

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Italy – Croatia

Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 2021-27

Small-Scale Projects
1st Call for Proposals

*CATCHING THE WAVES
OF COOPERATION*

Interreg



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the European Union

Italy – Croatia

***CATCHING THE WAVES
OF COOPERATION***



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Foreword

This booklet showcases the success of the **Small Scale Projects** (SSPs), a pioneering initiative that marked a turning point for the **Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme**. For the first time, the Programme launched a Small-scale Call for Proposals and funded 21 projects demonstrating that cross-border cooperation can be highly effective even with slim partnerships and limited resources.

A distinctive feature was the significant involvement of numerous **newcomers**, partners who had never participated in our Programme before. For these organisations, the SSPs represented a key entry point for understanding the Programme's mechanisms and the broader opportunities offered by Interreg.

The results described in this booklet are particularly encouraging and demonstrate the **vitality of our cross-border area**. Although some of the projects initially faced slight difficulties in implementation, these obstacles were successfully overcome, as demonstrated by the excellent financial results achieved by each project upon completion in 2024. Today, many of these newcomers have become experienced players, ready to remain **key actors in our Programme** and to contribute to larger-scale cooperation initiatives in the future.

Silvia Comiati

Head of the Interreg Italy-Croatia Managing Authority

Angelo Mason

Head of the Interreg Italy-Croatia Joint Secretariat

Guide to this Publication

This publication is structured to guide the reader **from an overall overview** of the Small-Scale Projects 1st Call for Proposals **to a detailed presentation** of the funded projects and their results. It opens with **key figures and general information on the 1st Call for Proposals**, providing a snapshot of its scope, participation, and allocation of resources. This is followed by an **overview of all approved projects**, grouped by Programme Priority and Specific Objective.

The main body of the publication is **organised by Programme Priority and Specific Objectives** and presents **each project** through a **factsheet** including general data, objectives, key actions, cross-border cooperation, capacity building, and results and impact. In addition, each project is complemented by a dedicated page highlighting its **main achievements and distinctive features**, offering a clearer understanding of its concrete contributions to cross-border cooperation.

Below is a **recap of the priority icons and the icon legend**, illustrating the Programme Priorities, Specific Objectives, and key project information used throughout the publication to guide the reader.

PRIORITY ICONS



PRIORITY 2
Green and Resilient
Shared Environment

► **SO 2.2** ◀

Protection of Nature
and Biodiversity



PRIORITY 4
Culture and Tourism for
Sustainable Development

► **SO 4.1** ◀

Culture and Sustainable
Tourism



PRIORITY 5
A Better Cooperation
Governance

► **SO 5.1** ◀

Integrated
Governance for
Stronger Cooperation

ICON LEGEND



Project start and
end date



Budget



Lead Partner



No. Partners

1st Call for Proposals Small-Scale Projects

The Small-Scale Projects 1st Call for proposals – launched on 28th November 2022 and closed on 28th February 2023 – addressed the whole Programme area and selected cross-border projects in which organisations of different types, scopes and sizes cooperated to address specific thematic issues and concrete needs in the area.



SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS

Small-Scale Projects are an **innovative and inclusive cooperation tool** in the Programme area designed to engage new target groups and **empower newcomers** to actively cooperate in shaping stronger social, economic, and territorial cohesion in the cross-border region. More specifically, they strengthen cross-border cooperation by **encouraging direct interaction** between citizens and institutions, **strengthening local networks** across border regions, **reducing territorial barriers**, and **fostering closer relations** between communities on both sides of the border.

Small-Scale Projects can last from 12 to 18 months and focus on **streamlined partnerships and targeted interventions**. They are particularly well suited to smaller organisations, enabling them to address specific thematic priorities and respond effectively to concrete, local needs.

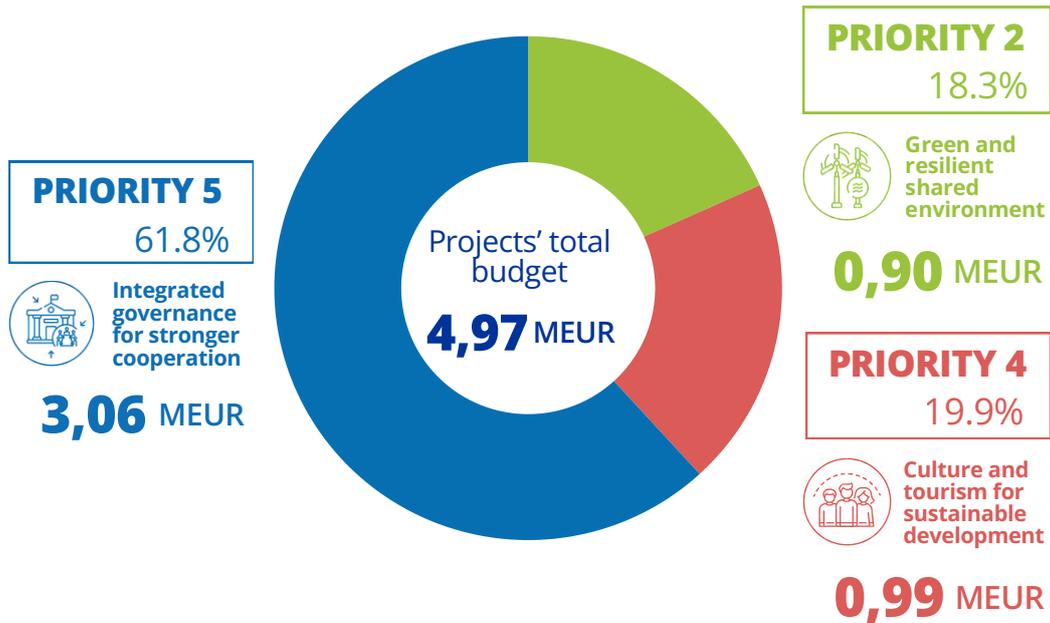
Their actions focus on improving legal and administrative cooperation, enhancing communication among key stakeholders, and raising awareness among public authorities and local actors. These objectives are pursued through targeted **awareness-raising initiatives, training and educational activities**, and **concrete measures** designed to facilitate and sustain cooperation between organisations across the maritime border.

Key Numbers

21 SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS APPROVED IN THE 1st CALL FOR PROPOSALS

BUDGET

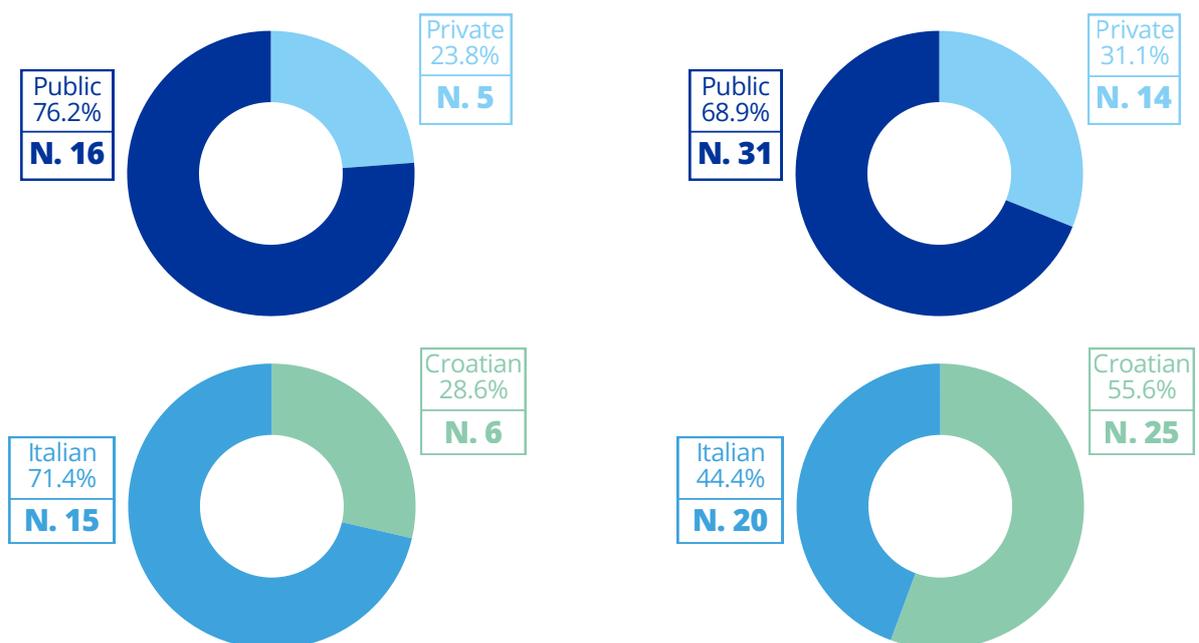
Allocated budget per priority



PARTNERS

Total number of Lead partners - 21

Total number of Project partners - 45



Overall number of partners (PP + LP) = 66

Themes

Here is the complete list of the 21 Small-Scale Projects funded within the 1st Call for Proposals, divided per Priority and Specific Objective, in alphabetical order.



