Warsaw |NOVEMBER 2020

INTERREG NEXT

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME

POLAND-BELARUS-UKRAINE 2021-2027

Table of contents

[1. Programme strategy: main development challenges and policy RESPONSES 3](#_Toc56542171)

[1.1. Programme Area 3](#_Toc56542172)

[1.2. Summary of main joint challenges, taking into acccount economic, social and territorial disparities as well as inequalities, joint investment needs and complimentary and synergies with other forms of support, lessons-learnt from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies 4](#_Toc56542173)

[1.3. Justification for the selection of policy objectives and the Interreg specific objectives, corresponding priorities, specific objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure 20](#_Toc56542174)

[2. Priorities 28](#_Toc56542175)

[2.1. Priority: Environment 28](#_Toc56542176)

[Specific Objective: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience 28](#_Toc56542177)

[Specific Objective: Promoting sustainable water management 32](#_Toc56542178)

[Specific Objective: Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment and reducing pollution 35](#_Toc56542179)

[2.2. Priority: Health 39](#_Toc56542180)

[Specific Objective: Improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of health care systems and long-term care services across borders 39](#_Toc56542181)

[2.3. Priority: Tourism 44](#_Toc56542182)

[Specific objective: Enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation 44](#_Toc56542183)

[2.4. Priority: Cooperation 49](#_Toc56542184)

[Specific Objective: Increasing the efficiency of public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation as well as cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular to eliminate legal obstacles and other barriers in border regions 49](#_Toc56542185)

[Specific Objective: Creating mutual trust by encouraging actions to facilitate people – to – people contacts 52](#_Toc56542186)

[2.5. Priority: Borders 57](#_Toc56542187)

[Specific Objective: Actions in the border crossing management area 57](#_Toc56542188)

# Programme strategy: main development challenges and policy RESPONSES

##  Programme Area

The Programme area is determined on the basis of NUTS 3 units (subregions) in Poland[[1]](#footnote-2) and oblast division in Ukraine and Belarus. In Poland, it includes the following subregions: Białostocki, Łomżyński, Suwalski, Ostrołęcki, Siedlecki, Bialski, Lubelski, Puławski, Chełmsko-Zamojski, Przemyski, Rzeszowski, Tarnobrzeski, Krośnieński. In Belarus Programme area includes: Grodno, Brest, Minsk and Gomel Oblasts, whereas in Ukraine Programme area involves: Volyn, Lviv, Zakarpattia, Rivne, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk Oblasts.

The selection of units involved in the Programme area results directly from the Programme objective - supporting and promoting integrated regional development in neighbouring border regions, including regions at the external borders of the European Union. The Programme area covers around 316 300 km2. Its largest part lies on the territory of Belarus (44%), and the remaining part in Ukraine (32%) and Poland (24%).

Due to the size of the Programme area, it is very diverse in almost every aspect. The borderland of three countries is characterized by low population density, a sparse settlement network and - mainly in Poland - a large number of nature conservation areas. Combined, these factors contribute to a relatively high preservation of natural resources. However, the majority of the area is a periphery of countries, as evidenced by the lower than average national GDP value of most subregions. Metropolises are an exception here, as their economic situation is more favorable - the disparities between metropolises and the periphery are significant. In the area involved in Programme are differences in basic fields, such as education or public administration. The Programme diversity can be also seen in the field of law, political systems or management of public tasks. It is also a region that has experienced an economic collapse and political crisis. Despite the existing adversities, joint actions are undertaken and joint solutions are developed.

Cooperation between Poland, Belarus and Ukraine has been going on for years, but the partnership in the form of the Neighbourhood Programme was established in the years 2004-2006. Since 2007, it has been continued as a Cross-Border Cooperation Programme.

## Summary of main joint challenges, taking into acccount economic, social and territorial disparities as well as inequalities, joint investment needs and complimentary and synergies with other forms of support, lessons-learnt from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies

Socio-economic, spatial and functional problems can be identified in the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme and it is worth noting that the following conclusions were drawn on the basis of a socio-economic analysis of the support area and diagnostic workshops with representatives of units from the support area. Information about the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the lives of the inhabitants of the support area is based on publicly available knowledge about the problems related to the functioning of Central and Eastern European countries during the pandemic.

* + 1. **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES**
			1. **DEMOGRAPHY**

The Programme area is mostly low populated - the average density for this area is 80 people per square kilometre. In 2018, the population of the Programme area was 19,886,000, of which 31% was in Poland, 27% in Belarus and 42% in Ukraine. Each country has seen a decline in its population in recent years. Demographic forecasts indicate further declining trends in the number of inhabitants in most units of the Programme.

An important issue influencing the demand for various social services, such as senior care or health care, is the age structure of the inhabitants. The decreasing population and low population growth affect the shape of the demographic structure - the percentage of people in pre-working age is decreasing and the percentage of people in post-working age is increasing. The highest percentage of people in post-working age in the total population is recorded in the Belarusian part of the Programme area. A favourable demographic situation in the support area is recorded in subregions and oblasts in which the largest cities are located - capital cities of voivodships, main public service centres. In Poland, these are the Białostocki, Lubelski and Rzeszowski subregions, in Ukraine – Lviv, Volyn, Zakarpattia and Rivne Oblasts. This is related to the migration trend of inhabitants from rural areas to cities, especially those giving the greatest development opportunities.

The unfavourable demographic situation of a significant part of the Programme area is strongly linked with low migration attractiveness and low economic development, which is manifested by unemployment and a shortage of high-paid, specialized positions. Urban areas are an exception in this context (in Poland - Białostocki, Lubelski and Rzeszowski subregions, in Ukraine - Lviv Oblast and in Belarus - Minsk Oblast). The key challenges are counteracting the consequences of negative demographic trends. Stopping unfavourable processes, such as depopulation of the Programme area as a result of the increasing number of people in retirement age and the decline in the birth rate, in most of the Programme are is becoming a key social challenge.

**Taking into account the demographic structure of the Programme area, the Programme should invest in public services aimed at improving the welfare of the aging population and mitigating results of the unfavourable demographic structure of the population, especially through improving health services across borders and increasing the migration attractiveness of the Programme area i.a. by supporting better use of the potentials of the Programme area such as high touristic attractiveness of the natural resources.**

* + - 1. **ECONOMIC SITUATION AND LABOUR MARKET**

The economic situation in the Programme area is characterized by large and deepening disparities between the subregions covered by the Programme and the other parts of participating countries.

The economic structure of individual regions in the Programme area is characterized by a significant share of the agricultural sector in creating gross value added. In the Belarusian part of the Programme area, Podkarpackie Voivodship (Poland), as well as in the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast (Ukraine) there is also a relatively large industry sector. However, despite some regional economic differences in all units of the Programme area, the share of the services sector is growing, while the share of sector I (agriculture) and sector II (industry) is decreasing. Such changes in the economic structure are typical of developed and developing economies.

The highest entrepreneurship indicator is in Programme area located on the Polish side of the border, it remains moderately high in Ukraine. However units of Programme area located in Belarus have a low entrepreneurship indicator. The share of medium and large enterprises remains relatively high in units in Belarus and Ukraine, while in Poland small and micro enterprises dominate. It is worth emphasizing that the Lubelskie and Podkarpackie Voivodships and the Brest and Grodno Oblasts are characterized by a relatively high level of innovation.

In the Polish and Belarusian part of the Programme area, the unemployment level is close to the natural rate of unemployment. It is different in the Ukrainian part of the Programme area, where unemployment (especially in Volyn, Rivne, Ternopil and Zakarpattia Oblasts) remains high. Trends at the national level in Ukraine indicate a significant increase in the number of long-term unemployed, there is a growing need to implement intensive measures to reduce the negative social effects of this problem. In 2014-2018, the highest dynamics of changes on the labour market was recorded in the Brest Oblast in Belarus, which indicates rapid changes that are taking place in this region. Subregions of the Programme area located in Poland are characterized by a relatively stable situation. What is alarming, the growing number of the unemployed with higher and post-secondary education is observed in almost all analysed units in the support area (in Poland: Białostocki, Łomżyński, Suwalski, Ostrołęcki, Siedlecki, Bialski, Puławski, Rzeszowski, Tarnobrzeski, Krośnieński; in Belarus: Grodno, Brest, Minsk and Gomel Oblasts; no data available for Ukraine).

The Programme area’s economic problems are clearly linked to social and demographic problems, common to all three countries. Negative economic phenomena result from the outflow of educated population, from the growing demographic burden, which is why the allocation of financial resources and remedial actions focusing on economic issues may be inefficient. Due to the existing differences in the economic profiles of the areas forming the Programme area and the system differences existing between Ukraine, Belarus and Poland, developing a common economic development strategy will be very difficult.

**Hence, the Programme should support the development of cooperation and entrepreneurial links across border and promote actions supporting business start-up and employment. Support for this type of activities can have a positive impact on eliminating joint problems and achieving synergy.**

* + - 1. **EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

Education and health services can increase social cohesion and social inclusion in a variety of ways and therefore contribute to social development. The education systems in Poland, Ukraine and Belarus are quite different from each other. Nevertheless, in all surveyed units there is a clear tendency to reduce the number of educational institutions, which is a consequence of a decrease in the number of students. The number of university students is high in the Lviv Oblast and Lubelski, Rzeszowski, Białostocki subregions. This is due to the variety of educational opportunities offered by cities located within these units. Academic cities are characterized by high migration attractiveness - mainly among young people. The development of educational institutions from the elementary level to the tertiary level requires support. High-quality educational services combined with access to attractive job offers may limit the outflow of young staff from the Programme area to large agglomerations. An important aspect of cooperation in the field of education is the integration of the inhabitants of border areas from an early age. Due to the lack of trust and the noticeable reluctance of citizens of different countries of the support area, it is advisable to undertake integration activities already at the stage of education.

