

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE COOPERATION

September 2021

Because neighbours grow up together

People-to-people actions in
cross-border cooperation programmes
along the external borders of the European Union

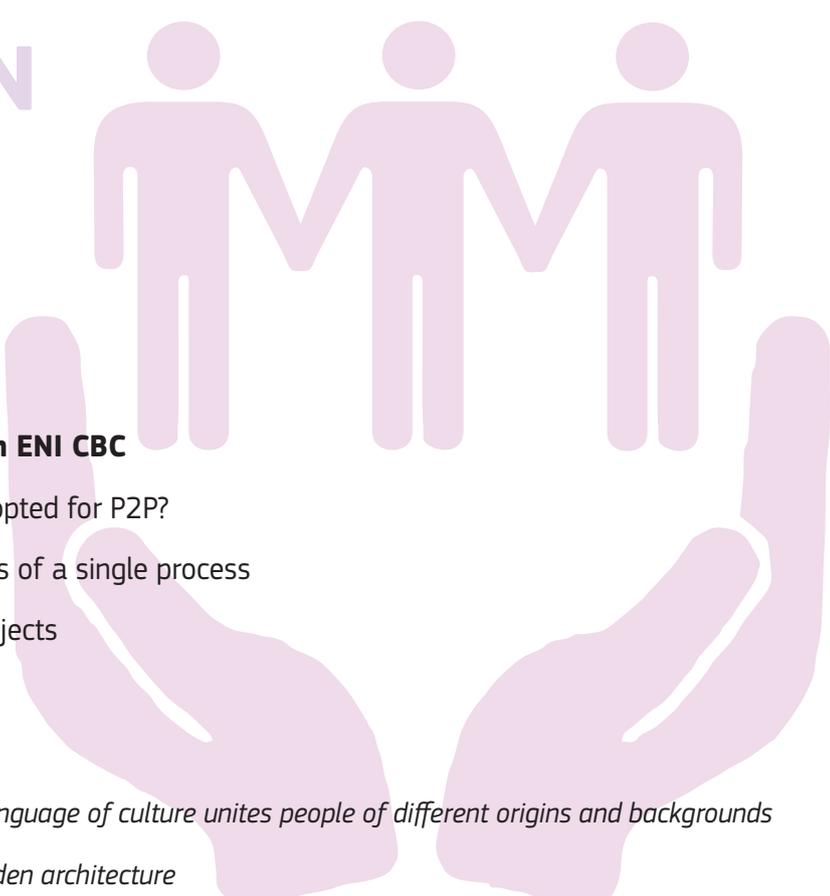


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PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE COOPERATION

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Introduction

Cross-border cooperation programmes under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI CBC) are a key component of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Strategic Partnership with Russia, and they have an important added value to other associated regional policies such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Eastern Partnership*.

The 15 ENI CBC programmes, involving 31 participating countries, are at the moment in full implementation, and over 950 cross-border cooperation projects are running to date: from environmental protection to business development, from infrastructures to people-to-people (P2P) cooperation, they are building a greener, more social, more cohesive Europe and its neighbourhood. We keep analysing this precious material, to find out how and in which sectors these projects improve the lives of the citizens in both Member States and Partner Countries, paving the way to the programming cycle 2021-2027.

* Within this document, the term “cross-border” applies to all types of programmes: land borders, sea-crossings and sea basins.