PRIORITY 2

SO 2.2

Protection of Nature and Biodiversity



HABI
ML-FREE
MONI.CA
VERA



PRIORITY 4

SO 4.1

Culture and Sustainable Tourism



AdriaticPorTLand
CREaIT
ETHNIC
OMNIS



PRIORITY 5

SO 5.1

Integrated Governance for Stronger Cooperation



BNA
BRICS
CICERO
CO-MAY
COPE
D.E.C.
DEMY-Coop
DIGITsmart
EFFICIENTN2K
INABLE
M.A.R.I.O.
NEWS
SFERA



PRIORITY 2 // Green and Resilient Shared Environment

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2

**PROTECTION OF
BIODIVERSITY AND
REDUCTION OF
POLLUTION**

PROJECT

2.2

HABI

Awareness raising, training, and scientific research activities on species and Habitat of Community interest

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024



Municipality of Conversano



€ 226.602



2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Combat ecological degradation and enhance biodiversity by creating a robust framework for the protection of NATURA 2000 habitats in the Italy-Croatia region.

KEY ACTIONS

- Developed two Transnational Strategies and a Shared Monitoring Framework;
- Conducted joint training schemes;
- Implemented practical conservation actions and recovery strategies.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Pooled Italian and Croatian expertise to safeguard a shared natural heritage and facilitated knowledge exchange to harmonise conservation methods and policies.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Joint training schemes that enhanced skills in biodiversity monitoring and habitat management, empowering communities to become stewards of their natural environment.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Joint management strategies, increased public awareness, strengthened habitat connectivity through green corridors, and a robust foundation for future conservation initiatives.



PROJECT

HABI

Awareness raising, training, and scientific research activities on species and Habitat of Community interest

2.2

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The HABI project addressed crucial challenges in the protection of NATURA 2000 habitats. Focused on enhancing biodiversity, raising awareness, and implementing sustainable strategies, the project created a robust framework for ecological and cultural preservation.

At its heart, HABI aimed to combat ecological degradation in sensitive protected areas. Its transnational approach brought together Italian and Croatian partners, pooling expertise to safeguard a shared natural heritage. The strategy was multifaceted, combining the conservation of biocenoses with the promotion of education, scientific research, and sustainable eco-tourism. This broad approach ensured a profound impact by integrating diverse stakeholders, including local authorities, businesses, educational institutions, and the general public.

This collaboration led to significant achievements, beginning with the development of joint strategies and action plans for habitat management. The project produced two Transnational Strategies and a Shared Monitoring Framework, ensuring a harmonised approach to conservation in key reserves such as Conversano and Lokrum. The project increased awareness and showcased its outcomes through a series of events and social media campaigns that successfully engaged a broad audience, from local authorities to the public.

Beyond strategy and communication, HABI delivered tangible results through scientific and educational activities. Joint training schemes engaged over thirty participants, enhancing skills in biodiversity monitoring and habitat management. Practical conservation actions were also a priority, with ecological assessments and recovery strategies implemented in critical reserves. The project highlighted the importance of dry-stone walls and green corridors as essential ecological infrastructures, strengthening habitat connectivity and



ensuring the long-term, sustainable management of these precious areas.

The authentic added value of the HABI project lies in its ability to facilitate cross-border knowledge exchange: Italian and Croatian organisations shared best practices, harmonising their conservation methods and policies. This capacity building not only improved the skills of local stakeholders but also empowered communities to become stewards of their natural environment. By engaging the public and educational institutions, HABI fostered a culture of ecological stewardship, laying a robust foundation for future conservation initiatives and demonstrating how collaboration can protect our shared environmental heritage.

A key strength of HABI was its focus on practical implementation alongside strategic planning. Scientific assessments and targeted recovery actions were carried out in sensitive areas, highlighting the role of ecological infrastructures such as dry-stone walls and green corridors in improving habitat connectivity and long-term resilience.

The project's added value lies in its capacity to foster cross-border knowledge exchange and long-lasting capacity building. By harmonising practices and encouraging community involvement, HABI promoted a shared culture of ecological stewardship, creating conditions for sustained cooperation and future conservation initiatives across the Italy-Croatia region.

PROJECT

2.2

ML-FREE

Marine Litter-Free Adriatic Sea- Education for Active Youth Participation

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024



Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce



€ 220.406



1 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Combat marine litter in the Adriatic Sea by empowering students, educators, and communities through innovative environmental education and cross-border cooperation.

KEY ACTIONS

- Developed and implemented a Cross-Border Educational Programme with hands-on, service-learning activities;
- Held two five-day study trips between Venice and Split.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Strengthened partnerships between Italian and Croatian schools, NGOs, and local authorities through joint learning, cultural

exchange, and coordinated environmental actions.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Trained teachers in participative methods and equipped students with practical skills to lead community-based marine litter prevention initiatives.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Engaged over 60,000 people through awareness campaigns, youth actions, and conferences, leaving a lasting legacy of environmental stewardship and cooperation in the Adriatic region.



PROJECT

ML-FREE

Marine Litter-Free Adriatic Sea- Education for Active Youth Participation

2.2

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The mission of the ML-FREE project was to tackle marine litter in the Adriatic Sea, proving that an engaged and educated community is the most powerful tool for environmental protection. Through a unique cross-border collaboration between Italy and Croatia, the project has empowered students and educators alike, creating a new wave of environmental stewardship for the next generations.

The journey began in the classroom, where professors from partner schools were trained on how to implement innovative, participative educational methods. This led to the development of a Cross-Border Educational Program, designed specifically for students from the Marco Polo High School in Venice and the School of Economics and Administration in Split. The program immersed twenty students in a curriculum that focused on marine litter prevention, not through traditional lectures, but through hands-on, service-learning methods. Students were not just learning about pollution; they were actively becoming the solution. This collaborative framework, fostered through two five-day study trips, strengthened their connections and enabled a valuable exchange of knowledge and cultural understanding.

The project's impact extended far beyond the participating students. They designed and organised two youth pilot actions in their local communities, which empowered them to lead community-based initiatives on marine litter. This youth-led approach demonstrated the students' ability to learn, actively engage, and educate the public. The project's reach was further amplified through a series of awareness campaigns that reached over 10,000 people through digital channels and a remarkable 50,000 people via local and national media. The project was also showcased at prominent public events, including the Venice Boat Show and the national school fair in Split.



The project's culmination was the three-day international conference on Marine Tides of Change, held in Split. This significant event brought together 110 participants to discuss the integration of environmental issues, particularly marine litter, into school curricula to address key legislative and enforcement challenges. It was a testament to the project's success in connecting educational institutions with NGOs and local authorities, laying the groundwork for sustained, coordinated environmental efforts. Additionally, workshops for professors not directly involved in the project ensured that these new ideas and methods for environmental education would be integrated into the schools' formal curricula, creating a lasting legacy.

Ultimately, the ML-FREE project stands as a powerful example of how cross-border cooperation and innovative educational strategies can drive progress in preserving the Adriatic Sea. By fostering collaboration and empowering young people, the project has not only enhanced the capacities of schools and educators but also demonstrated that pollution, which knows no borders, can be fought effectively by a community united in its commitment to a cleaner, healthier future.

PROJECT

2.2 MONI.CA | air MONItoring aCrosss Adriatic

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024

RIT Croatia

€ 213.384

1 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Address air quality through “Knowledge Transfer for Smart Decision Making”, creating a dynamic network committed to a cleaner, healthier future for the Adriatic region.

KEY ACTIONS

- Organised a Youth Exchange Visit with a hackathon competition;
- Held a hybrid-format Thematic Event for stakeholders;
- Implemented a comprehensive social media awareness strategy.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The Youth Exchange Visit brought together students from four universities, and the Thematic Event strengthened networks

across local, regional, and European stakeholders.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Engaged young people in multidisciplinary teams during the hackathons, which provided students with hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of air quality monitoring issues.

RESULTS & IMPACT

A strong, lasting network, empowered youth, and a groundwork for a more sustainable and coordinated effort to monitor and improve the air quality across the Adriatic region.



PROJECT

MONI.CA

air MONItoring aCrosss Adriatic

2.2

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The MONI.CA project took a fresh approach to a shared challenge: air quality. The focus was “Knowledge Transfer for Smart Decision Making”, and the results were extremely inspiring. By empowering young people, forging new partnerships, and raising public awareness, the project has created a dynamic network, committed to building a cleaner, healthier future for the Adriatic region.

A major highlight was the Youth Exchange Visit, an initiative designed to foster cross-border collaboration and engage the next generation of innovators. Led by RIT Croatia and supported by the partner Eduforma, the project established inclusive criteria to select students with expertise in environmental science and information technology. After an open call and a rigorous evaluation process, two three-day events were organised, one in Zagreb and the other in Padua. These events brought together students from four different universities, who formed multidisciplinary teams to tackle shared challenges in a highly engaging hackathon competition. This hands-on approach not only strengthened cooperation between the universities but also gave students a real sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of the issues at stake.

The project’s commitment to collaboration extended beyond the youth exchange. A hybrid-format Thematic Event was organised, providing a vital platform for stakeholders to share findings, discuss initiatives, and build stronger networks across local, regional, and European levels. This event successfully brought together key stakeholders in air-quality monitoring, ensuring that the knowledge generated by the project would be executed.

Crucially, the project made a great effort to raise public awareness. With Eduforma at the helm, a comprehensive social media strategy was implemented across platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Through this digital campaign and regular news articles, the project shared key findings and showed the public how they could contribute to improving air quality.