The health of the inhabitants of the Programme area is also of key importance. Deaths, irrespective of the location of the subregions or oblasts, are mainly caused by cardiovascular disease (In Poland their share in the total number of deaths is 41.5%, in Belarus – 55.5%, and in Ukraine – 56.5%) and cancer (In Poland their share in the total number of deaths is 26,5%, in Belarus – 15,7%, and in Ukraine – 13,4%) in all regions.

This is due to the growing demographic trends and the growing number of people in post-working age, as well as the apparent inequalities between the subregions of the Programme area regarding the availability of health care. One of the elements of the senior policy will be the development of care and health services. Secondly, as shown by statistical data on mortality and morbidity, it is necessary to take measures in the field of preventive health and safety. These problems also overlap with staff shortages - in the medical sector, as in other sectors, there is an outflow of staff to other urban centres and regions with a higher level of development potential. Inequalities in access to health care are manifested by the varying number of clinics, doctors and hospital beds in relation to the number of inhabitants. On the Polish side, these inequalities are most visible due to the fact that voivodship capital cities are located in some subregions, which often act as regional health care centres, serving patients from neighbouring subregions. On the Belarusian and Ukrainian side, the disproportions between the oblasts are much smaller. The best accessibility of clinics (number of clinics per 10,000 population) is noticeable on the Polish side. In the oblasts of Belarus and Ukraine this indicator is lower by about half. When it comes to the availability of doctors (number of doctors per 10,000 population), the inequalities between individual countries of the Programme area are not significant, but with regard to the availability of beds in hospitals, their availability on the Polish side is much lower than in Belarus and Ukraine.

It is worth adding that the ongoing pandemic of the coronavirus (COVID-19) is a huge threat to the efficiency of health care and elderly people. Its estimated duration is unknown, therefore long-term measures should be taken to safeguard the local population and health care providers. In order to combat the effects of the ongoing pandemic, it is advisable to tighten and develop cross-border cooperation between medical and emergency services.

**One of the key challenges of the Programme area is the need of developing health care, especially concerning senior citizens, preventive health and safety, access to specialist and e-medicine as well as strengthening the cooperation and exchange of experiences between medical professionals.**

* + 1. **NATURAL RESOURCES AND THEIR USE - SPATIAL, FUNCTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**
			1. **ENVIRONMENT**

Regarding environmental aspects the Programme area is characterized by unsatisfactory air quality. The most common source of pollution is burning of fossil fuels for electricity production, followed by the processing industry and heating households with poor quality fuels. The Ukrainian part of the Programme area is the main emitter of pollution, while the Minsk Oblast in Belarus has the highest percentage of retained and neutralized pollution (over 90%).

Water consumption in most of the Programme area has been decreasing in recent years. In some parts of the Programme area, there are deficiencies in the coverage of the sewage network. The percentage of population using the sewage network is the largest on the Belarusian side. The Programme area is significantly different in this respect - the values of the level of canalization are higher in urban areas than in rural areas. In Belarus, over a third of raw wastewater goes to waters. The situation is worst in the Brest and Minsk Oblasts.

Renewable energy consumption in the Programme area (except for the Zakarpattia Oblast, where the Terebelsko-Rick hydroelectric power plant is located) is low. One of the objectives of the European Union's cohesion policy is to reduce emission that can be achieved by increasing the production of energy from renewable sources. Over the past five years, most Programme area units have not seen a significant increase in green energy consumption - this needs to be emphasized given that environmental protection and sustainable development are key values of the European Union. Adapting to high standards in the Programme area is very difficult, because it results from infrastructural deficiencies, which is manifested in the insufficiently developed sewage and water supply network, and from low ecological awareness of residents and stakeholders operating in the Programme area. The lack of prioritization of environmental protection is noticeable, among others in insufficient financial resources allocated to equip infrastructure networks, lack of diversification of energy sources or insufficiently controlled extraction of raw materials. The manifestation of environmental problems in the Programme area is the presence of illegal garbage dumps in this area, persistent low level of waste recycling and low water quality.

**A significant challenge for the Programme area are, therefore, air pollution and wastewater management as well as switching to low-carbon economy and increasing the environmental awareness of the stakeholders and the general population of the Programme area.**

* + - 1. **NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM POTENTIAL**

The Polish part of the Programme area definitely differs from other countries by the large share of protected areas in the entire territory. While in the Ukrainian and Belarusian Oblasts the percentage of the protected area is up to 15%, in Polish subregions it reaches up to 75%. However, the Programme area of all three countries covers many valuable natural areas. There are 24 national parks - 4 on the Belarusian, 8 on the Polish and 12 on the Ukrainian side. It is also worth paying attention to the naturally valuable areas included in the Natura 2000 (in Poland) and Emerald (In Belarus and Ukraine) networks. It should be noted that in Ukraine, the area of protected areas has increased over the past few years, as subsequent areas are covered by various forms of nature protection. The border location of the largest protected nature complexes is an advantage for creating cross-border nature protection networks. The Białowieża Forest, covering extensive primeval forests, stretches across the Polish-Belarusian border. Its greater part, i.e. approx. 58%, is located in Belarus. The Bug River Valley is another key element of the cross-border ecosystem. The total area of the river basin is almost 40,000 sq. km, of which almost 50% is located on the Polish territory. In Belarus, the basin area is 9,200 sq. km, while in Ukraine it is 10,800 sq. km. The Bug is the border river of the three countries. For cooperation in the field of environmental protection at the Polish-Ukrainian borderland also important are: Western Polesie, Roztocze and the Eastern Beskids. They constitute an environmentally and culturally coherent area, and, at the same time, they are an important tourist potential of the neighbouring countries[[2]](#footnote-3).

These area features are important endogenous factors adding to its competitive advantage. The quality of the natural environment of the cross-border area is the key aspect of the inhabitants’ high quality of life, it also determines the tourist attractiveness.

However, the quality of the natural environment may be negatively affected by the lack of coordinated plans for the development of the protective zone, as well as differences in nature protection systems in countries in the Programme area. This phenomenon makes it difficult to undertake joint, uniform actions in natural areas within several countries in the support area. There is significant potential for improvement in this area as there is a need to solve problems and challenges related to environmental protection. Furthermore, due to the huge potential and high natural attractiveness of the Programme area, meeting the challenges in this area may also contribute to achieving socio-economic development benefits. The natural environment is a huge advantage of the Programme area.

Due to the relatively favourable natural and landscape location as well as historical and heritage potential, tourism should be an important element of the Programme area economy. Current share of tourism in GDP remains low. Therefore, it is extremely important to intensify activities related to the promotion of tourism. Regarding the general trends of tourism development, positive phenomena can be observed in Poland and Belarus, where number of tourist facilities and number of tourists have increased or remained stable. The situation in Ukraine is completely different - significant decrease in tourism development occurred in 2018. Partly the reason for this is the unstable political situation.

There is a significant tourist potential in the support area. It is unique in the scale of the respective countries. This is particularly visible in the Belarusian support area, where 63% of the whole country’s collective accommodation facilities are accommodation is concentrated (in 2018). In Ukraine, it constitutes one third of the entire tourist facilities, which were fully used in the analysed period. In Poland, tourist facilities are the most dispersed, therefore in the support area their share is only 13%. It is worth adding that generally, in the entire support area, the economic importance of tourism is much lower than globally. In Poland, tourism has the smallest share in GDP compared to the other two countries. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify promotional activities in tourism.

Due to the significant impact ongoing pandemic COVID-19 (which may turn out to be long-lasting) on the tourism industry and the limitations in the possibility of conducting touristic activities, as well as the decline in demand for tourist services, particular attention should be paid to the directions of development of such projects in the support area.

**Hence, the Programme should support the protection of biodiversity and the unique flora and fauna of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine cross-border area as well as development of products and services which may create new jobs by increasing in the tourism sector, by promoting both the natural and cultural potential of the Programme area.**

* + - 1. **ACCESSIBILITY AND BORDER MANAGEMENT**

In the field of transport infrastructure, the Programme area has changed significantly in recent years. The length of roads in the Polish and Belarusian part of the Programme area is gradually increasing. Low density of road network in the Programme area is still noticeable - especially in the Ukrainian and Belarusian part. In addition, attention should be paid to the poor quality of road infrastructure on the Ukrainian and Belarusian side of the Programme area. Furthermore, the number of public transport passengers is decreasing in Belarus and Ukraine, as well as in Podlaskie and Lubelskie Voivodships. However, it is also worth emphasizing that the number of passengers in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, as well as Volyn, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk Oblasts is much lower than in the other analysed units. The quality of transport infrastructure is closely related to the level of economic development. Infrastructure creates conditions for the proper functioning of the entire economy and stimulates its development.

The number of border crossings is also decreasing. There are also deficiencies in the infrastructure of existing border crossings, especially for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. About 22 million people crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border use 10 border crossings. In 2018, the Polish-Belarusian border was crossed almost 9 million times using 8 available border crossings. The number of people crossing the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Belarusian border is growing, which is the motivation behind the need to create new and improve existing border crossings. It is also necessary to improve the effectiveness of controls at border crossing points.