48
calls for proposals



4.815
applications



945
projects funded



1.076 M€
total budget of funded projects
(includes EU and national co-financing)

3.602
organisations
involved



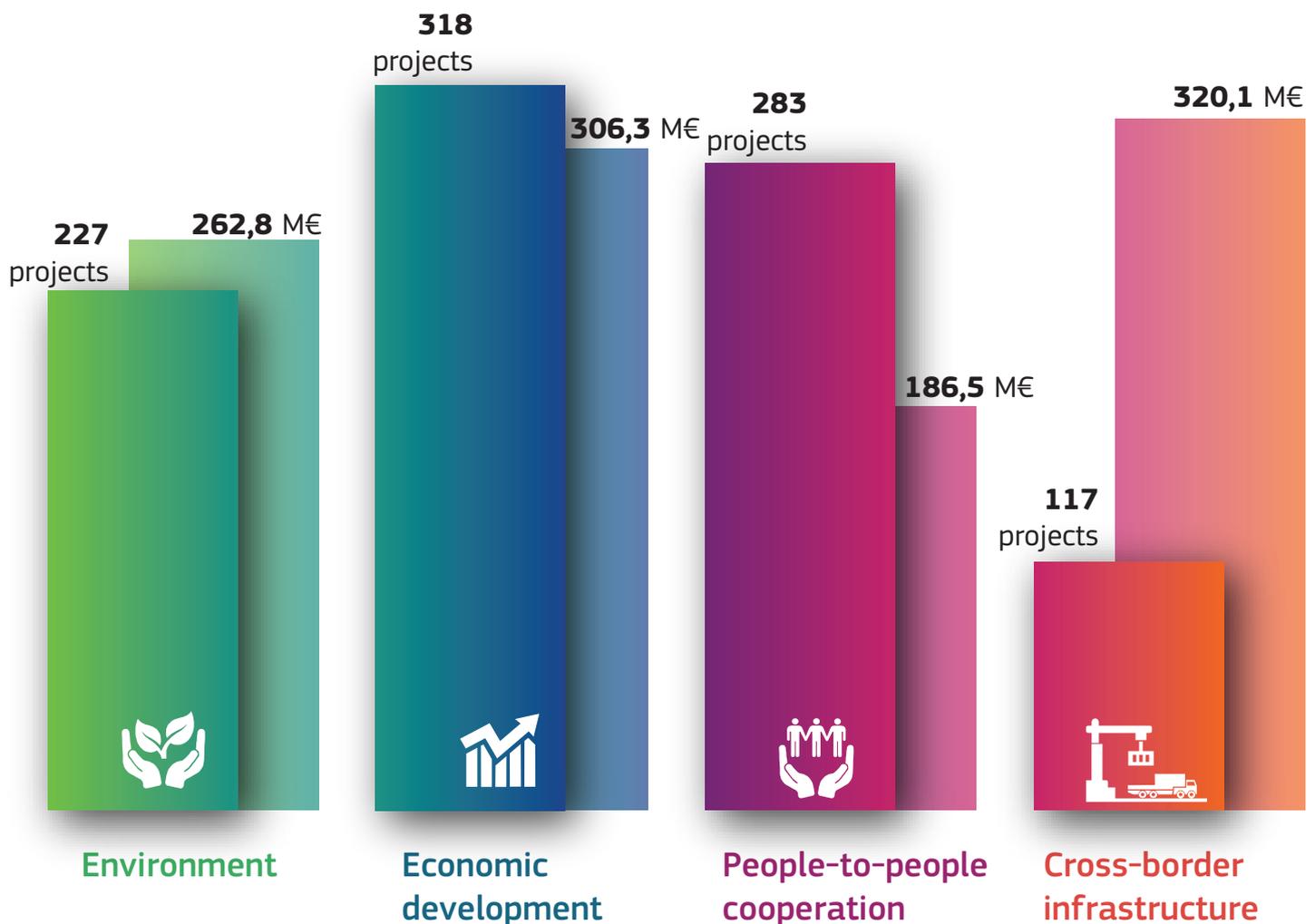
1.888
EU Member States
& Norway



1.714
CBC Partner
Countries

Following the analysis of the running projects, TESIM has identified four clusters of action: environment, P2P cooperation, economic development and cross-border infrastructure. They are an attempt to show in a structured way the richness of the cross-border cooperation initiatives being implemented along the external borders of the EU. In this publication we focus on the cluster related to P2P cooperation.