Through these activities, the MONI.CA project has proven that a collaborative, multi-faceted approach is the most effective way to address complex environmental issues. By empowering youth, creating opportunities for knowledge transfer, and building strong, lasting networks, the project has laid the groundwork for a more sustainable and coordinated effort to monitor and improve the air we breathe across the Adriatic.

PROJECT

2.2

VERA

Sustainable agricultural models for biodiversity preservation

DATA & FIGURES



01/09/2023 - 31/12/2024



Municipality of Larino



€ 246.687



2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Chart a new route for sustainable agriculture by revitalising traditional farming methods and laying the groundwork for a lasting cross-border community committed to environmental preservation.

KEY ACTIONS

- Coordinated Operators' Workshops, the cross-border exchange and monitoring of ten different fig sapling varieties;
- Created the digital fig catalogue "I Giardini di Pomona in Your Pocket".

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The powerful partnership between Italian and Croatian farmers, millers, and academics culminated in a joint report on

the fig exchange and a final conference in Split.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Educational activities conducted by PermaCulture Dalmatia and Sunce's programme for elementary and high school students raised awareness of ecological farming practices.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Enhanced agricultural biodiversity, the digital preservation of traditional knowledge, and the cultivation of a lasting community committed to a sustainable and fruitful future.



PROJECT

VERA

Sustainable agricultural models for biodiversity preservation

2.2

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

A new route for sustainable agriculture has been charted thanks to the VERA project. Through a powerful partnership between Italian and Croatian partners, this initiative has not only revitalised traditional farming methods but has also laid the groundwork for a lasting cross-border community committed to environmental preservation and innovation. The project's journey proves that a shared passion for the land can overcome geographical borders.

The project's numerous activities, led by the Municipality of Larino, which coordinated the Operators' Workshops, brought together private farmers, millers, and academics, creating a vital platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. The journey culminated in a final conference in Split, where partners celebrated their collective achievements and looked ahead to the project's legacy. One of the most tangible successes was the cross-border exchange of fig saplings, a powerful symbol of the project's mission. Partners from PermaCulture Dalmatia and Pomona collaborated to exchange ten different fig varieties between Italy and Croatia. This pilot project promoted agricultural biodiversity, with the entire process, from production to long-term monitoring, meticulously documented in a joint report.

This commitment to agricultural biodiversity was a recurring theme, driving extensive community engagement. PermaCulture Dalmatia conducted educational activities for local communities, while Sunce developed a programme for elementary school students and a mentorship programme for high school students. These initiatives built capacity and raised awareness of ecological farming practices and nature conservation. In addition, Sunce organised a Green Swap Fair to promote sustainable practices more broadly.

Blending tradition with technology was another key achievement. Pomona, in



addition to its work on the fig exchange, digitised its collection of ancient figs, creating a digital catalogue called "I Giardini di Pomona in Your Pocket".

This modern tool, featuring QR codes for easy access to information, serves to preserve and share traditional knowledge.

Pomona further amplified the project's reach with a dynamic social media campaign titled "Preserving Biodiversity One Fig at a Time", which attracted significant online engagement.

To ensure this work reached a broad audience, a robust communication strategy was maintained throughout the final period. The project's website and social media presence, managed by Pomona, reached tens of thousands of users, ensuring a broad audience was informed of its progress and achievements.

The VERA project stands as a testament to the power of shared values. By uniting farmers, educators, and innovators across borders, the initiative has cultivated not only a diverse collection of fig varieties but a lasting community committed to a sustainable and fruitful future.



PRIORITY 4 // Culture and Tourism for Sustainable
Development

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.1

CULTURE AND
SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM

PROJECT

4.1

AdriaticPorTLand

Adriatic traditional navigation and shipbuilding as a PorTal between mainLand and the sea and as a key synergic factor for innovative touristic services and routes

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024



Institution "The House of Batana"



€ 249.670



2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Enhance the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development by creating a new, unified route connecting the coasts and rivers of Italy and Croatia.

KEY ACTIONS

- Organised Joint Exchange Labs;
- Participated in four Traditional Boat Meetings;
- Developed a comprehensive digital strategy;
- Created a Joint Strategy and Action Plan through a Design Thinking Workshop.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

United partners from maritime and river museums in Italy and Croatia, legally

establishing a long-term framework through a signed Memorandum of Understanding.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Joint Exchange Labs served as training grounds, providing hands-on learning and encouraging the exchange of best practices for a new generation of tourism operators.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Created a unified cultural and tourism destination, amplifying the partners' visibility and proving that shared heritage can drive economic development and cultural preservation.



PROJECT

AdriaticPorTLand

Adriatic traditional navigation and shipbuilding as a PorTal between mainLand and the sea and as a key synergic factor for innovative touristic services and routes

4.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The Adriatic PortLand project left behind a new route for sustainable tourism that connects the coasts and rivers of Italy and Croatia. By uniting partners from maritime and river museums across the region, the project has not only highlighted the region's rich nautical heritage but has also created a cohesive strategy for its future. This cross-border effort has proven that shared history and a common vision can drive economic development and cultural preservation.

A key part of this journey was the organisation of Joint Exchange Labs. These workshops fostered a collaborative tourism offer for the off-season by providing a platform for extensive discussions on sustainable tourism. More than just meetings, the labs served as a training ground for a new generation of tourism operators, providing hands-on learning and encouraging the exchange of best practices. This was crucial for exploring new opportunities to enhance cultural tourism within a cross-border context.

The project's insights were further enriched through Joint Participation in Traditional Boat Meetings. Four traditional boat rallies were held, allowing partners to exchange knowledge and highlight best practices in a hands-on environment. The experiences and insights gained were documented in the PorTLand Boats Meetings Logbook, ensuring the project's findings were preserved and could be disseminated to a broader audience. Extensive video material was also collected during these events to promote the project and celebrate its shared heritage.

To reach a broader audience, the project developed a comprehensive digital strategy. This included actively using a dedicated Instagram page and producing a Joint Video to showcase the collaboration and the cultural richness of traditional boats. These multimedia efforts successfully amplified the partners' visibility, reinforcing the importance of preserving nautical heritage through a



structured and sustainable tourism approach.

The culmination of these efforts was the creation of a Joint Strategy and Action Plan. Through a Design Thinking Workshop, partners defined strategic priorities and explored innovative ways to integrate cultural heritage into sustainable tourism models. The practical insights from the Exchange Labs and Traditional Boats Meetings were woven directly into this strategy, ensuring it was rooted in real-world experience. The partners then secured institutional commitment and signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which legally established a long-term framework for collaboration.

Ultimately, the Adriatic PortLand project has made a strong effort to enhance the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development. By co-designing a strategy that respects regional specificities while addressing shared challenges, the partners have created a unified cultural and tourism destination. This collaboration has amplified the project's visibility and proved that the Adriatic is not just a sea that separates, but a heritage that unites.

PROJECT

4.1

CREaIT

Co-creating Recipes for Accessible and Inclusive Tourism

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024



Social Cooperative
COOSS
Marche Onlus



€ 249.574



2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Establish a model for tourism that leaves no one behind, promoting inclusivity as a fundamental value to enrich every traveler's experience across the Adriatic.

KEY ACTIONS

- Trained about sixty figures in the tourism sector;
- Implemented eight pilot projects in Fermo and Trogir;
- Created the Joint RoadMap Strategy for future actions.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Lasting network of partners and stakeholders committed to carrying the project's objectives forward, acting as an engine for future inclusive initiatives.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Collaborative training sessions helped tourism sector figures understand the potential of accessible tourism and embrace the concept of design for all.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Concrete accessible services, such as tactile prototypes and panoramic displays, and a Joint RoadMap Strategy to guide the long-term journey toward a more accessible Adriatic.



PROJECT

CREaIT

Co-creating Recipes for Accessible and Inclusive Tourism

4.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The Adriatic, a crossroads of cultures and landscapes, now offers a more inclusive tourism thanks to the CREaIT project. It has united people, ideas, and a common vision: a tourism that leaves no one behind. Inclusivity was promoted as a fundamental value that enriches every traveler's experience.

The journey began with the training of about sixty key figures in the tourism sector. The lessons functioned as a collaborative process to fully understand the potential of accessible and inclusive tourism. This marked a paradigm shift, transforming a niche market into a growth opportunity for all. The awareness that design for all is the key to the future of tourism gained traction.

From theory to practice, the cities of Fermo and Trogir became laboratories of innovation. Eight pilot projects translated ideas into concrete realities. For example, in Fermo, courses were created to welcome deaf tourists and provide assistance services, along with tactile prototypes of the Palazzo dei Priori. At the Kamerlengo Fortress in

Trogir, the project installed a panoramic display for wheelchair users and developed a 3D model with an audio guide for visually impaired visitors.

The greatest legacy of CREaIT is the network of collaboration it has created among partners and stakeholders. More than a simple partnership, it's a network of people committed to carrying the project's objectives forward even after its conclusion. This network is the engine of change that will continue to generate new initiatives.

The project concluded with the Joint RoadMap Strategy, a plan outlining a future vision and actions. This compass will guide the journey over time, ensuring that the experiences and services created become a model to follow. CREaIT was not just a project, but a seed that laid the foundation for a more accessible Adriatic, proving that by combining forces, innovation, and cross-border cooperation, the joy of travel can become a right for everyone.