**In order to promote strengthening of the cross-border coordination and cooperation, and taking into account the growing migration flows between Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, it is important for the Programme to support the development of cooperation in the field of border management, increasing the efficiency of border-crossing procedures, but It should be remembered that the majority of border-crossing procedures is regulated by central institutions (and on EU level) and inter-governmental/international agreements.**

* + - 1. **COOPERATION POTENTIAL**

Existing development asymmetries between Ukraine, Poland and Belarus may hamper the cooperation of local governments in the field of socio-economic development, existing management standards and the level of commercialization of the state economy. Aspects that may cause problems in mutual future cooperation include incomparable competences of local and regional authorities, differences in the principles of functioning of local authorities in Poland, Belarus and Ukraine - this mainly concerns the possibility of independent disposal of own resources and communal property, differences in the necessity and possibilities of planning activities for many years, financed from public funds and the lack of equivalent institutions comparable in terms of competence. In order to cooperate with international partners, effective cooperation seems necessary to increase the competence of local government units.

So far, cooperation has shown that it is effective and has positive impact on cross-border integration and development of cross-border areas. International cooperation between Poland, Ukraine and Belarus takes place mainly as part of the cooperation of the European Union with its eastern partners under the Eastern Partnership as well as under the “Poland-Belarus-Ukraine” Programme.

In the years 2014-2020, the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine is also implemented as part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument and the European Regional Development Fund. The Programme is targeted at the Polish, Ukrainian and Belarusian border regions. It is implemented in the area of NUTS 3 units on the Polish side and the corresponding territorial units, i.e. oblasts, in Ukraine and Belarus. The amount of EUR 183 million was allocated to the implementation of tasks under the 2014-2020 programme (approximately EUR 171 million for the implementation of the projects themselves).

There are 5 Euroregions (Bug Euroregion, Carpathian Euroregion, Niemen Euroregion, Białowieża Forest Euroregion and newly created Roztocze Euroregion) operating in the support area, which represent a great potential for cross-border cooperation.

It is worth paying attention to cross-border cooperation of local government units. Based on surveys carried out in 2012[[3]](#footnote-4), it was found that 41% of the examined Polish local governments declare active cooperation with Ukraine, especially regarding EU projects and gaining local government experience. Cooperation with the Belarusian local governments is of a smaller scale. “It concerns economic contacts, cultural and tourist events as well as school youth exchanges”[[4]](#footnote-5), however, the visa requirement remains a problem in this respect.

**Therefore, cooperation between different stakeholders across borders, strengthening of the administrative potentials as well as people-to-people actions should be an important part of the Programme intervention.**

* + 1. **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN COMMON CHALLENGES AND INVESTMENT NEEDS**

The Programme area is characterized by common problems, and therefore common challenges, especially:

* low level of socio-economic development
* advanced negative demographic processes such as depopulation and aging
* counteracting the negative effects resulting from the peripheral location of the parts of border area of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine.

They can be counteracted by using the advantage of potential for the development of tourist activities related to the provision of valuable natural and cultural potentials of the region for tourists and visitors, as well as among the local population. An important challenge of the Programme is counteracting degradation of the natural environment and further protection of its most valuable assets, which constitute its largest resources. These activities are part of the EU's demand for a more efficient use of environmental resources.

However, from the point of view of further development of territorial cooperation between Poland, Belarus and Ukraine in connection with current problems and challenges of the Programme area, it is necessary to deepen and improve cooperation between residents and institutions, integration of communities and overcoming socio-cultural barriers. Problem with maintaining local cohesion and integration of the inhabitants of the Programme area may be caused by the border dividing Europe associated in the European Union with countries outside the Community, therefore it is all the more important to promote and support strong, positive interpersonal relations.

The main priority, which is the undoubted potential of the support area, is the natural environment, which is also accompanied by a rich cultural heritage. This touristic potential should be sustainably exploited in order to better the economic situation of the Programme area. Due to the existing inequalities and problems as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, priority should also be given to residents' health. Further investments should be made in streamlining the border-crossing procedures to strengthen the existing and build new cross-border links between institutions and people living in the border area of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine.

In order to strengthen the impact of the Programme, Large Infrastructure Projects should be implemented. These strategic investments will be implemented under:

* policy objective 2 " A greener, low-carbon Europe "
* policy objective 4 “A more social Europe”
	+ 1. **CONTINUITY AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF COOPERATION**
			1. **LESSONS-LEARNT FROM PAST EXPERIENCE**

Institutional cooperation between Poland, Ukraine and Belarus plays an important role within the cooperation of the European Union and its eastern partners under the Eastern Partnership and under the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine.

In the 2014-2020 Programme edition over 140 projects have been selected for financing with nearly 460 institutions involved as projects partners.

In the 2014-2020 period, the main priorities of the Programme were: heritage, security, accessibility and borders. The 2021-2027 Programme will strengthen the existing links between the three countries and build new ones in the field of: environment, health, tourism, cooperation and borders. The Programme will therefore be a continuation and deepening of the development processes launched in the 2014-2020 programming period. However, as new challenges for cross-bored cooperation between Poland, Belarus and Ukraine arise, the Programme will be more tailor-made and faced to maximize its impact on the Programme area. The most popular project topics in this edition of the Programme 2014-2020 were:

* preservation of historical and cultural heritage;
* improving safety including health security;
* preservation of existing natural heritage;
* improvement of transport connections.

A review of lessons learned from Joint Operational Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 Programme annual implementation report (2016/2017, 2017/2018) provided the following information for the strategy development:

* The Programme is popular among beneficiaries from all 3 countries - Large number of organizations involved in project proposals;
* In the first years of the Programme implementation, the focus was on calls for proposals and organizational issues;
* In the first call for proposals, the activities in the priorities Heritage and Security (including health protection and social services) enjoyed the greatest interest of beneficiaries;
* Good cooperation among partner countries leading to stable and sustain partnerships;
* There were minor issues reported by the applicants with relation to the e-application software usage;
* Insufficient correlation between projects under the same priority (the projects tend to be implemented on a ‘individual basis’, without having the bigger programme picture).
	+ - 1. **COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE PROGRAMME**

In order to achieve positive synergies, it is necessary to continue to maintain the thematic and spatial links between the various interventions at both supra-regional and regional levels. Obtaining and sustaining the benefits resulting from the current implementation of programmes and projects in the Programme area is possible only if the complementarity of interventions will be maintained in the future. This will help maintain the positive direction of long-term socio-economic, spatial, environmental and other changes.

* + - * 1. EU strategies and programmes

In terms of planned priority investments, it is also necessary to refer to the strategic documents of the European Union. The *Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030 Strategy* is one of the key documents. The main assumptions of this Strategy are:

* From a linear economy to a circular economy
* Concept ‘farm-to-fork’
* Energy, construction and mobility ready for the challenges of the future
* Ensuring the transformation of a just Europe from a social point of view.

The European Union is committed to moving towards an economically sustainable Europe in which people "live well within the limits of our planet"[[5]](#footnote-6). In this context, the investment priorities planned under the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme for 2021-2027 to improve energy efficiency, promote sustainable water management, promote transformation towards a circular economy and broadly understood nature, environment and landscape protection are most important. There is a visible link between investment priorities and goals 1. „From a linear economy to a circular economy”, 3. „Energy, construction and mobility ready for the challenges of the future”.

It is also worth mentioning that the Multiannual Financial Framework, reinforced by Next Generation EU, will be the main European tool serves creating jobs and repairing the immediate damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic whilst supporting the Union’s green and digital priorities. It is built on three pillars:

* Pillar 1: Supporting Member States to recover
* Pillar 2: Kick-starting the economy and helping private investment
* Pillar 3: Learning the lessons from the crisis

Pillar 1 involve instruments to support Member State efforts to recover, repair and emerge stronger from the crisis. Second Pillar assume measures to boost private investment and support ailing companies. Last Pillar covers the reinforcement of key EU programmes to draw the lessons of the crisis and make the single market stronger and more resilient and accelerate the twin green and digital transitions. In this context, the activities planned under the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme for 2021-2027 also serve digitalisation (e.g. in health care, support of tourism (creating job), environment by promoting adaptation to climate change, sustainable water management, increasing biodiversity and reducing pollution.

Attention should also be paid to macro-regional strategies: The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and draft Carpathian Strategy.

The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is based on three main thematic pillars: marine protection, increased integration of the region and increased prosperity and a horizontal basis. In the context of the planned development priorities in the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme should be focused on the Programme area, increasing integration in the region deserves attention, as part of which goals were planned to improve energy markets and improve cooperation in the area of combating cross-border crime, which are directly related to the "Environment" priority and the "Borders" priority of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme.

The Carpathian Strategy is a project of a macro-regional strategy that can significantly contribute to the improvement of security on the EU's eastern border and its stabilization. Currently, it functions mainly in the political dimension. However, its design envisages the implementation of a number of objectives relating to both socio-economic and environmental development. Both the Carpathian Strategy project and the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme provide that the common potentials and development challenges of border countries and regions create an opportunity to strengthen economic cooperation in order to increase the competitiveness of strategic sectors of the economy for macro regions and border regions, taking into account their unique endogenous natural, environmental and cultural resources and values.

The Programme will also be complimentary with the European Social Fund (ESF). The ESF finances initiatives that promote a high level of employment, equal opportunities for men and women, sustainable development and economic and social cohesion. Moreover, its components offer the possibility of applying innovative solutions in a cross-border approach, for example to support the mobility of workers in Europe and to help participating countries with health care systems. In terms of transnational cooperation, support for activities for health protection and labour markets from the ESF can also strengthen the impact of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine.

With regard to the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world and in Europe, it should be noted that complementarity between the ESF and the Programme is necessary. Implementation of the Programme priorities will contribute to drawing attention to the issues of health and its protection, which in turn may increase the immunity of citizens, and may also encourage them to a healthy lifestyle, thus complementing ESF activities.

