025);
- OSI Lead Partner seminar and Citizen Engagement training in Venice (September 2025);
- The “EU Crossing Stories” event at the Venice Film Festival;
- “Paths That Last” joint event in Split with other Interreg Programmes;
- Participation in the EU Week of Regions and Cities, with a youth Hackathon;
- Monthly COM-Meetups, helpdesk support, and visibility guidance;
- Launch of the Programme’s Instagram account and publication of a results dashboard.

Planned **2026** activities include:

- January: Lead Partner Seminar for SSPs (3<sup>rd</sup> CfPs);
- February: Thematic event on AI and the Blue Economy (Bologna);
- May: Youth Engagement event combined with the next MC meeting and ASOC final event;
- October: Lead Partner Seminar for SPs (3<sup>rd</sup> CfPs).



## ITEM 9 – UPDATE ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

The MC **acknowledges** the update on Technical Assistance (TA) activities implemented in 2024:

- The MA and JS ensured full **operational management of the Programme**, including two Monitoring Committee meetings, three JEMS system releases, and the maintenance of the Exchange Data and Interoperability (EDI) system. **Capacity-building and communication support** were provided through COM-Meetups, project workshops, and participation in major Interreg events such as the Interreg Knowledge Fair, EUSAIR Forum, and the European Week of Regions and Cities;
- The Croatian National Authority and JS Antenna Office supported Croatian beneficiaries with **training on eligibility, reporting, and website management**, while the Croatian Audit Authority conducted its planned **control and verification activities**;
- A financial update confirmed the submission and completion of the **first payment** request to the European Commission, securing TA resources for all Programme bodies.

## ITEM 10 – UPDATE ON ASOC ETC ITALY-CROATIA PROJECT

The MC **acknowledges** the update on ASOC ETC Italy-Croatia project activities. The results of the first two editions are shared, along with the **launch of the 2025 edition** foreseeing joint activities that will be presented during a final event to a broader audience.

## ITEM 11 – UPDATE ON MMM ACTIVITIES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR 4<sup>th</sup> CfPs

The MC **acknowledges** the updates on MMM activities, including a report on the “Paths That Last” event (held in Split on 25–26 June 2025) on sustainable tourism, which resulted in joint recommendations, youth engagement initiatives, and a shared basis for future coordinated actions. Preliminary considerations for the **Capitalisation CfPs**, expected in **Spring 2026**, are also presented.



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### ITEM 12 – UPDATE ON 2014-2020 PROGRAMME CLOSURE

The MC **acknowledges** the updates on 2014-2020 Programme closure progress. All activities are progressing according to the established timetable, and the finalisation of the closure is **expected by February 2026**.

### ITEM 13 – DISCUSSION ON POST-2027

The MC **acknowledges** the updates on post-2027 programming implications for Interreg Italy–Croatia, following the **European Commission’s legislative proposals** (ERDF and MFF).

- The new **Interreg Plan** will maintain **continuity** with the 2021–2027 period through specific chapters for each Programme;
- The key **changes** introduced include:
  - A **performance-based management approach**;
  - An automatic de-commitment rule (**N+10 months**) replacing N+3;
  - An **8% flat rate for TA**;
  - **5 general and 5 specific objectives**;
  - **3 Interreg-specific objectives**.

To prepare, the MA proposes creating a **Task Force 2028–2034**.

### AoB (ANY OTHER BUSINESS)

The MC **acknowledges updates** on:

- The new **JS structure**, with the appointment of the **new Head**;
- The recruitment of **interns and IVY** (Interreg Volunteer Youth) **volunteers** within both the MA and JS teams;
- The **next MC meetings**, scheduled for March, May and November 2026;



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- The launch of the **KLens project**, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool implemented to improve Programme monitoring and analysis, building on the Veneto Region's digital transformation strategy. The project aims to automate eligibility and quality checks, improve project data integration, and enhance decision-making for project selection and monitoring.