PROJECT

4.1

ETHNIC

Eco-cultural Tourism for the sustainable development of Adriatic Inland Communities

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024



Mountain Union Montefeltro



€ 249.538



2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Promote sustainable and inclusive tourism by connecting inland and coastal regions of Italy and Croatia, focusing on accessibility for all travellers.

KEY ACTIONS

- Development of foundational research on travel trends, co-creation of inclusive theme itineraries and packages;
- Development of training materials for operators;
- Launch of a new WCAG 2.1 compliant website.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Engaged a diverse network of stakeholders from two countries, co-created and tested

itineraries through cross-border exchange visits, and fostered the OMNIS community via WhatsApp.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Training materials (videos, podcasts) designed to improve tourism providers' ability to welcome travellers with visual impairments, guide dogs, and pets.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Established a lasting legacy for inclusive tourism by creating new, tested itineraries, a fully accessible website, and a stronger community committed to making travel a welcoming experience for everyone.



PROJECT

ETHNIC

Eco-cultural Tourism for the sustainable development of Adriatic Inland Communities

4.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The ETHNIC Project has successfully woven a rich tapestry of eco-cultural tourism across the Italy-Croatia region, proving that cooperation is key in creating a more sustainable and inclusive tourism sector. In addition to its focus on isolated activities, the project created a unified interregional movement that has enhanced sustainable tourism, empowered local communities, and forged lasting partnerships.

A key to this success was taking a knowledge-based approach, capitalising on previous EU-funded initiatives to develop a baseline model for eco-cultural tourism. The project then created four comprehensive training modules, supported by a series of mentoring and learning workshops. These were a cornerstone of the project, bringing together local stakeholders who actively participated in co-creating new tourism products, complete with circuits, itineraries, prototype packages, and digital marketing plans. By the end of this process, local authorities and tourism operators had significantly improved their expertise and were ready to lead sustainable tourism planning.

This newfound expertise was quickly put into practice. The project's main achievement was the creation of nine unique eco-cultural tourism products, each tailored to specific themes within the four participating regions. These products offered authentic experiences in areas such as cultural heritage, eco and soft adventure tours, gastronomic tourism, and wellness retreats. All of these were developed through a participatory planning process, ensuring they truly reflected the local cultural and natural heritage. To support the long-term growth of these initiatives, the ETHNIC Project also designed powerful cross-border digital tools and strategies. These included a digital map of tourism points of interest, as well as new cross-border and regional marketing strategies. These tools will provide a lasting benefit by helping local tourism operators to connect with international audiences while



preserving local traditions.

The project's strong commitment to participatory planning was evident throughout, empowering local communities to take ownership of tourism development. More than 15 onsite and 3 online workshops were held to co-develop tourism products. This collaborative spirit was formalised with a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all partners to sustain the project's impact beyond its funding period.

A powerful communication strategy amplified the project's results, ensuring they reached a wide audience. A website was created, offering free access to all training materials and tools. Five onsite territorial dissemination events, supported by social media and press outreach, showcased the project's outcomes to a broad audience. The final online conference brought together tourism experts from three universities and over 60 participants, ensuring the project's findings would remain relevant for future initiatives.

Ultimately, the ETHNIC project has laid a solid foundation for the long-term success of eco-cultural tourism in the Italy-Croatia region. By combining education, digital transformation, and genuine stakeholder participation, the project has transformed fragmented local efforts into a unified movement, fostering mutual learning and shared approaches to sustainable tourism for years to come.

PROJECT

4.1

OMNIS

Co-creatiOn of inclusive sustainable tourisM itiNeraries and packages from coastal to Inner areaS

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024



Catria and Nerone Mountain Union

€ 250.000



2 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Promote sustainable and inclusive tourism by connecting inland and coastal regions of Italy and Croatia, focusing on accessibility for all travellers.

KEY ACTIONS

- Development of foundational research on travel trends, co-creation of inclusive theme itineraries and packages;
- Development of training materials for operators;
- Launch of a new WCAG 2.1 compliant website.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Engaged a diverse network of stakeholders from two countries, co-created and tested

itineraries through cross-border exchange visits, and fostered the OMNIS community via WhatsApp.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Training materials (videos, podcasts) designed to improve tourism providers' ability to welcome travellers with visual impairments, guide dogs, and pets.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Established new, tested itineraries, a fully accessible website, and a stronger community committed to making travel a welcoming experience for everyone.



PROJECT

OMNIS

Co-creatiOn of inclusive sustainable tourisM itiNeraries and packages from coastal to Inner areaS

4.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The OMNIS project has contributed to weaving a new narrative for tourism across the Adriatic, one of inclusivity and cooperation. Focused on connecting inland and coastal regions, the project achieved remarkable results by engaging a diverse network of stakeholders, from tourism operators to public authorities, and creating a community committed to making travel a more welcoming experience for everyone.

The project began with a clear vision, shaped by a foundational research on “Sustainable Travel Trends” in Italy and Croatia. This study, which explored the needs of travellers with pets and those with visual impairments, was crucial in identifying key target groups and guiding the development of accessible tourism products. Following this, two focus groups in Split and Cantiano helped to establish four leading themes for inclusive itineraries: nature and active tourism, cultural heritage, eno-gastronomy, and religious tourism.

A key achievement was the creation of training materials for local tourism providers. These resources, including videos, podcasts, and web-based content, were designed to improve their ability to welcome travellers with visual impairments or those who travel with guide dogs and pets. The materials were made easily accessible via the OMNIS website, YouTube channel, and even Spotify, sparking interest among a general audience, including young students.

The project also focused on the co-creation of new, inclusive theme itineraries and packages. Designed in collaboration with local stakeholders, these were tested through cross-border exchange visits, which allowed Italian visitors to travel to Split and Croatian visitors to the Catria and Nerone Mountain Union territory. The feedback from these visits was vital, enabling the project to fine-tune the itineraries and ensure they truly met the needs of the target groups.

A significant technological milestone was the launch of a new, responsive website that is Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 compliant, ensuring full accessibility. The site serves as a central hub for promoting the new OMNIS packages and offering educational content. It also supports the OMNIS community, which was fostered through a dedicated WhatsApp group for tourism providers to exchange best practices and discuss collaborations.

The project’s high profile was maintained through a strategic communications plan, which included local events in Italy and Croatia, as well as articles in leading magazines such as Adriaeco Journal. In summary, the OMNIS project has achieved its goals by effectively pooling the collective expertise of its partners. Despite their inexperience with the programme, the partners’ specialist knowledge contributed to the project’s success, strengthening their capacities and creating a lasting legacy for more inclusive and sustainable tourism.



PRIORITY 5 // A Better Cooperation Governance

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 5.1

**INTEGRATED
GOVERNANCE FOR
STRONGER
COOPERATION**

PROJECT

5.1

BNA

BRAND NEW ADRIATIC - European Management Skills for Newcomers

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024



TREND consulting and training



€ 248.236



2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Build a new model for cooperation by fostering a shared understanding of Euro-planning and project management among public officials and professionals.

KEY ACTIONS

- Organised a comprehensive, five-day cross-border capacity-building training module;
- Co-developed and finalised an Action Plan and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Officially established the BNA Cluster, a lasting cross-border network for institutional assistance, and formalising it

with a signed Memorandum of Understanding.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Expert-guided training in Euro-planning and digital skills, which engaged participants in hands-on activities to design project proposals.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Concrete tools, a new learning model, and the BNA Cluster, which provided a solid foundation and enduring legacy for newcomers in European project development.



PROJECT

BNA

BRAND NEW ADRIATIC - European Management Skills for Newcomers

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



In a mission to build a stronger, more connected Europe, the BNA project provided a new model for cooperation among institutions. By fostering a shared understanding of Euro-planning and project management, the initiative has not only equipped public officials and professionals with vital skills. It has also launched the BNA Cluster, a lasting cross-border network designed to support future collaborations.

A cornerstone of the project's success was a comprehensive capacity-building programme focused on Euro-planning and "Digital Abilities and Operational Skills". This training was the result of a cross-border effort, with a five-day module delivered in Pula, Croatia, to seventeen participants from seven Croatian municipalities, and nine staff members from the Municipality of Spoltore in Italy. Guided by expert lecturers, the training went beyond theory, engaging participants in hands-on activities that allowed them to design project proposals. The programme received very positive feedback, and joint certificates were issued to acknowledge the participants' commitment and newly acquired skills.

The project's most significant output is the formal establishment of the BNA Cluster, a sustainable network for institutional assistance and partner search. To make this

a reality, partners meticulously co-developed and finalised a robust Action Plan and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

These crucial documents were officially approved during a meeting in Pula and signed during the final event in Spoltore, where project partners formally committed to continuing their work together. The signing was a symbolic moment that also brought on board at least one stakeholder from each partner, establishing the initial membership of this brand-new cluster.

The culmination of this journey was a series of final cross-border events. A training event in Pula and a final conference in Spoltore served as key dissemination moments, presenting the Action Plan and the MoU to a wide audience of partners and stakeholders. A successful press conference in Pescara further raised public awareness of the project's outcomes. Ultimately, the BNA project has provided a clear added value to the region. By creating concrete tools – the Action Plan, the MoU, and the Institutional Support Office – and a new learning model, the project has laid a solid foundation for newcomers in European project development, ensuring that its legacy of cooperation and knowledge-sharing will endure.