In terms of border management, the Programme is consistent with the assumptions of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.. Its purpose is to contribute to the effective management of migration flows, the implementation, strengthening and development of all elements of the common European policy on asylum and the common European immigration policy in accordance with the relevant EU acquis, the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, in full respect of the Union's and Member States' obligations international law and the rights and obligations of the Union of the principles enshrined in the scope of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Another complementary support instrument may be the Internal Security Fund, which aim to ensure a high level of security in the European Union while facilitating legitimate travel thanks to uniform and high-level control of external borders and thanks to the effective processing of Schengen visa applications, in accordance with the Union's commitment to respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights. Complementarity in the scope of the above mentioned possibilities of financing from the European Union funds due to the border nature of the Programme area is key for the possibility of achieving the assumed specific objectives under priorities Cross-border Cooperation Programme - ‘Borders’ and ‘Cooperation’.

The Programme will also be complimentary with the Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF), which aims at managing the crossing of the external borders efficiently and addressing migratory challenges and potential future threats at those borders, thereby contributing to addressing serious crime with a cross-border dimension (such as migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and terrorism) and ensuring a high level of internal security within the EU, while at the same time acting in full respect for fundamental rights and in a manner that safeguards the free movement of persons within the EU. The Programme includes activities related to better border monitoring and efficiency raising for border and customs services.

* + - * 1. National strategies and EU-funded programmes

Similarly to the 2014-2020 programming period, the thematic objectives and priorities of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine will remain complementary with the wider development priorities of the three countries whose territories are on the Programme area. The Programme is compatible with the following long-term national strategies:

* In Poland: Long-term National Development Strategy "Poland 2030. The Third Wave of Modernity" - this document indicates the need to focus development on improving the competitiveness and innovativeness of the economy, achieving sustainable development of the potential of Polish regions, implementing the effectiveness and efficiency of the country;
* In Ukraine: Ukraine's Development Strategy until 2030 - the document aims to achieve European living standards and a dignified position of Ukraine on a global scale;
* In Belarus: The National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2030 - the document aims to provide high living standards for residents and conditions for harmonious individual development through the transition to a high-performance economy based on knowledge and innovation, while maintaining a friendly environment for future generations.

Concerning the Polish part of the Programme area, complementarity with regional (regional operational programmes) and national programmes (e.g. "Eastern Poland 2020+") shall be maintained. The key element of the OP "Eastern Poland 2020+", if adopted, will remain the achievement of tangible economic effects related to the development of entrepreneurship and an increase in the level of private investments in the macro region. Aspects related to improving the quality of life of the inhabitants will also remain important. They are clearly linked to the priorities ‘Cooperation’ and ‘Tourism’, which are assumed by the implementation of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme.

The effects achieved so far thanks to the implementation of the OP Eastern Poland 2014-2020 have made it possible to significantly reduce or overcome some of the identified development barriers, as well as to support the competitiveness and innovation of regions.

* + - * 1. Regional strategies

The Programme will be implemented in cooperation with the managing authorities of regions in the Programme area. It will increase the chances of ensuring complementarity with the objectives and strategies of regional development, including: Podlaskie, Mazowieckie, Podkarpackie (until 2030) and Lubelskie Voivodeship for the years 2014-2020(with a perspective until 2030), strategy of cross-border cooperation of the Lubelskie Voivodeship, Podkarpackie Voivodeship, Lviv Oblast, Volyn Oblast, Brest Oblast for the years 2021-2027. The Programme is also complementary to the existing provisions of the development strategies of the Lviv, Volyn, Zakarpattia, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil Oblasts, as well as the strategies for sustainable development of the Brest, Grodno, Gomel and Minsk Oblasts for the years 2016-2025. All these documents are aimed at promoting the broadly understood socio-economic development on a regional scale and improving the quality of life of the inhabitants.

It should be noted that maintaining the complementarity between the above-mentioned supranational, national and regional programmes and strategies is necessary due to the limited budget of the programmes, what means that they are insufficient to meet all challenges and problems. Each of them focuses on the most important issues. Achieving their objectives will lead to synergy effect, and thus effective improvement in the socio-economic, environmental and spatial situation of the Programme area, and as a result, to solving Programme area common problems.

## Justification for the selection of policy objectives and the Interreg specific objectives, corresponding priorities, specific objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure

Table 1. Justification for the selection of policy objective 2 and its specific objectives

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Selected policy objectives and specific objectives for Interreg** | **Selected specific objective** | **Priority** | **Justification for the selection** |
| **Policy objective 2: A greener, low-carbon Europe** | Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience | Environment | The effects of climate change, especially the temperature increase, frequency and intensity of extreme phenomena, which have occurred in the last few decades are deepening. Insufficient measures are taken to climate change adaptation in the Programme area. Socio-economic analysis of the Programme area shows that growth of electricity production and insufficient use of renewable energies in most of subregions (especially in Volyn, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Rivne Oblasts in Ukraine, all Oblasts in Belarus and Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Poland where share of energy from renewable sources in the total energy production is from 0 to 5%). It is worth adding that there is visible increase in air pollution in some subregions (especially in Lubelski, Chełmsko-zamojski, Rzeszowski, Tarnobrzeski, Krośnieński, Suwalski subregion, Lvivska Oblast and Brest Oblast). Diagnostic workshops shown that environmental awareness of the inhabitants is insufficient. In order to minimize the damage associated with the effects of climate changes, it is proposed to undertake adaptation measures. This process consist of many elements - energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable water management as well as the circular economy or reduction of pollution, as well as increasing the environmental awareness of the inhabitants. Each of these aspects requires significant improvement within the Programme area. Therefore adaptation to climate change should be promoted. This is particularly important in the era of current threats around the world - more frequent drought, fires or global warming. Also important element are activities aimed at raising the awareness of residents about the need to adapt to climate change, not only at the general level of society, but also at the level of individual households, due to the heating with poor-quality fuels and the excessive production of waste and a low degree of their reuse.The assumptions of the specific objective are consistent with the policy objective 2: Greener, low-carbon Europe, which establish adaptation to climate change and risk management, as well as running a low-carbon environment-friendly economy and changing attitude of inhabitants toward pro-ecological. |
| Promoting sustainable water management | Environment | Despite the downward trend in total water consumption within the Programme area visible in socio-economic analysis, it is recommended to constantly promote sustainable water management so that the situation in this area improves constantly. Analysis showed also that the percentage of people using sewage systems is also increasing, but in rural areas it is still low (in most subregions <40%). The efficiency of wastewater treatment plants is declining in some subregions in the Programme area. Because of this aspects, it is proposed to promote measures of sustainable water management. This will minimize the consumption of freshwater resources, which are exhausting, so in the interests of future generations. Particular care should be taken to use water resources sustainably. It is very important to promote sustainable water management in individual households, e.g. in the form of small retention facilities.The assumptions of the specific objective are consistent with the policy objective 2: Greener, low-carbon Europe, which establish supporting blue investments, environmentally friendly economy and stable economic growth related to sustainable management of environmental resources (including water) and changing attitude of inhabitants toward pro-ecological. |
| Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution | Environment | The implementation of that objective is particularly important due to the densely populated cities in the Programme area, and thus the development of biologically active areas. Diagnostic workshops and socio-economic analysis shown problems of the lack of coordinated joint plans for the management of the protection zones and differences in nature protection systems between countries. Despite the presence of particularly protected areas, it is important to increase the number of green spaces in the Programme area, which will reduce the generated pollution and increase biodiversity. It is particularly important to protect ecological corridors and natural habitats, as well as to promote the restoration of their conditions for the proper functioning of ecosystems by supporting natural processes that have been disrupted. The creation of new or a combination of broken ecological corridors also has a positive effect on increasing biodiversity. Green infrastructure is an important element of the urban environment, which makes it more attractive and friendly to residents. It is also proposed to promote rainwater retention facilities and plants with high interception capacity.The assumptions of the specific objective are consistent with the policy objective 2: Greener, low-carbon Europe, which establish supporting green and blue investments, environment-friendly economy and stable economic growth related to sustainable management of environmental resources and changing attitude of inhabitants toward pro-ecological. |

Table 2. Justification for the selection of policy objective 4 and its specific objectives

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Selected policy objectives and specific objectives for Interreg** | **Selected specific objective** | **Priority** | **Justification for the selection** |
| **Policy objective 4: A more social Europe** | Improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of health care systems and long-term care services across borders | Health | The lack of cross-border emergency procedures and medical personnel as well as the downward trend in the number of available hospital beds per capita are one of the main challenges of the Programme area in terms of health care. It is also necessary to take into account crisis situations in this process. In addition, health care should function as part of an integrated system guaranteeing coordinated care and preventing unnecessary expenditure. Relieving emergency care as a result of a better planned health system is an important aspect that should be improved. The socio-economic analysis showed that the main cause of death in the support area, irrespective of the location of the wards or provinces, are mainly caused by cardiovascular disease (In Poland their share in the total number of deaths is 41.5%, in Belarus – 55.5%, and in Ukraine – 56.5%) and cancer (In Poland their share in the total number of deaths is 26,5%, in Belarus – 15,7%, and in Ukraine – 13,4%) in all regions and it may be related to, inter alia, environmental pollution. It should also be noted that the results of the analysis indicate a shorter life expectancy of people living in large urban centres compared to those in which urbanization is lower. Due to the above-mentioned problems, it is necessary to take measures to ensure better access to prophylaxis, diagnostics and specialist medical care, including geriatric and palliative care. To increase universal access to health care, it is also possible to implement solutions in the field of computerization of health care facilities under this objective. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has paid particular attention to the new challenges posed by the occurrence of unpredictable circumstances. This is a problem, which influence across national borders, therefore cooperation is advisable to minimize the impact of the threat on the population living in border areas. At the same time, once established cooperation pays off in future similar occurrences. |
| Enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation | Tourism | The multiculturalism of the area, the existence of folk traditions, folk crafts and material resources of historical and cultural heritage and unique natural values are great potential, which should be supported to increase the importance of the tourism sector in the support area. Border areas of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine are constitute an environmentally and culturally coherent area, and, at the same time, they are an important tourist potential. Actions taken in this direction may be also helpful in addressing the challenges such as the economic stratification of the population and the resurgence of historical conflicts. In addition, attention should be paid to the risks posed by failure to act in this area - the disappearance of cultural objects as a result of the lack of their financing. Currently, there is no system for joint management of historical and cultural heritage areas. Due to the significant impact ongoing pandemic COVID-19 (which may turn out to be long-lasting) on the tourism industry and the limitations in the possibility of conducting tourism activities, as well as the decline in demand for tourist services, particular attention should be paid to the directions of development of such projects in the support area. It is proposed to take measures to support entrepreneurs in order to help them find their way in the new reality of tourism. |