When confronting the four clusters, both in terms of number of projects and funding, the overall ENI CBC picture is as follows:



As can be seen, the P2P cluster represents a substantial share of all the actions being currently implemented, with 30% of projects and 17% of financial allocation. The average size of P2P projects is actually around 600.000 €, much lower than the average budget for example of environmental projects (1,2 M€).

In the next pages, we will analyse the wide range of topics covered by the cluster and we will introduce those projects that we have found more illustrative with the aim of highlighting the importance of P2P actions in cross-border cooperation programmes along the external borders of the European Union.

Enjoy the reading!
The TESIM team

People-to-people cooperation in ENI CBC



P2P cooperation in ENI CBC

There is no agreed academic definition of the concept of P2P cooperation, although many efforts to contextualize it have been undertaken by numerous actors, normally pivoting around the notions of “social motivation” and “behavioral public policy”.

People-to-people exchanges are the real cement of cross-border cooperation projects: they create direct links between institutions and organisations, authorities and citizens, with the purpose to promote understanding and to develop new solutions to common challenges.

Looking at official European sources, the 2014-2020 ENI CBC Programming Document defines P2P not as “a strategic or thematic objective, but rather a modality which may be applied, where relevant, in pursuing the [...] thematic objectives” ([Programming document for EU support to ENI Cross-Border Cooperation \(2014-2020\)](#)). In particular, the document considers P2P for “enhanced cooperation among local and regional authorities, NGOs and other civil society groups, universities and schools, chambers of commerce etc.”.

Likewise, P2P is rather to be seen as an approach to territorial/international cooperation “designed to foster the convergence of bordering regions and initiating grassroots contact among people”, as indicated in the opinion of the Committee of the Regions on [People-to-people and small-scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes](#).

It can thus be inferred that P2P ultimately aims to contribute to the so-called “human development”. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) identifies two dimensions in this concept, namely (i) Enhancing human abilities, and (ii) Creating the conditions for human development. ENI CBC contributes to human development through a number of objectives and priorities seen with the lenses of the P2P approach, although with some nuances. In fact, P2P has a role of paramount importance in delivering the objectives determined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN Resolution 70/1) and in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Analysing P2P interactions brings us to tackle the underlying reasons and ratio of cooperation, as well as the role of social motivation in generating spaces for it. Cross-border cooperation is the perfect field to plant P2P seeds, supporting the creation of cohesive societies, mutual understanding and spaces for exchange of experiences and practices.

Which ENI CBC programmes have opted for P2P?

So far, the implementation of ENI CBC programmes has brought to the surface several interesting experiences of P2P cooperation. Shedding a light on the said experiences is not only a communication effort to showcase good practices, but first and foremost an exercise of capitalization towards a greater contribution of P2P in the post-2020 scenario under Interreg External Neighborhood Programmes (NEXT).