PROJECT

5.1

BRICS

Bridging the gaps of Cross-border Small destinations

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024



Union of Municipalities Lands and Rivers



€ 237.460



2 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Create a new route for sustainable tourism, connecting Italian and Croatian coasts and rivers, enhancing the role of culture in economic development.

KEY ACTIONS

- Ran Joint Exchange Labs;
- Held Traditional Boat Meetings;
- developed a digital strategy;
- Created a Joint Strategy and Action Plan.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Established through a partnership between three entities, formalised by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which legally binds the partners to a joint strategy and framework.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Using the Exchange Labs as training grounds for new tourism operators, fostering hands-on learning and the exchange of best practices.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Overcame procedural and administrative fragmentation, established a new era of cooperation and ensured that the unique beauty of the inland areas is promoted effectively and collectively through a lasting legal and strategic framework.



PROJECT

BRICS

Bridging the gaps of Cross-border Small destinations

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The BRICS project committed itself to uniting the inland territories of Italy and Croatia, transforming fragmented local tourism into a cohesive, cross-border strategy. Through a powerful partnership among Unione Terre e Fiumi, Unione Sorgenti del Biferno, and the Municipality of Dugopolje, the project has created a new framework to promote the unique tourism assets of these areas jointly for years to come.

The journey began with an in-depth analysis of the challenges facing tourism in these regions. The partners identified a common issue: an excessive fragmentation of governance tools and promotion efforts. To overcome this, they embarked on a series of cross-border study visits to Croatia and Italy. These visits allowed them to observe and discuss governance methods directly, share best practices, and lay the groundwork for a unified approach. The project then brought the insights back to local “Living Labs”, where local stakeholders co-developed solutions and created unified tourism governance mechanisms.

These potential solutions were then implemented through the adoption of three legally binding acts. In Italy, the Unione Terre e Fiumi adopted a Single Programming Document (DUP) that includes the installation of digital tourist totems. On the other hand, the Unione Sorgenti del Biferno strengthened its promotion of the “Cammini” project by adding a new info point. In Croatia, the Municipality of Dugopolje modernised its existing Integrated Tourism Information System and committed to developing the Green Market - Event Centre as a key component of sustainable tourism.

With these foundational steps complete, the project moved to its second phase: developing a joint promotion strategy. The partners first created a shared Vision for their collaboration, centred on networking, sustainability, empowerment, and digitalisation. They then identified specific



tourism products and assets in their inland areas that could be promoted together. Once these were chosen, they developed a comprehensive marketing and promotion plan. This plan was then integrated into a BRICS Cross-Border Strategy, providing a clear roadmap for the future development of interregional tourism.

The project’s culmination was an event in Copparo, Italy, where this new strategy was presented and validated. This final step was made legally binding with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which formally outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

The BRICS project has not only helped its partners overcome procedural and administrative fragmentation but has also established a new era of cooperation. By creating a unified Cross-Border Strategy and a lasting legal framework, it has empowered these communities to work together, ensuring that the unique beauty of their inland areas is promoted effectively and collectively.

PROJECT

5.1

CICERO

Croatia-Italy Civil protEction collaboRatiOn

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024

Pratiarcati Union of Municipalities

€ 232.662

1 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen civil protection capabilities by creating a lasting framework that will enhance disaster response in border areas for a more resilient community.

KEY ACTIONS

- Made two large-scale joint exercises in Croatia and Italy;
- Addressed key legal and administrative obstacles with AEBR;
- Ran large-scale public safety campaigns.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Enabled a vital exchange of knowledge between different civil protection systems and established operational relationships and joint coordination protocols tested during the exercises.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Mobilised over 240 personnel for hands-on training in specialised techniques like drone operations and forest firefighting, leading to the creation of two certified drone pilot teams.

RESULTS & IMPACT

A lasting framework for joint disaster response, practical recommendations to streamline operations, and public safety awareness, which successfully reached over 50,000 citizens.



PROJECT

CICERO

Croatia-Italy Civil protEction collaboRatiOn

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The CICERO project has significantly strengthened civil protection capabilities. It has created a lasting framework that will enhance disaster response in border areas, ensuring a more resilient and prepared community for years to come.

At the heart of the project were two large-scale joint exercises, which put cross-border collaboration to the ultimate test. Held in Labin, Croatia, and Padua, Italy, these exercises mobilised over 240 civil protection personnel from both countries. Participants gained crucial hands-on experience in specialised techniques, including drone operations, rope rescue, and forest firefighting. These realistic scenarios validated joint coordination, communication protocols, and equipment compatibility, with all trainees receiving proper certification. A key outcome was the creation of two dedicated teams of drone pilots, a skill that will be invaluable for future emergency management and information sharing.

The project did not just focus on field operations; it also tackled the underlying administrative hurdles. Through expert collaboration with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), CICERO identified and addressed key legal and administrative obstacles that typically hinder joint response.

The practical recommendations developed from this work will streamline future emergency operations, directly resolving challenges identified by first responders. Beyond operational training, the project prioritised public safety and awareness. Campaigns successfully reached over 50,000 citizens across the participating communities. In Italy, for instance, 15,000 households received informational leaflets that linked to the national “IononrischiO” campaign. A special focus was placed on educating the next generation through age-appropriate materials, including custom-designed colouring books for schoolchildren.

The transnational cooperation was truly the project's greatest asset. It enabled a vital exchange of knowledge between different civil protection systems and allowed for joint training that would have been impossible through isolated national initiatives. The operational relationships and communication channels established by CICERO will continue to serve these communities, creating a safer and more prepared region organised to face natural disasters together.

PROJECT

5.1

CO-MAY

Croatia-Italy Civil protEction collaboRatiOn

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024

Municipality of Mesagne

€ 249.744

2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Empower municipalities in adopting more effective and sustainable energy governance, aligning with the commitments of the Covenant of Mayors.

KEY ACTIONS

- Drafted and signed a Memorandum of Understanding;
- Developed and updated Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs);
- Promoted green practices through community workshops.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Drafting and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the three partner municipalities, ensuring continued joint

efforts in sustainable energy and climate action.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Practical learning events like Mesagne's Green Public Procurement workshop, Labin's "Živa Placa" community workshops, and Pietracatella's transnational workshop on Energy Communities.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Updated and new SECAPs, Mesagne's feasibility study, Labin's Biennial Urban Green Action Plan, and a lasting framework that strengthens local energy and climate governance.



PROJECT

CO-MAY

Croatia-Italy Civil protection collaboration

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The CO-MAY project's mission was to empower municipalities in adopting more effective and sustainable energy governance, aligning with the commitments of the Covenant of Mayors. Through strong cross-border collaboration, the Municipalities of Mesagne, Labin, and Pietracatella worked together to enhance local climate and energy policies, creating a strong framework for future action.

A central achievement of the project was the strengthening of cross-border cooperation, which was solidified by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the three partner municipalities. This agreement, formalised during the final project meeting in Labin, ensures a commitment to continued joint efforts in sustainable energy and climate action long after the project's conclusion.

The project delivered tangible results in the form of updated and new Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs). Mesagne completed a feasibility study for energy efficiency improvements in two key public buildings, while Labin developed a landscaping project for Park Kature, integrating green urban infrastructure into its SECAP. In a significant step, Pietracatella finalised its entire SECAP, providing a clear roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting renewable energy. These plans ensure each municipality has a structured strategy for improving energy efficiency and strengthening climate resilience.

Beyond formal planning, the project actively promoted green and sustainable practices within local communities. Mesagne organised a workshop on Green Public Procurement (GPP), engaging stakeholders in discussions on integrating sustainability into purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Labin's "Živa Placa" initiative involved a series of community workshops that promoted recycling, energy awareness, and urban greening, reaching over 200 participants.



Pietracatella also organised a transnational workshop on Energy Communities, facilitating a valuable exchange of best practices. These events fostered direct engagement and practical learning, bringing sustainable principles to life at the local level.

Labin's work on urban green strategies was another key highlight, with the successful implementation of a Biennial Urban Green Action Plan. This innovative tool, based on circular economy principles, supports long-term sustainability goals by integrating green infrastructure directly into city planning, improving the quality of public spaces.

The project's reach extended to the general public through a series of awareness-raising efforts. The project's website and social media channels, managed by Mesagne, successfully engaged over 24,000 people with news and updates. Such active involvement of local communities in decision-making and climate action was a core tenet of the project's success.

Ultimately, the CO-MAY project has demonstrated that cross-border cooperation is a catalyst for strengthening local energy and climate governance. By sharing their unique expertise – Mesagne's focus on procurement, Labin's green urban planning, and Pietracatella's comprehensive SECAP development – the partners have not only achieved their project goals but have also established a lasting framework for future collaboration. The project leaves behind tangible results and a clear commitment to climate-friendly policies.

PROJECT

5.1

COPE

Cooperation for better early and preschool education

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024

Italian kindergarten Fregola Buje

€ 225.660

1 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Build a powerful digital bridge across the Adriatic to preserve cultural heritage and modernise public services, preparing communities for a technologically advanced future.