Table 3. Justification for the selection of Interreg policy objectives 1 and 2 and its specific objectives

| **Selected policy objectives and specific objectives for Interreg** | **Selected specific objective** | **Priority** | **Justification for the selection** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Interreg objective 1. Better Interreg governance** | Increasing the efficiency of public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation as well as cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular to eliminate legal obstacles and other barriers in border regions; | Cooperation | There is insufficient cooperation between different stakeholders in the Programme area, mainly due to the legal and administrative barriers (41% of Polish local governments surveyed declare active cooperation with Ukraine[[6]](#footnote-7), definitely less cooperation with Belarus). The Programme will aim to stimulate and support the development of cross-border links between institutions, non-governmental organizations and citizens.This will result in gradual changes in the functioning of public administration, which may facilitate cooperation with residents and institutions. Focusing on increasing the institutional capacity will lead to development of the civil society.The cross-border cooperation so far has been based primarily on formalized activities such as Euroregions or cooperation within projects financed from EU funds. There are 5 Euroregions (Bug Euroregion, Carpathian Euroregion, Niemen Euroregion, Białowieża Forest Euroregion and newly created Roztocze Euroregion) operating in the support area, which represent a great potential for cross-border cooperation.It is worth stimulating grassroots movements and other existing institutions, which have great potential for the development of cooperation between e.g. entrepreneurs or NGOs from individual countries.  |
| Building mutual trust by encouraging actions to facilitate people-to-people contacts | Cooperation | The cooperation of communities is a great development opportunity for all three partners of the Programme. The existing cross-border cooperation between NGOs, residents and entrepreneurs is not very intense, but there is insufficient data to clearly define their scale and nature. But it is emphasized that cross-border cooperation is based primarily on already discussed formal activities such as the Euroregions or cooperation under the EU financed projects, but not on grassroots movements. All kinds of interactions between the Programme area community are necessary for establish long-term cooperation. In this respect, also small budget, local activities can be very useful. Undertaking such activities can significantly affect trust and establishing interpersonal contacts between the inhabitants of the Programme area. |
| **Interreg objective 2. Safer and more secure Europe** | Actions in the border crossing management area | Borders | The Programme area is facing an important challenge to improve the functioning of the border crossing system.Problems are related to the insufficient number of border crossings and long checks, resulting in long waiting times at the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Belarusian border crossings. There are also cases of illegal border crossing Programme area. Those issues have a negative impact on the efficient management and efficient service of people crossing the borders in the Programme area and thus it hinders development of cross-border tourism and establishing lasting relations between the inhabitants of the borderland.Taking into account the planned increase of other EU funds allocated for border management as well as the experiences from 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 perspectives, it is proposed not to support infrastructure activities under this objective. Projects should focus on:* targeted investments in necessary equipment and supplies,
* exchange of experience and best practices, joint trainings,
* creation of joint procedures for quicker and safer border control and crossing.

Specific objective is complimentary to the Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF), which aims at managing the crossing of the external borders efficiently and addressing migratory challenges and potential future threats at those borders, thereby contributing to addressing serious crime with a cross-border dimension (such as migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and terrorism) and ensuring a high level of internal security within the EU, while at the same time acting in full respect for fundamental rights and in a manner that safeguards the free movement of persons within the EU.  |

# Priorities

## Priority: Environment

Support for infrastructure is assumed as a part of the activities under this priority.

### Specific Objective: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies

As part of the specific objective related to promoting adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and disaster resilience, it is assumed to implement thematic actions such as:

1. **Promotion and implementation of activities related to a low-carbon economy and resilience to climate change.**

Due to the globally advancing climate change, it is proposed to take measures to ensure appropriate living conditions. Adequate support is needed to promote a low-carbon economy and climate change adaptation measures, e.g. in the form of developing and implementing strategies, solutions, programmes and infrastructural projects to increase the readiness and adaptability of population in the Programme area. Activities related to promotion of low-emission economy among the inhabitants of the support area are also assumed. It will positively influence the awareness of the inhabitants of the economic and environmental advantages of such solutions.

1. **Support for joint actions in the field of adaptation to climate change and protection against climate-related threats regarding: floods, droughts, erosion and risk management regarding this area.**

Due to the occurring climate change, it is necessary to allocate adequate resources to measures aimed at adapting to these changes, preventing flood, drought, erosion and managing the risk in this area, e.g. in the form of developing and implementing strategies, solutions, programmes and related to raising enter and protection of the population, including by building systems and infrastructure for disaster management. These activities are aimed at increasing the readiness and adaptability of the society in the supported area. The effect of the implementation of measures in this area will be the promotion of adaptation to the risk associated with floods and the minimization of the effects of such events.

1. **Support for joint actions in the field of adaptation to climate change and protection against climate-related threats regarding: fire and risk management regarding this area.**

As a result of the occurring climate changes, the increasing risk of fire, it is proposed to allocate appropriate funds for activities aimed at adapting to these changes, preventing fires and managing the risk in this area, e.g. in the form of developing and implementing strategies, solutions, programmes and innovative projects related to raising awareness and protection of the population, including by building systems and infrastructure for disaster management. The effect of the implementation of activities in this area will be the promotion of adaptation to the risk associated with fires and minimizing the effects of such events.

1. **Joint prevention and management of risks caused by anthropogenic activities, e.g. industrial accidents and risk management regarding this area.**

In connection with potential threats and fairly common occurrence of industry in the support area, it is proposed to take measures to strengthen resistance to the effects of anthropogenic disasters. They will translate into the implementation of specific projects in this area, and thus raising awareness and prevention of such threats. The implemented projects will reduce the chance of the above-mentioned disasters, and in the event of their occurrence, they will ensure the minimization of related losses.

#### Indicators

Table 4. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate objective (2024)** | **End objective (2029)** |
| **Environment** | Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience | RCO81 | Participations in joint actions across borders | Participation |  |  |
| RCO116​ | Jointly developed solutions​ | Solutions developed​ |  |  |

Table 5. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value** | **Reference year** | **End objective (2029)** | **Data source** | **Comments** |
| **Environment**  | Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience | RCR104 | Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations | Solutions applied | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

**Inhabitants of the Programme area** will be the main target group of actions under the Environment priority in terms of promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience. Intervention in this area can significantly contribute to reducing the impact of climate change on the life quality of local people. It will also help to reduce the frequency of extreme events and minimize their effects. This will significantly improve the level of safety and comfort of life for all inhabitants of the Programme area.

Actions under this specific objective may be undertaken by beneficiaries such as:

* Units of state, regional and local administration, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them,
* Rescue and emergency services, fire brigades and border authorities,
* Other public law entities (e.g. chambers, government administration bodies),
* Units of higher education and research institutions,
* Non-governmental organizations.

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

### Specific Objective: Promoting sustainable water management

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies

As part of the specific objective related to the promotion of sustainable water management, it is assumed to implement thematic actions such as:

1. **Implementation of projects aimed at protection and condition improvement of water resources (including river basin management, infrastructure development of rainwater retention systems, infrastructure and other activities related to improvement of water quality).**

Due to the fact that in some subregions in the Programme area water consumption is increasing, it is important to provide support measures in the field of water management, e.g. in the form of developing strategies, solutions, programmes and innovative projects, which will enable many activities in the field of water resources protection and it will be a form of promoting sustainable water management in the Programme area.

1. **Implementation of projects related to sewage infrastructure and management.**

Considering the fact that the capacity of wastewater treatment plants in some sub-regions is decreasing (in about 40-50% of sub-regions in Poland and Ukraine), and in some sub-regions some of the untreated wastewater still goes to water and access to the sewage system is insufficient (especially in rural areas, where approx. 70-80% of NUTS3 or comparable units less than 2/5 of the population use sewage). Adequate management of municipal wastewater is essential and aims to maintain sustainable water management in the Programme area. Projects under this measure are aimed at supporting rational management of water resources.

1. **Undertaking promotional and educational activities related to sustainable water management.**

Due to the problems related to water management in the Programme area, activities focused on promoting sustainable water management are proposed, e.g. in the form of developing strategies, solutions, programmes and innovative projects, as well as promotional campaigns and educational activities addressed mainly to residents, because that influencing the management of waters in this group will be particularly effective.

#### Indicators

Table 6. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate objective (2024)** | **End objective (2029)** |
| **Environment** | Promoting sustainable water management | RCO81 | Participations in joint actions across borders | Participation |  |  |
| RCO116​ | Jointly developed solutions​ | Solutions developed​ |  |  |

Table 7. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value** | **Reference year** | **End objective (2029)** | **Data source** | **Comments** |
| **Environment** | Promoting sustainable water management | RCR104 | Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations | Solutions applied | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

**Inhabitants of the Programme area** will be the main target group of actions under the priority Environment in terms of promoting sustainable water management. Intervention in this area may significantly improve the quality of waters in the support area, and thus improve the condition of the entire natural environment. These activities will have a positive impact on the quality of life of the local population. It may also affect the tourist attractiveness of the support area, and thus it will constitute a great potential for the development of entrepreneurship.