KEY ACTIONS

- The City of Kastela hosted the final meeting and technical training;
- Romagna Tech developed new guidelines for digital archives;
- FGDV digitised and showcased historical photographic collections.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Signing of a DIGITsmart Memorandum of Understanding between FGDV and the municipalities of Bari and Conversano,

securing future partnerships and shared initiatives.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Final training workshops for technical stakeholders and the development of comprehensive guidelines that provide a clear roadmap for other institutions to modernise their archives.

RESULTS & IMPACT

A new standard for digital archives, the successful public accessibility of thousands of historical photographs, and a lasting framework for a digitally empowered Adriatic.



PROJECT

COPE

Cooperation for better early and preschool education

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The COPE project has demonstrated the profound impact of investing in early and preschool education within the cross-border regions of Istria and Friuli Venezia Giulia. In these officially bilingual territories, where Croatian, Italian, and Slovenian minorities are present, the project highlighted the vitality of a supportive, multilingual environment for a child's development. Its overall positive impact on participants and the wider community exceeded all expectations.

A major milestone was the final conference, held at the City Theatre of Buje, which served as a platform to share the project's achievements with a broad audience of over 200 people. This event was a perfect opportunity to advocate for the importance of preschool education in the development of every child. Educators and partner institutions shared their work and achievements, reaching a wide range of local authorities, interest groups, and citizens. The project's influence extended far beyond this conference, touching countless individuals, including parents and grandparents who participated in initiatives such as "Librolandia", which became a key part of the project's outputs.

The culmination of all the project's hard work was the creation of a travelling exhibition, which was officially opened in the Italian Community of Buje.

Designed to be both physical and digital, the exhibition can be easily set up in any institution that requests it. Following its initial presentation in Buje, it has already been showcased in several institutions in Croatia and is scheduled to move to Italy in the coming year. The project ensures its legacy endures by making the exhibition material freely available for anyone to reproduce.

A particularly noteworthy highlight was the pilot project "NUTRIKIDS", developed in collaboration with the Fondazione Italiana Fegato. This initiative was based on scientific evidence showing concerning trends in children's lifestyle habits, such as an increase in sugar and fat consumption, a decrease in fibre, and a decline in physical activity. The project's proactive approach to these issues is a key example of its innovative spirit.

The project also underscored the value of in-person networking and the exchange of skills among institutions and preschool educators. While this activity is crucial for professional development, the project also highlighted the significant economic cost involved. The achievements of the COPE project are a clear testament to the power of cross-border cooperation in enhancing early education, creating lasting resources, and strengthening communities for future generations.

PROJECT

5.1

D.E.C.

Digital Ethics Culture

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 30/11/2024



Eurelations
European
Economic Interest
Grouping

€ 206.540



1 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Help equip citizens, professionals, and students across Italy and Croatia with the skills needed to navigate the digital world safely and ethically.

KEY ACTIONS

- Developed a Joint Vademecum and a comprehensive Methodological kit;
- Conducted capacity-building workshops on topics like AI cybersecurity, and data protection for various demographics.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The final conference established a cross-border network of young ambassadors, ensuring the enduring community of practice established by the project.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Targeted, hands-on workshops led by experts for young professionals and secondary school students, providing practical examples of digital risks and avoidance strategies.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Tangible tools, a dedicated network, and a lasting framework for future cooperation, formalised by a signed Memorandum of Understanding that guarantees the long-term sustainability of the outputs.



PROJECT

D.E.C.

Digital Ethics Culture

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



In an era of rapid technological change, the goal of the D.E.C. project was to help equip citizens with the skills needed to navigate the digital world safely and ethically. By bringing together partners from Italy and Croatia, the project has provided crucial training on topics ranging from Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity to data protection. This forward-thinking initiative has empowered a new generation of professionals and students to confidently face the challenges posed by new technologies and embrace their potential.

A cornerstone of the project was a series of capacity-building sessions that targeted different demographics. Experts developed a comprehensive Methodological kit and a Joint Vademecum, which served as the foundation for a series of workshops. Eurelations, the Lead Partner, held a session in Molise for young professionals in the communications sector. Simultaneously, the City of Metkovic organised a workshop for around 40 young adults on AI risks and ethics, while Odos led a local session for secondary school students in Jesi. These sessions provided practical, hands-on examples of risks and strategies to avoid them.

The project's culmination was a final conference held in Metkovic, which brought all of the training and networking efforts to a head. Framed as an innovation camp, the

event was animated by thematic experts and served as the official venue for the creation of a cross-border network of young ambassadors. These, selected from each partner's territory, will continue to champion the project's values and lead future initiatives, ensuring the community of practice established by D.E.C. endures.

The long-term commitment to the project's mission was formally cemented with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This fundamental document, drafted by Odos, was signed not only by the project partners but also by the young ambassadors, the President of the Order of Journalists of Molise, and a local NGO. This agreement stands as a testament to the shared dedication of all parties to continue implementing activities in the field of digital rights and ethics, guaranteeing the sustainability of the D.E.C. project's outputs beyond its official closure.

Through this collaborative and innovative approach, the D.E.C. project has successfully empowered individuals and built a lasting framework for future cooperation. By creating tangible tools, such as the Vademecum, and fostering a dedicated network of ambassadors, the project has ensured its legacy will continue to guide communities as they navigate the digital landscape with greater awareness and confidence.

PROJECT

5.1

DEMY-Coop

DEMY-Coop Decision-Making Youth for CB-COOPERation

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024



Eurelations
European
Economic Interest
Grouping

€ 234.575



2 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen youth participation in strategic policy processes by bridging the gap between young people and decision-makers across Italy and Croatia.

KEY ACTIONS

- Organised two major Cross-Border Youth Forums;
- Organised a Final Conference to promote dialogue, co-creation, and policy engagement.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Fostered lasting cooperation between Italian and Croatian partners, formalised through two Memoranda of Understanding.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Empowered young participants with skills, knowledge, and platforms to contribute meaningfully to policy development and governance.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Created a sustainable framework for youth involvement, produced cross-border policy guidelines, and strengthened democratic participation across the Adriatic.



PROJECT

DEMY-Coop

DEMY-Coop Decision-Making Youth for CB-COOPERATION

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Although youth are often seen as the future, the DEMY-Coop project has demonstrated that they are also the present. By bridging the gap between young people and decision-makers, the project worked to promote youth involvement in strategic policy processes. This collaborative effort between Italian and Croatian partners has not only empowered a new generation but has also laid the foundation for a sustainable framework of continued cooperation across the Adriatic.

The project focused particularly on fostering direct youth engagement, achieved primarily through two pivotal Cross-Border Youth Forums. One forum was an itinerant event, with several meetings organised by partner FEL across the Padua area in Italy and Dubrovnik in Croatia. The other was a two-day intensive event organised by partner Emedea in Šibenik, Croatia. Both events were crucial in highlighting the importance of youth involvement and identifying concrete, place-based policy recommendations.

Building on the momentum from these forums, the project established a lasting framework for cooperation, formalised through the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding. These agreements ensure that partners will continue to empower youth beyond the project's lifecycle. They represent

a dual commitment: on one hand, to champion the role of young people in society, and on the other, to encourage public authorities to involve them proactively in decision-making at all levels. All the valuable lessons and practices from this collaborative journey have been meticulously documented in the final deliverable, titled "Guidelines on Cross-Border Cooperation for Better Youth Engagement in Strategic Decision-Making".

The project's grand finale was the Final Cross-Border Conference, hosted by the lead partner, Eurelations. This event provided a unique opportunity to engage key EU, national, and macro-regional stakeholders, including representatives from DG Regio and the EUSAIR Hellenic Presidency. Their presence not only highlighted the broad significance of the project but also reinforced the essential role of cross-border cooperation in strategic policymaking. Ultimately, the DEMY-Coop project stands as a powerful testament to the principle that cooperation and youth empowerment are the keys to a more democratic and prosperous future. Through its hands-on approach and lasting commitments, the project has ensured that the voices of young people will continue to be heard within decision-making spaces for years to come.

PROJECT

5.1

DIGITsmart

Sustainable and smart digitalization in public service sector

DATA & FIGURES



01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024



City of Kastela



€ 249.850



2 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Build a powerful digital bridge across the Adriatic to preserve cultural heritage and modernise public services, preparing communities for a technologically advanced future.

KEY ACTIONS

- The City of Kastela hosted the final meeting and technical training;
- Romagna Tech developed new guidelines for digital archives;
- FGDV digitised and showcased historical photographic collections.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between FGDV and the municipalities of Bari and Conversano,

securing future partnerships and shared initiatives.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Final training workshops for technical stakeholders and the development of comprehensive guidelines that provide a clear roadmap for other institutions to modernise their archives.

RESULTS & IMPACT

A new standard for digital archives, the successful public accessibility of thousands of historical photographs, and a lasting framework for a digitally empowered Adriatic.



PROJECT

DIGITsmart

Sustainable and smart digitalization in public service sector

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The DIGITsmart project has built a powerful digital bridge across the Adriatic to preserve cultural heritage and modernise public services, laying the groundwork for a more connected and technologically advanced future for our communities.