In reference to investment activities, additional initiatives are planned aimed at promoting sustainable water management, e.g. organizing events, meetings, workshops and conferences, as well as promotional campaigns and educational activities. Participants of such events may be anyone interested in the subject related to the specific objective, e.g. residents, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, research centres, local government units and other entities.

Actions under this specific objective may be undertaken by beneficiaries such as:

* Units of state, regional and local administration, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them
* Other public law entities (e.g. chambers, government administration bodies)
* Units of higher education and research institutions
* Non-governmental organizations.

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

### Specific Objective: Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment and reducing pollution

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies

As part of the specific objective related to increasing biodiversity, green infrastructure in urban greenery and reducing pollution, it is assumed to implement thematic activities related to:

1. **Protection, regeneration and sustainable use of valuable natural areas, including Natura 2000 and Emerald areas, with particular emphasis on cross-border areas**

The supported area is diversified in terms of the percentage of legally protected areas in the area of individual subareas/oblasts (from 0% of the area in the Lviv Oblast to 75% in the Krośnieński subregion). In order to maintain these areas in good condition, measures should be taken to protect and regenerate them in order to neutralize harmful anthropogenic activities. This may contribute to reducing pollution in the Programme area and increasing its tourist attractiveness. It is worth paying special attention to cross-border nature protection areas, which have high potential for creating cross-border nature protection networks like Białowieża Forest (Polish-Belarusian border), Bug River Valley (Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian border), Western Polesie, Roztocze and the Eastern Beskids (Polish-Ukrainian). They constitute an environmentally and culturally coherent area, and, at the same time, they are an important tourist potential of the neighbouring countries.

1. **Undertaking promotional and educational activities expanding knowledge of residents about nature protection and raising awareness of natural valuable areas in the Programme area**

Due to the insufficient level of environmental education of the inhabitants of the Programme area, it is necessary to take actions aimed at increasing the environmental awareness and level of knowledge of the inhabitants about the common natural heritage, protected areas and their unique value. It is proposed to implement educational projects and information campaigns aimed at all social groups living in the Programme area.

1. **Protection of nature and biodiversity and development of green infrastructure**

Due to the diagnosed problems, such as the presence of illegal landfills, poor air and water quality, and insufficient level of environmental education for the inhabitants of part of the support area, it is necessary to strengthen the existing biodiversity in the support area thanks to an appropriate approach to nature protection. Preservation of the local flora and its constant care will make it possible to eliminate pollution, and thus improve the quality of life in the support area. In order to protect nature, it is also very important to raise the environmental awareness of the inhabitants of the support area.

1. **Implementation of projects aimed at identifying, monitoring and improving the condition of areas with exceeded environmental quality standards**

Due to the diagnosed problems, such as the presence of wild landfills, poor air and water quality, and insufficient level of environmental education for the inhabitants of part of the support area, it is recommended to support common identification, monitoring and improvement of the condition of areas with exceeded environmental quality standards. It will help prevent potential threats on an ongoing basis and ensure a constant increase in biodiversity and reduction of pollution. Acquiring data regarding the existing environmental situation will allow comparisons over time of changes taking place in the Programme area.

#### Indicators

Table 8. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate objective (2024)** | **End objective (2029)** |
| **Environment** | Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment and reducing pollution | RCO81 | Participations in joint actions across borders | Participation |  |  |
| RCO116 | Jointly developed solutions | Solutions developed​ |  |  |

Table 9. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value** | **Reference year** | **End objective (2029)** | **Data source** | **Comments** |
| **Environment** | Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment and reducing pollution | RCR104 | Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations | Solutions applied | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

**Inhabitants of the Programme area** will be the main target group of actions under the priority Environment in terms of enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution. Intervention in this area may significantly improve biodiversity, increase ecological awareness of the inhabitants and reduce pollution in the support area, and thus improve the condition of the entire natural environment. These activities will have a positive impact on the quality of life of the local population. It may also affect the tourist attractiveness of the support area, and thus it will constitute a great potential for the development of entrepreneurship.

Additional initiatives are planned aimed at enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment and reducing pollution, e.g. organizing events, meetings, or jointly creating a strategy. Participants/recipients of such events may be anyone interested in the subject related to the specific objective, e.g. residents, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, research centres, local government units and other entities.

It is proposed that interventions, under the Environment priority, in the scope of enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution should be undertaken under the support of the Programme by:

* State, regional and local administration units, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them,
* Other public law entities (e.g. chambers, government administration bodies),
* Administrations and managements of nature protection areas, such as national parks, nature parks, landscape parks, biosphere reserves, etc.,
* Entities administering forest areas and state forest holdings with their organizational units,
* Units of higher education and research institutions,
* Non-governmental organizations.

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

## **2.2. Priority: Health**

Support for infrastructure is assumed as a part of the activities under this priority.

### Specific Objective: Improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of health care systems and long-term care services across borders

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies

In order to ensure equal access to health care through joint improvement of qualifications of medical and rescue personnel, development of infrastructure and purchase of medical and rescue equipment, including primary health care, such actions shall be supported:

1. **Improving access and infrastructure development of diagnostic and prophylactic also in different areas of medicine**

The visible high mortality from cardiovascular diseases and cancers among the inhabitants of the Programme area requires measures to promote, as well as increase the availability and quality of prophylactic (including health screening) and diagnostics. It is planned to support the health infrastructure in order to ensure better access to the medical services to the inhabitants of the Programme area, and thus increase their life expectancy and quality of life. It is worth paying attention to the elderly and people with disabilities who require adaptation of the infrastructure that will allow them to use places providing health services, e.g. slipways, toilets adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, etc. Activities may include the purchase of equipment, reconstruction, expansion, renovation of facilities providing services in the field of prevention, diagnostics, including those introducing facilities for people with disabilities. Support can also be used to improve the efficiency of receptions, as well as other activities improving the system. It is also proposed to undertake activities for the benefit of a joint cross-border offer of care facilities providing services in the field of prevention and diagnostics in the entire Programme area.

1. **Improving access to specialist medicine, in particular cardiovascular diseases and cancer (development of health infrastructure, support for the equipment of health care facilities) and emergency medicine**

In the Programme area are problems such as the declining number of beds in hospitals in the Programme area, high mortality from cardiovascular diseases and cancer and an insufficient number of doctors per capita in some sub-regions (despite a favourable upward trend) and an aging population (requiring more frequent and more intensive care). Therefore, it is planned to support the health infrastructure and equipment of health care facilities in order to provide better access to specialized health services (in particular regarding cardiovascular diseases and cancer) to the inhabitants of the Programme area, thus increase their life expectancy and quality of life. Activities may include the purchase of equipment, reconstruction, expansion, renovation of facilities providing specialized health services, support in the field of management improvements to improve the efficiency and resilience of existing systems, as well as facilities for people with disabilities. It is also proposed to undertake actions for the joint cross-border offer of health care institutions and hospitals in the entire area of support.

1. **Measures to improve access to long-term care, especially infrastructure development for geriatric and palliative care**

Due to the aging of the population in the Programme area and the related demand for employees providing basic care and nursing services, as well as specialist medical services, it is proposed to support courses and training, as well as promote related professions as a constantly developing, perspective industry. This is to ensure better access to long-term care, which is expected to be in increasing demand due to the increasing number of older people. Funds will be allocated to the development of this type of service. It is also planned to increase the availability of care services for people in economic disadvantage and excluded people.

1. **Support for activities aimed at preventing the occurrence and effects of adverse events such as epidemics (with particular emphasis on local phenomena)**

Due to the occurrence of unpredictable adverse events, such as crisis situations, e.g. epidemics, it is proposed to allocate appropriate funds for activities aimed at preventing the occurrence and effects of these events, e.g. by developing and implementing strategies, action plans, solutions, innovative programmes and projects, as well as working out solutions to the issue of volunteering in rescue services and working out cross-border rescue procedures. The effect of the implementation of activities in this area will be the minimization of the effects of adverse events.

1. **Supporting the development of digitization in health care (including the development of telemedicine)**

In order to provide more effective and modern health care and integration between health care providers in the Programme area, it is proposed to support digitization in health care. Assistance may be provided in the scope of co-financing IT devices, software (incl. telemedicine services), storage and service of medical records in digital form as well as in the scope of employee training in the field of system operation. Information technology is seen as a means to improve the process of providing health care - from prevention, through diagnosis, to monitoring the effects of treatment and health. Taking action in this area will enable joint operation of medical personnel from support countries in difficult cases. It is also proposed to create an integrated information system about the possibilities and principles of using health care in the neighbouring country. The creation of this type of system will definitely facilitate the access to medical services for all residents of the Programme area.

1. **Joint improvement of the qualifications of medical and rescue personnel**

Acquiring new skills in the field of medical care among medical and rescue staff in the Programme area will improve its quality, which may translate into its effectiveness in the treatment of diseases, and as a result eliminate the problem related to the relatively short life expectancy in the Programme area. As part of the action, it is proposed to organize joint meetings to exchange good practices, trainings, workshops or conferences aimed at improving qualifications and drawing attention to common problems in the field of health care and emergency services in the Programme area.