The project was largely orchestrated by its lead partner, the City of Kastela, which played a central role in coordinating a wide range of activities. A major highlight was the final meeting and conference held in Kastela, which brought together partners to celebrate their achievements and plan for the future. The city also hosted the final training workshops for technical stakeholders, ensuring that the knowledge and skills gained would have a lasting impact.

Building on this foundation, a core focus of the project was the creation of a new standard for digital archives. The partners at Romagna Tech were instrumental in this, developing comprehensive guidelines for digitising archival documents. These guidelines, which included a detailed breakdown of the digitisation process and a blueprint for a demo platform, provide a clear roadmap for other institutions wishing to modernise their archives. Romagna Tech also provided invaluable technical support, guiding the other partners as they implemented these new methods.

A standout example of this implementation was the work of the partners at FGDV, who brought historical archives to life. By digitising and re-engineering their archival platform, FGDV successfully made around 8,000 photographs from various historical collections accessible to the public. To showcase this remarkable effort, they organised the interactive multimedia exhibition “Rocco Errico’s Lens”, which featured 400 photos and engaged a wide audience at cultural events.

The project’s collaborative spirit, exemplified by such achievements, was formalised with the signing of a DIGITsmart Memorandum of Understanding. This crucial agreement, signed between FGDV and the municipalities of Bari and Conversano, ensures that the project’s legacy will continue to grow, fostering future partnerships and shared initiatives.

To ensure this success was widely shared, communication and dissemination were key throughout the project. All partners actively promoted their work through social media and press releases, engaging both the public and technical stakeholders. This guaranteed that the project’s innovative methods for digitising and sharing cultural heritage would not remain confined to a few partners but would inspire a broader movement towards a more digitally empowered Adriatic.

PROJECT

5.1

EFFICIENTN2K

Strengthening institutional collaboration on surveillance and enforcement in coastal and marine Natura 2000 sites

DATA & FIGURES



Co-funded by the European Union

Italy - Croatia



 01/08/2023 - 31/12/2024



Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce

 € 249,144



1 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Improve the management of coastal and marine Natura 2000 areas through enhanced cooperation between Croatian and Italian institutions.

KEY ACTIONS

- Identified bottlenecks in enforcement;
- Analysed legal and institutional frameworks;
- Developed practical solutions for more effective surveillance.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Formalised cooperation through a declaration signed by five Italian and Croatian institutions, and conducted joint demonstrative actions in the Šćedro Natura 2000 site.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Organised joint workshops and training in Split on using technology for monitoring and surveillance of protected areas.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Strengthened stakeholder engagement, improved institutional coordination, and established a foundation for sustained cross-border conservation efforts.



PROJECT

EFFICIENTN2K

Strengthening institutional collaboration on surveillance and enforcement in coastal and marine Natura 2000 sites

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The EfficientN2K Small-scale project aimed to improve the management of coastal and marine Natura 2000 areas through enhanced collaboration between Croatian and Italian institutions. By actively engaging stakeholders and building a foundation of shared knowledge, the project has set a new benchmark for cross-border conservation efforts.

The initiative began by identifying key bottlenecks and proposing practical solutions for more effective surveillance. Through workshops and a thorough analysis of legal and institutional frameworks, partners developed and validated a set of solutions for improving enforcement in marine and coastal Natura 2000 sites. These solutions were formally enshrined in a declaration signed by five institutions from both Italy and Croatia, solidifying their commitment to a collaborative future.

To launch this new strategy, the project focused on building capacity through hands-on training and joint actions. A key training session in Split, titled "Using technology in the monitoring and surveillance of protected areas", brought together over thirty participants from Croatian public institutions, Italian protected areas like Porto Cesareo, NGOs, and museums. This cross-border exchange of expertise was crucial. On the ground, a demonstrative surveillance action was organised within the Natura 2000 site of Šćedro to inform tourists about the damage anchors can cause to Posidonia meadows, blending enforcement with public education.

All the knowledge, experiences, and recommendations gathered were summarised in a comprehensive final report. This document became the centrepiece of the project's dissemination efforts, spearheaded by a strategic communication plan. The final conference in Ugento acted as a major platform to advocate for institutional support and collaboration, bringing together



partners, competent authorities, and even students from the De Viti De Marco Technical Institute.

Throughout its implementation, the project consistently communicated its results to decision-makers and key stakeholders. This ensured they understood the steps needed for improvement and encouraged them to take the lead in implementing these recommendations beyond the project's lifespan. The project's success is a testament to the power of cooperation, reinforcing the exchange of ideas and experiences and creating an environment ripe for future collaboration. The EFFICIENTN2K project did not just solve immediate problems; it laid a solid foundation for more effective management of our protected areas, proving that when we work together, we can achieve lasting and meaningful change.

PROJECT

5.1

INABLE

INnovating public institutions as enABLers of the Ecological transition

DATA & FIGURES



01/09/2023 - 31/12/2024



Technical Assistance
Center Confcommercio
Rimini



€ 249.750



2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Connect sustainable development research with local authorities through digitalisation, focusing on obstacles to public digital services for the circular economy among SMEs.

KEY ACTIONS

- Held the second Consortium Meeting and two Sustainability & Tech Labs, focusing on reviewing progress and developing the Cooperation Agreement.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

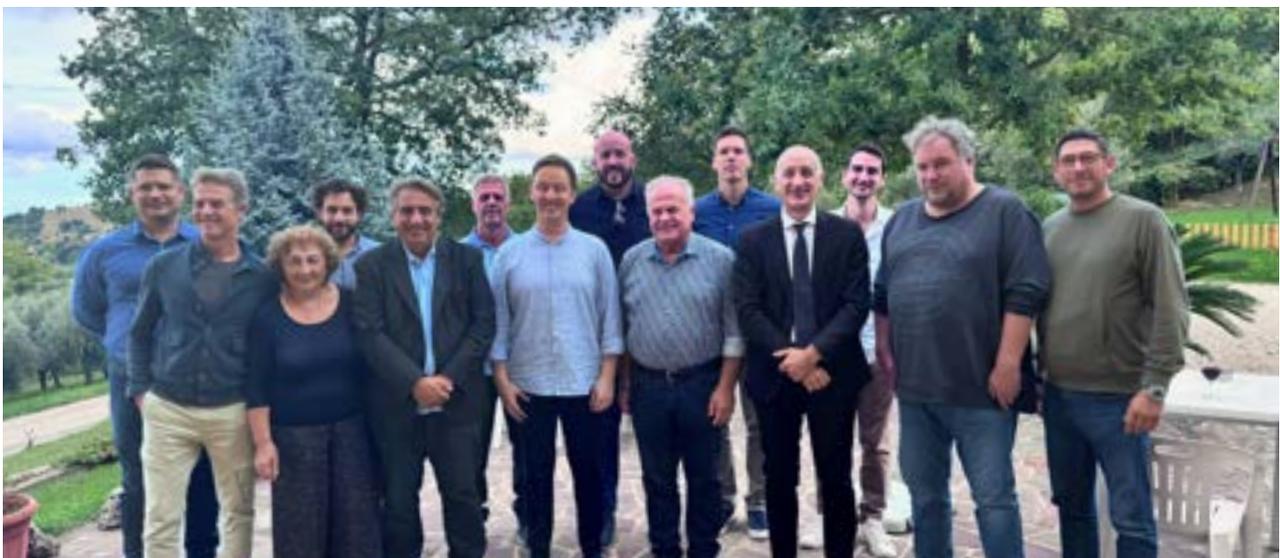
Culminated in the Cooperation Agreement, which underwent a peer-review evaluation and established a permanent framework for partners to continue working together on shared goals.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity was built through cross-border dialogue, the Sustainability & Tech Labs, which engaged local stakeholders, and by specifically involving small municipalities to ensure a comprehensive impact.

RESULTS & IMPACT

The formal Cooperation Agreement ensures the project's work continues, successfully transitioning the initiative into a long-term commitment to sustainability and enduring change.



PROJECT

INABLE

INnovating public institutions as enABLers of the Ecological transition

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The INABLE project marked a powerful transition from a period of intensive collaboration to a long-term commitment to sustainability. The final months focused on securing the project's future and ensuring its innovative work would continue to benefit our communities across the Italy-Croatia region.

At its core, the project aimed to forge a vital connection between sustainable development research and local authorities through digitalisation. The focus was twofold: identifying obstacles to public digital services for sustainable production and developing a new service design approach to support the circular economy among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This small-scale project's unique approach addressed these intertwined challenges by fostering cross-border dialogue and collaboration, with a specific emphasis on involving small municipalities to ensure a comprehensive impact. Its main beneficiaries included municipalities, SMEs, young entrepreneurs, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Central to the project's final period was the second in-person Consortium Meeting, held in Montebello di Bertona. This gathering was a crucial moment for all partners to review the progress and prepare for the final tasks ahead. Held alongside this meeting was the second in-person Sustainability & Tech Lab, a

valuable opportunity for partners to engage with local stakeholders and share the project's vision. During these discussions, the partners focused on a key deliverable that would define the project's legacy: the Cooperation Agreement. This document represents a shared commitment to continue addressing the challenges of the INABLE project and to ensure the sustainability of its outputs long after the project funding has ended. To ensure its quality, the agreement underwent a peer-review evaluation, performed as a second Technical Qualitative Assessment among the partners.