#### Indicators

Table 10. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **Identification number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate goal (2024)** | **Final goal (2029)** |
| **Health** | Improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of health care systems and long-term care services across borders | RCO69 | Capacity of new or modernised health care facilities | Persons/year |  |  |
| RCO116 | Jointly developed solutions​ | Solutions developed​ |  |  |

Table 11. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **Identification number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value** | **Reference year** | **Final goal (2029)** | **Data source** | **Comments** |
| **Health** | Improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of health care systems and long-term care services across borders | RCR73 | Annual users of new or modernised health care facilities | Users/year | 0 |  |  |  |  |
| RCR104 | Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations | Solutions applied | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

The main target groups for actions under the Health priority to improve the accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of health systems and long-term care services across borders will be the **inhabitants of the Programme area**. Intervention in this area may significantly improve the health services provided, and thus improve the health condition of residents. Activities related to long-term care will have a positive impact on the quality of life of elderly and terminally ill residents. Investments in infrastructure, equipment and improving the qualifications of medical and rescue personnel will significantly affect the comfort of work and the number of successes achieved by health care and emergency services workers.

In relation to the investment activities, additional initiatives are planned aimed at improving the accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of health care systems and long-term care services across borders, e.g. organization of events, training, exchange of good practices among specialists operating in the Programme area.

Activities under this specific objective may be undertaken by the following beneficiaries:

* state, regional and local administration units, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them that deal with medical care,
* public entities providing medical services and long-term care services,
* rescue services (i.a. mountain rescue services)
* entities of higher education, e.g. medical universities, educational entities in the field of health protection, etc.,
* non-governmental organizations (including rescue organizations and associations).

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

## 2.3. Priority: Tourism

Support for infrastructure is assumed as a part of the activities under this priority.

### Specific objective: Enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies.

Nurturing and promoting local traditions and tourist attractions draws attention, and thus encourages tourists to visit specific attractions. As a result, tourist traffic generates profit, which increases the role of tourism in economic development.

The multiculturalism of the area, active cultural units, valuable natural areas, the existence of folk traditions, folk crafts and material resources of historical and cultural heritage constitute capital, the proper use of which may enable the economic and social development of the Programme area. Cultivating and promoting local traditions, joint cross-border cultural undertakings, caring for valuable natural areas and joint heritage sites, and other activities for the use and tourism values are essential in the development of the cross-border area. As part of the specific objective related to enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation, the implementation of thematic activities related to:

1. **Protection, infrastructure development and promotion of public tourist values and related tourist services e.g. by shaping an integrated tourist offer by entities in the Programme area, infrastructure of new and improvement/upgrade of  existing routes.**

Due to the special tourist values (historical, cultural and natural) of the support area, it is proposed to promote the development of entrepreneurship related to tourism among the inhabitants. Therefore, support is planned, e.g. in the form of trainings or workshops on how to set up a business in the tourism industry and manage it effectively. Accommodation and gastronomic base adapted to the needs of visitors is one of the key factors in the development of tourism. The Programme area also has a high potential for the development of agritourism, e.g. due to the large share of rural and valuable natural areas. Actions involving creation of e.g. joint brochures, tourist guides, films, advertising campaigns and study visits are also proposed in order to promote the Programme area as an attractive area with a coherent tourist offer. Involvement in the activities of local authorities, entrepreneurs as well as local leaders, will strengthen social integration and allow for better protection, development and promotion of tourist values.

1. **Protection, infrastructure development and promotion of culture and its heritage as well as services in the field of culture**

In the Programme area are 10 sites (or groups of sites) inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as other sites and areas of particular cultural and historical value, and facilities providing cultural services, e.g. museums, open-air museums, etc. This area has a particular potential for the development of tourism by promoting culturally valuable areas and objects, as well as intangible heritage. It is worth noting that the countries included in the Programme area have a common history, the positive aspects of which are worth highlighting in order to strengthen ties between local communities. The potential increase in the number of tourists also provides space for development of enterprises providing services in the tourism industry, e.g. accommodation, gastronomy or other recreational, entertainment or cultural services. Renovation of existing cultural heritage sites, allowing them to be preserved for future generations, as well as increasing the accessibility of the existing sites of historical and cultural heritage, e.g. for people with disabilities shall be supported by development of infrastructure and investments. Involvement in the activities of local authorities as well as entrepreneurs and local leaders will strengthen social integration and allow for better promotion of the historical and cultural heritage of the area. Initiatives aimed at supporting cultural activities (carried out also by non-governmental organizations), e.g. organizing events promoting the intangible heritage of the area covered by the Programme. It is also proposed to undertake activities involving the establishment of long-term, cross-border cooperation between institutions dealing with particularly valuable heritage objects and cultural institutions in the support area.

1. **Protection, infrastructure development and promotion of natural heritage and ecotourism**

Due to the fact that the Programme area includes valuable natural areas, such as the Białowieża Primeval Forest, post-glacial areas of Northern Podlasie, Augustów Canal, limestone and loess uplands of the Lublin region, Eastern Carpathians, the Bug River Valley, Western Polesie, Roztocze, as well as other valuable natural objects and areas, Programme area has a high tourist potential. The potential increase in the number of tourists also provides space for development of enterprises providing services in the tourism industry, e.g. accommodation, gastronomy or other recreational, entertainment or cultural services. As part of the measure, support is provided for nature protection, allowing for its preservation for future generations. Involvement in the activities of local authorities, entrepreneurs and local leaders will strengthen social integration and allow for better promotion of the natural heritage of the area. Initiatives aimed at supporting promotional activities carried out by non-governmental organizations, e.g. organizing events promoting the natural heritage of the area covered by the Programme assumptions, will also be important. Actions involving the establishment of long-term, cross-border cooperation between institutions dealing with the protection, development and promotion of natural heritage and ecotourism are also proposed.

1. **Support for the adaptation of skills and professional qualifications in the field of tourism to the needs of the tourism market and changes within, e.g. through training related to establishing, running and promoting tourism activities**

Due to the insufficiently used tourism potential of the Programme area and the outflow of human resources (especially educated young people) to regions with higher development potential, it is proposed to take measures aimed at increasing tourism-related entrepreneurship, which will allow for more effective use of the area's potential, therefore support is planned by, e.g. in the form of courses, trainings or workshops on how to set up and promote an enterprise in the tourism industry and to manage it effectively. One of the key factors in the development of tourism is the accommodation and catering base adapted to the needs of visitors, which is developed (in mainly by private entities, therefore stimulating the development of these entities may particularly contribute to increasing the tourist attractiveness of the Programme area.

#### Indicators

Table 12. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **Identification number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate goal (2024)** | **Final goal (2029)** |
| **Tourism** | Enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation | RCO77 | Number of cultural and tourism sites supported | Cultural and tourism sites |  |  |
| RCO115 | Public events across borders jointly organised | Events |  |  |
| RCO116 | Jointly developed solutions | Solutions developed |  |  |

Table 13. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **Identification number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value** | **Reference year** | **Final goal (2029)** | **Data source** | **Comments** |
| **Tourism** | Enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation | RCR77 | Visitors of cultural and tourism sites supported | Visitors/year | 0 |  |  |  |  |
| RCR104 | Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations | Solutions applied | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

Actions under the Tourism priority in terms of enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation, will be **people visiting the Programme area and its inhabitants**. Undertaking an intervention in this respect may significantly increase the tourist attractiveness of the support area, and thus provide a great potential for the development of entrepreneurship.

In relation to investment activities, additional initiatives are planned in the field of enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation, e.g. organization of events, workshops, trainings, conferences, exchange of good practices among specialists operating in the Programme area. The participants of such events may be all, i.e. residents, entrepreneurs, local government units, non-governmental organizations operating in the Programme area.

Activities under this specific objective may be undertaken by the following beneficiaries:

* State, regional and local administration units, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them,
* Other public law entities (e.g. chambers, government administration bodies),
* Units of higher education and research institutions,
* Administrations and managements of nature protection areas, such as national parks, nature parks, landscape parks, biosphere reserves, etc.,
* Personnel development institutions,
* Non-governmental organizations.

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

## 2.4. Priority: Cooperation

Under this priority support for minor infrastructure is assumed as a part of other activities.

### Specific Objective: Increasing the efficiency of public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation as well as cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular to eliminate legal obstacles and other barriers in border regions

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies

One of the challenges facing the Programme area is the effective and efficient functioning of public administration while the implementation of common actions for the development of this area.

In order to increase the efficiency of public administration through the promotion of legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions is planned to take action in terms of:

1. Increasing and improving the quality of cross-border cooperation between entities in the programme area,
2. Improving the access to information on legal, fiscal and formal conditions related to e.g. running a business in each countries of the Programme area, stimulating economic ties or promoting jointly operating organizations of entrepreneurs, which may result in the economic development of the support area,
3. Support in the implementation of consulting services assistance to entities applying for additional financial resources (e.g. by helping in creating business plans, drawing up contracts, filling out applications),
4. The creation of open data banks regarding the Programme area, including statistics on the socio-economic situation of the area, changes taking place and available investment areas, which may result in the economic development of the support area.

#### Indicators

Table 14. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **Identification number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate goal (2024)** | **Final goal (2029)** |
| **Cooperation** | Increasing the efficiency of public administration by promoting legal and administrative and cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular to eliminate legal obstacles and other barriers in border regions | RCO83 | Strategies and action plans jointly developed​ | Strategy/action plan​ |  |  |
| RCO116 | Jointly developed solutions​ | Solutions developed​ |  |  |

Table 15. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **Identification number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value** | **Reference year** | **Final goal (2029)** | **Data source** | **Comments** |
| **Cooperation** | Increasing the efficiency of public administration by promoting legal and administrative and cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular to eliminate legal obstacles and other barriers in border regions | RCR79 | Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | Joint strategy / action plan | 0 |  |  |  |  |
| RCR104 | Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations | Solutions applied | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

Actions under the Cooperation, in terms of increasing the efficiency of public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, especially in order to eliminate legal obstacles and other barriers in border regions, will be the **inhabitants of the Programme area**. Intervention in this area may also favor entrepreneurs and representatives of local government units by facilitating local government cooperation and conducting cross-border economic activity, which may contribute, inter alia, to the creation of new jobs and greater integration of local communities.