The public showcase of the project's collective efforts came with the third and final Sustainability & Tech Lab. This online event was the perfect platform to present the project's final results to a broader audience and celebrate the journey, highlighting how the collaboration has transformed ideas into tangible, long-lasting solutions.

Ultimately, the INABLE project has proven that cross-border cooperation can be a powerful catalyst for enduring change. By creating a formal Cooperation Agreement and empowering its partners to continue working together, the project has successfully transitioned from a time-bound initiative to a permanent framework for shared goals in technology and sustainability.

PROJECT

5.1

M.A.R.I.O.

Management of Actions to Reduce the outmigration of young educated people

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024

Municipality of Castelbottaccio

€ 209.830

2 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Provide a new roadmap for communities grappling with demographic decline and outward migration by forging practical, tailored strategies to revitalise territories.

KEY ACTIONS

- Conducted a robust research effort to assess existing policy tools;
- Conducted a detailed policy analysis;
- Co-defined common sectoral measures and Action Plans.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Partners from Italy and Croatia worked together to create a model survey form, conducted a joint policy analysis, and co-defined shared and participatory solutions.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Enhanced the partners' ability to read the dynamics of outward migration through analysis and established permanent forums for comparison and multi-level governance.

RESULTS & IMPACT

A solid foundation of insights, concrete territorial strategies, and Action Plans that will empower communities to monitor, understand, and respond to demographic challenges.



PROJECT

M.A.R.I.O.

Management of Actions to Reduce the outmigration of young educated people

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



In a mission to turn the tide on demographic decline, the M.A.R.I.O. project has provided a new roadmap for communities grappling with outward migration. By bringing together partners from Italy and Croatia, the project has not only deepened the understanding of this complex challenge but has also forged practical, tailored strategies to revitalise territories and encourage young people to stay and thrive. This concerted effort is a testament to the power of cross-border cooperation in addressing shared social issues.

The first phase of the project was dedicated to analysis and understanding. Led by a coordinated effort, partners collaborated to create a model survey form to assess the policy tools and strategies already in place. This involved a robust research effort, including a detailed study of measures implemented in partner territories by relevant stakeholders. With crucial support from the Municipality of Castelbottaccio and Orebic, a policy analysis was conducted, providing a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of existing efforts. This collaborative work helped all partners better comprehend the out-migration phenomenon and identify possible solutions.

Building on this comprehensive analysis, the project moved from understanding to action. A key objective was to identify and define concrete solutions that could be adapted at a local level to reverse out-migration. This was achieved through a shared and participatory approach, with partners co-defining common sectoral measures tailored to their specific contexts. To ensure these strategies would be implemented effectively, the process was supported by peer-review activities, the drafting of detailed Action Plans, and the establishment of permanent forums for comparison and multi-level governance.

Ultimately, the project successfully achieved its objectives by enhancing the partners' ability to read the dynamics of outward migration and designing targeted territorial strategies to counteract them. By identifying the root causes and evaluating the effectiveness of existing measures, the M.A.R.I.O. project has laid a solid foundation for future efforts. These insights and concrete strategies will empower communities to monitor, understand, and respond to demographic challenges, ensuring a lasting impact that goes far beyond the project's official conclusion.

PROJECT

5.1

NEWS

NEW Strategic actors for New Scenarios in the governance of cross-border business cooperation

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/10/2024



National Confederation of the craft sector and small and medium enterprises

€ 223.526



1 IT, 2 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Create a new path for SMEs and business associations by analysing legal and administrative obstacles and determining the feasibility of a new cross-border governance model.

KEY ACTIONS

- Identified obstacles through engagement with diverse stakeholders;
- Developed new human resource qualifications;
- Tested a new governance model and SME-supported services via workshops.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Created a business partners' community and produced a declaration of intent for a

new formal cross-border business association between Italy and Croatia.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Training course workshops engaged local businesses to assess and refine new competencies, focusing on skills required for the blue and circular economies.

RESULTS & IMPACT

A tested governance model, strong networks, and a declaration of intent for a new association, laying the foundation for a more interconnected and prosperous economic future.



PROJECT

NEWS

NEW Strategic actors for New Scenarios in the governance of cross-border business cooperation

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The NEWS project has created a new path for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and business associations across the Italy-Croatia border. By analysing the legal and administrative obstacles that often hinder cross-border cooperation, the project has not only determined the feasibility of a new governance model but has also laid the foundation for a more interconnected and prosperous economic future.

A core objective was to identify and overcome these obstacles through joint solutions. The project achieved this by engaging directly with a wide range of key stakeholders, including SMEs, business associations, public authorities, and non-governmental organisations. This inclusive approach ensured that the solutions were not just theoretical but were deeply rooted in the real-world needs and perspectives of the people they were designed to help. Furthermore, the project partners collaborated to develop new human resource qualifications, focusing on the essential skills required for success in emerging sectors such as the blue and circular economies.

This collaborative effort led to the promotion of a new model of cross-border cooperation for SMEs. The partners developed and tested a new governance model and a suite of SME-supported services, engaging local businesses and associations in training

course workshops to assess and refine new competencies. This hands-on approach proved crucial in validating the model's effectiveness and its potential to drive a clear strategy for business cooperation across the programme area.

The project delivered several key outputs that will ensure its legacy endures. A crucial achievement was the creation of a business partners' community, which provides a strong foundation for future collaboration. The project also produced a declaration of intent for a new cross-border business association between Italy and Croatia, which serves as a crucial milestone for formalising these cooperative efforts. This declaration represents a shared commitment to building a new and lasting framework for business relations.

The tangible results of the NEWS project are represented by the development of strong networks, innovative governance models, and impactful cross-border business actions. These networks have already produced multiple new initiatives and created a fertile space for the development of professional services that will benefit the region's economy for years to come. Ultimately, the project has established a lasting and sustainable cooperation between all organisations involved, moving beyond a simple partnership to create a new, unified cross-border business association.

PROJECT

5.1

SFERA

Strategic Framework for Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas

DATA & FIGURES



01/07/2023 - 31/12/2024



National Confederation of the craft sector and small and medium enterprises

€ 250.000



1 IT, 1 HR



Project website

PROJECT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

Foster rural entrepreneurship by proving that cross-border cooperation is the key to unlocking the full potential of rural communities.

KEY ACTIONS

- Produced comprehensive studies and a best practice guide for policymakers;
- Organised a cross-border forum in Bari;
- Conducted a three-day training for policymakers in Gospic.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The joint organisation of a forum, the policymakers' training, and two Open Days that connected Italian and Croatian SMEs for direct networking and knowledge pooling.

CAPACITY BUILDING

A hands-on cross-border training for policymakers and a total of eight workshops, which shared insights relevant to rural SMEs using six supplementary podcasts.

RESULTS & IMPACT

A valuable best practice guide, a unified ecosystem that transcends national borders, and a more robust and dynamic rural economy supported by lasting networks.



PROJECT

SFERA

Strategic Framework for Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas

5.1

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The SFERA project has fostered rural entrepreneurship, proving that collaboration across borders is the key to unlocking the full potential of our rural communities. Through a powerful partnership between CNA Bari in Italy and LAG LIKA in Croatia, the project has generated vital knowledge, built capacity, and created lasting networks that will support a more robust and interconnected rural economy for years to come.

The project's initial phase focused on understanding and sharing knowledge. Comprehensive studies, together with engaging podcasts and infographics, significantly increased understanding of rural entrepreneurship and reached a wide audience. The project also produced a best practice guide for enhancing rural development, which serves as a valuable resource for policymakers. This guide was complemented by didactic videos that provide practical advice, ensuring the project's insights were both accessible and actionable. A key moment was the cross-border forum held in Bari, where Italian and Croatian stakeholders came together to discuss a white paper on rural entrepreneurship. This forum, supported by a rich media package, facilitated crucial knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the project's outputs were validated by the very people they were designed to help.

The second phase was dedicated to building capacity and creating genuine networking opportunities. The project organised a three-day cross-border training for policymakers in Gospić, which led to a valuable exchange of

knowledge between policymakers from the Lika and Puglia regions. This hands-on training was a crucial step in enhancing their capacity for effective policymaking. Furthermore, a total of eight workshops were held, with four conducted by each partner, focusing on key topics relevant to rural SMEs. Six podcasts were created to share their insights, allowing their valuable knowledge to reach an audience far beyond the initial participants.

To truly bring people together, the project organised two Open Days, one in Italy and one in Croatia. These events connected Italian and Croatian SMEs, allowing them to visit best practices and participate in roundtable discussions. These open days were more than just meetings; they were direct networking opportunities that sparked the exploration of new cross-border collaborations. A final press conference in Gospić celebrated these achievements and presented the project's key results to the public.

The lasting value of the SFERA project lies in the power of its cross-border cooperation. The pooling of knowledge from both Italian and Croatian contexts enriched the research and the guide, while the joint organisation of events exposed participants to different approaches and fostered collaborations that would not have been possible otherwise. Ultimately, by generating knowledge, engaging stakeholders, building capacity, and facilitating networking, the project has created a unified ecosystem that transcends national borders, contributing to a more resilient and dynamic rural economy.

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***CATCHING THE WAVES
OF COOPERATION***