There are planned initiatives aimed at increasing the efficiency of public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation as well as cooperation between citizens and institutions, especially to eliminate legal obstacles and other barriers in border regions, e.g. in the form of public consultations, workshops and conferences in the supported area. Everybody can participate of such events, i.e. residents, entrepreneurs, local government units, non-governmental organizations and scientific and research operating in the Programme area.

Activities under this specific objective may be undertaken by the following beneficiaries:

* State, regional and local administration units, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them,
* Other public law entities (e.g. chambers, government administration bodies),
* Non-governmental organizations,
* Units of higher education and research institutions,
* Societies and organizations for activating the economy, technological centres (e.g. chambers of economy or trade, Business Environment Institutions).

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

### Specific Objective: Creating mutual trust by encouraging actions to facilitate people – to – people contacts

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies

As part of the specific objective related to mutual trust creation by encouraging activities facilitating people-to people contacts, it is assumed to implement thematic activities to increase the involvement and participation of the inhabitants of the Programme area in cross-border cooperation such as:

1. **Supporting bottom-up initiatives for the integration of the inhabitants of the Programme area, including promotion of volunteering**

Due to the need to integrate the inhabitants of the Programme area, it is proposed to provide appropriate funds enabling the inhabitants to jointly create initiatives, which will result in building or strengthening interpersonal connections within the Programme area. It is assumed that it is possible to support activities related to e.g. organization of events, implementation of projects supporting shaping the identity of border residents.

Because of the need to integrate the inhabitants of the Programme area, it is proposed to promote the volunteering. Through voluntary work the residents of the Programme area will have the chance to get to know each other and understand their needs. It will also stimulate empathy for the other person, which will result in building mutual trust. It is proposed to implement of projects such as social campaigns, events promoting volunteering among the inhabitants of the Programme area, etc.

1. **Organizing events aimed at the cross-border integration of residents related to environment, art, culture and heritage of the Programme area**

Due to the need of integration of the inhabitants of the Programme area, it is proposed to create opportunities to strengthen contacts between people of various environments, including natural environment, art, culture and heritage of the Programme area. Creating such events will contribute to establishing lasting relationships between representatives of entities, which may pay off in the future. The implementation of such events will contribute to building lasting cultural cooperation (also related to art and heritage) and the integration of experts and activists in the field of the natural environment at the supranational level.

Because of the need to integrate the inhabitants of the Programme area, it is proposed to promote the idea of volunteering. Through voluntary work the residents of the Programme area will have the chance to get to know each other and understand their needs. It will also stimulate empathy for the other person, which will result in building mutual trust. It is proposed to implement of projects such as social campaigns, events promoting volunteering among the inhabitants of the Programme area, etc.

1. **Supporting local initiatives and leadership**

The role of local leaders is to lead a group of people – thanks to the education of such leaders in the Programme area, it will be more likely that grassroots activities by the local community. Taking action in this area will enable the development of social capital in the Programme area. Under the measure, support may be given to exchange of experiences and best practices between local leaders from various areas of the region, joint training sessions, workshops and conferences.

1. **Support for cross-border cooperation of educational facilities (e.g. through cross-border exchange of youth or exchange of good practices and innovative solutions in the Programme area), including integration and educational activities**

Promotion and organization of exchanges at the local cross-border level and among schoolchildren or students of universities teaches young people tolerance, mutual respect and understanding other people’s difference. This will enable shaping regional awareness across borders and show the socio-cultural similarity between the inhabitants of the Programme area. Such educational programmes and initiatives should be related to the unique character of the borderland, in particular related to the common cultural and natural heritage and strengthening its potential, but also generating opportunities for better linking the non-compulsory educational offer with the possibility of employment in the service sector based on the shared heritage. It will also allow for the establishment of long-term cooperation between educational and business environment institutions[[7]](#footnote-8), which may pay off in the future. These exchanges also provide the opportunity to strengthen ties between participants and create long-term relationships.

1. **Supporting cross-border transfer of innovative solutions aimed at undertaking and strengthening further cooperation between research and scientific centres.**

Due to the low level of international cooperation of scientific and research centres in the Programme area, it is proposed to organize trainings, meetings and conferences focused on the transfer of innovative solutions. The implementation of this type of activities will facilitate the integration of experts from specific fields in the Programme area and the introduction of joint innovative solutions.

#### Indicators

Table 16. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator**  | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate objective (2024)** | **End objective (2029)** |
| **Cooperation** | Creating mutual trust by encouraging actions to facilitate people-to-people contacts | RCO85 | Participations in joint training schemes | Participation |  |  |
| RCO87 | Organisations cooperating across borders | Organisations |  |  |
| RCO115 | Public events across borders jointly organised | Events |  |  |

Table 17. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number**  | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value**  | **Reference year** | **End objective (2029)** | **Data source** | **Comments** |
|  **Cooperation** | Creating mutual trust by encouraging actions to facilitate people-to-people contacts | RCR81 | Completion of joint training schemes | Participants completion | 0 |  |  |  |  |
| RCR84 | Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion | Organisations | 0 |  |  |  |  |
| RCR85 | Participations in joint actions across borders after project completion | Participation | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

The main target groups of measures under the priority Cooperation, in terms of building mutual trust by encouraging people-to-people contacts, will be the **inhabitants of the Programme area**. Intervention in this area may contribute to the integration of local communities, youth, employees of educational institutions and research staff across borders.

Activities under this specific objective may be undertaken by the following beneficiaries:

* State, regional and local administration units, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them,
* Other public law entities (e.g. chambers, government administration bodies),
* Schools and educational institutions,
* Units of higher education and research institutions,
* Non-governmental organizations,
* Other entities conducting cultural or educational activity.

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

## 2.5. Priority: Borders

### Specific Objective: Actions in the border crossing management area

#### Related types of actions and their expected contribution to achieving these specific objectives and (where applicable) macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies

A socio-economic analysis of the Programme area has shown problems related with a long term of waiting for Polish - Ukrainian and Polish - Belarusian border crossings and occurring of smuggling goods abroad. Identified barriers affect development of cooperation in border areas and the level of residents security.

In order to decrease existing problems implementation of activity in the border crossing management area will focus on developing the cooperation between customs services of each country included in the Programme area.

It is assumed primarily:

* Common training of border services, customs services and other services involved in border management;
* Support for customs services and border services equipment;
* Improving the service at existing border crossing,
* Promoting the creation of pedestrian and bicycle border crossings for the development of cross-border tourism.
* Activities related to the sealing of borders, by preventing and combating illegal migration,
* Securing borders beyond border crossings, e.g. by creating an innovative border supervision system using modern technology (sensors, cameras, radars, drones, etc.).

The realization of activities in the border crossing management area will improve capacity of border crossing points. Better knowledge and practical border guards customs services skills will positively influence a higher level protection and speed of control at the border crossing. The common training of border services enable closer cooperation between units in all Programme area countries and also improve the level of residents security of the entire border region.

Under this specific objective, the support for minor infrastructure is assumed as a part of other activities.

#### Indicators

Table 18. Product indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Intermediate objective (2024)** | **End objective (2029)** |
| **Borders** | Actions in the border crossing management area | RCO85 | Participations in joint training schemes | Participation |  |  |
| RCO116 | Jointly developed solutions | Solutions developed |  |  |

Table 19. Result indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Specific objective** | **ID number** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measure** | **Base value** | **Reference year** | **End objective(2029)** | **Data source**  | **Comments** |
| **Borders** | Actions in the border crossing management area | RCR81 | Completion of joint training schemes | Participants Completion | 0 |  |  |  |  |
| RCR104 | Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations | Solutions applied | 0 |  |  |  |  |

#### Main target groups

The main target groups of actions under the Borders priority, in the field of border crossing management, will be **people visiting or travelling through the Programme area and its inhabitants**, as well as **border services**. Intervention in this area may help entrepreneurs (including those from the tourism industry) to conduct cross-border economic activity (including tourism) by enabling more efficient movement of workers and tourists across the border.

Activities under this specific objective may be undertaken by the following beneficiaries:

* Border and customs services and other units involved in border management from individual countries of the Programme area,
* State, regional and local administration units, associations of these units and institutions subordinate to them.

It should also be remembered that the actions undertaken under each objective involve beneficiaries from at least two Programme countries, of which at least one is a beneficiary from a Member State.

1. In accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 2016/2066 of 21 November 2016 amending the annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) C/2016/7380. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. B. Kawałko, 2011, *Wybrane problemy polsko-ukraińskiej współpracy transgranicznej*, Barometr Regionalny No. 2(24). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. A. Skorupska (2015), *Dyplomacja samorządowa. Efektywność i perspektywy rozwoju*, Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Biuro Analiz, Dokumentacji i Korespondencji (2017), Międzynarodowa współpraca samorządów, Warszawa: Kancelaria Senatu. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. „Dobra jakość życia z uwzględnieniem ograniczeń naszej planety” (Dz.Urz. L347 z 28.12.2013, s. 171) and H. Komiyama, K. Takeuchi, Sustainability Science: building a new discipline, “Sustainability Science”, no. 1/2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. A. Skorupska (2015), *Dyplomacja samorządowa. Efektywność i perspektywy rozwoju*, Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Business Environment Institution should be understood as any entity, regardless of its legal form, conducting business activity within the meaning of EU law, which conducts activities aimed at creating favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship, which does not operate for profit or allocates profit to statutory purposes. The activity aimed at creating favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship is mentioned as one of the main statutory objectives of the entity. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)