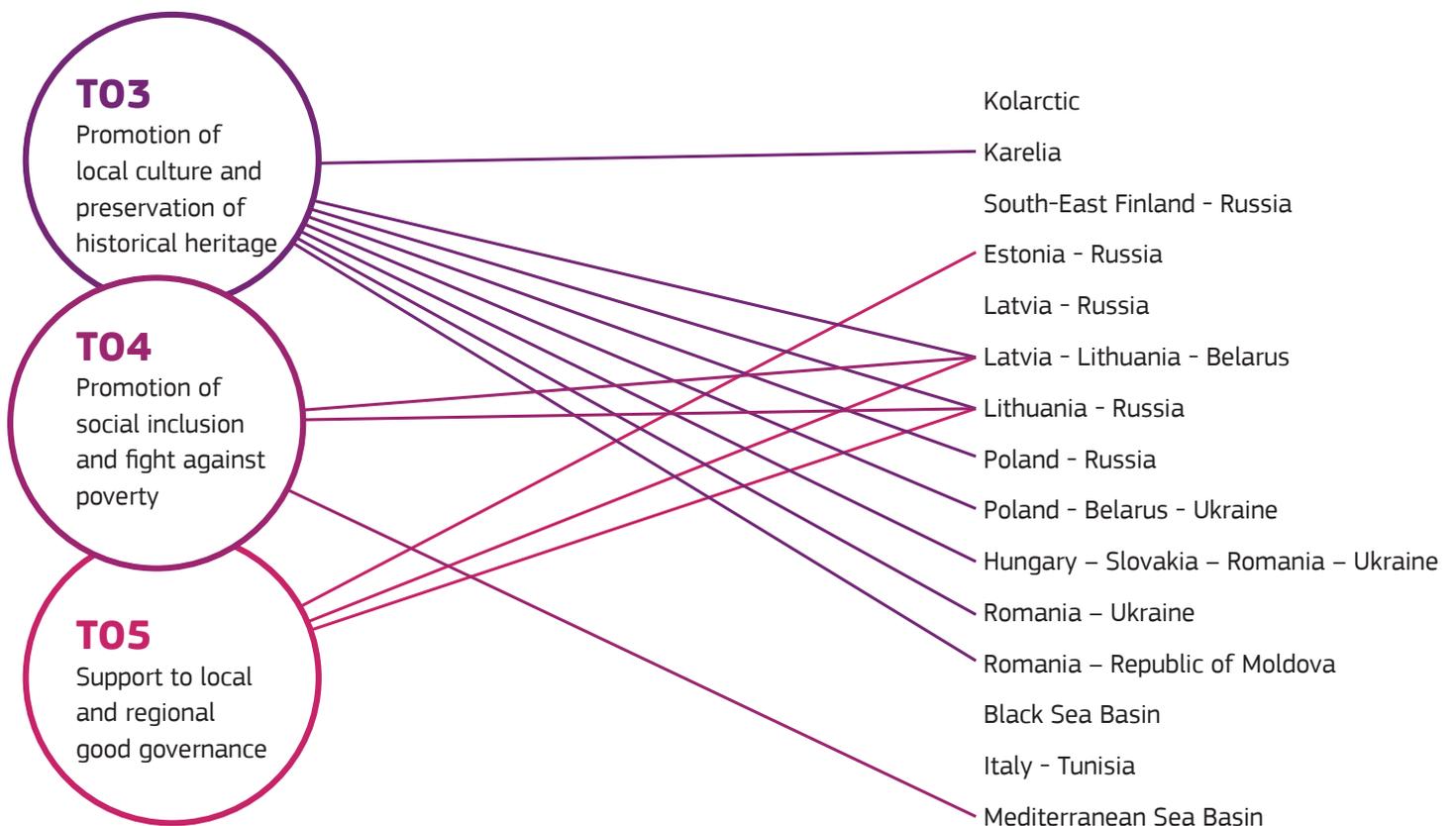
P2P is especially identifiable across three ENI CBC **thematic objectives** (TOs):

T03 Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage

T04 Promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty

T05 Support to local and regional good governance

While P2P has a clear link with T04 and T05, its reference to T03 is only limited to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage in sustainable tourism initiatives. Out of 15 ENI CBC programmes, three have adopted T04, other three T05 and eight T03:



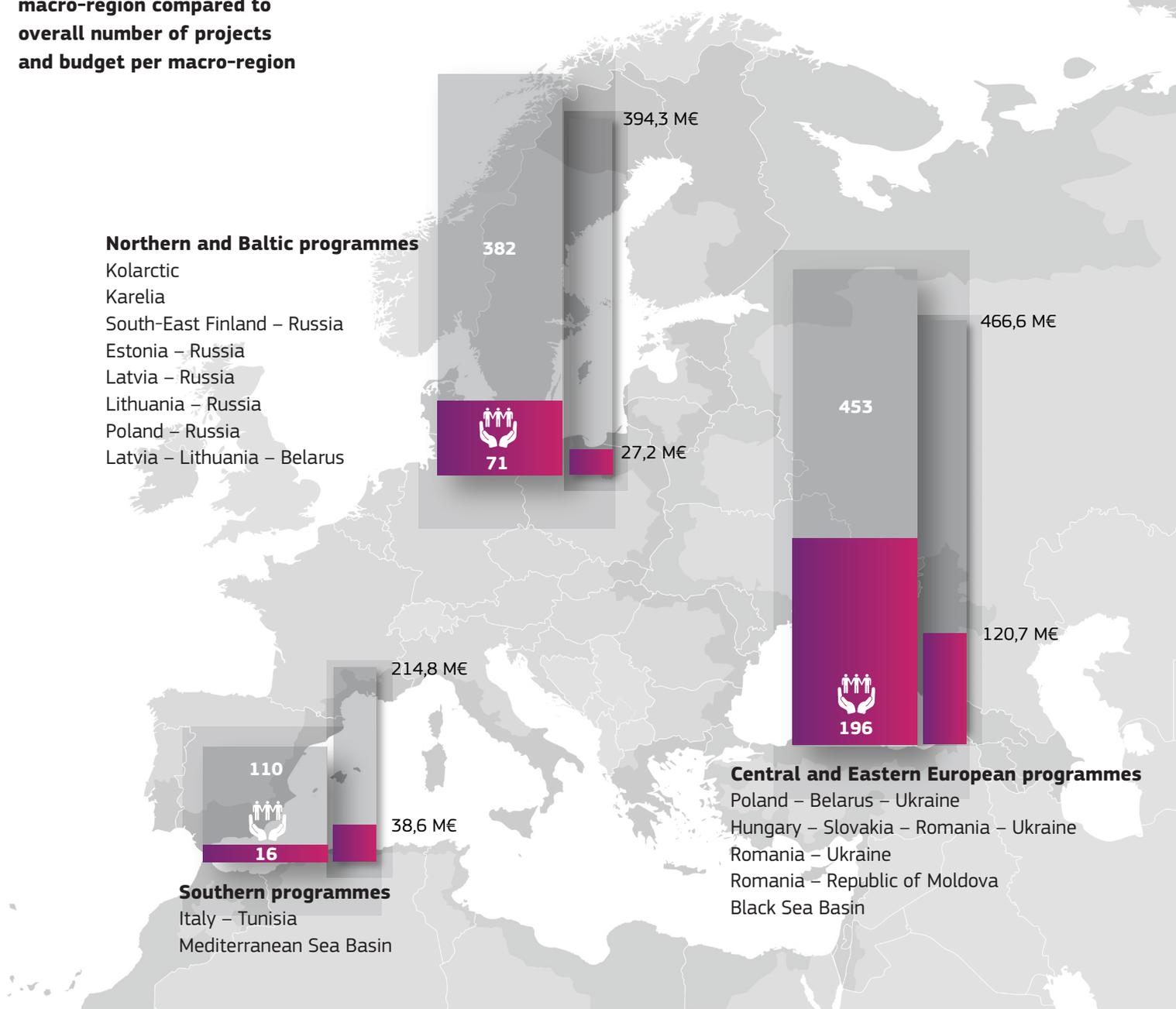
In addition to the projects labelled under T03, T04 and T05, several projects addressing education, culture and health have been identified under other TOs.

As anticipated, programmes have committed so far 186 M€ of EU funds to the P2P dimension, representing approximately 17% of the 1.076 M€ already awarded to all projects.

Over one thousand organisations from 24 countries are working together in the field, implementing joint activities in a total of 283 P2P projects, 30% of the total of 945 projects. Out of these, 280 were selected throughout calls for proposals, almost all under TOs 3, 4 and 5. Additionally, three large infrastructure projects addressing health and social protection have been granted a direct award.

As can be seen from the graphic, the bigger number of P2P projects is located in the Central and Eastern European region. At the same time, the Southern region, with only the 6% of P2P projects, absorbs 21% of the P2P budget.

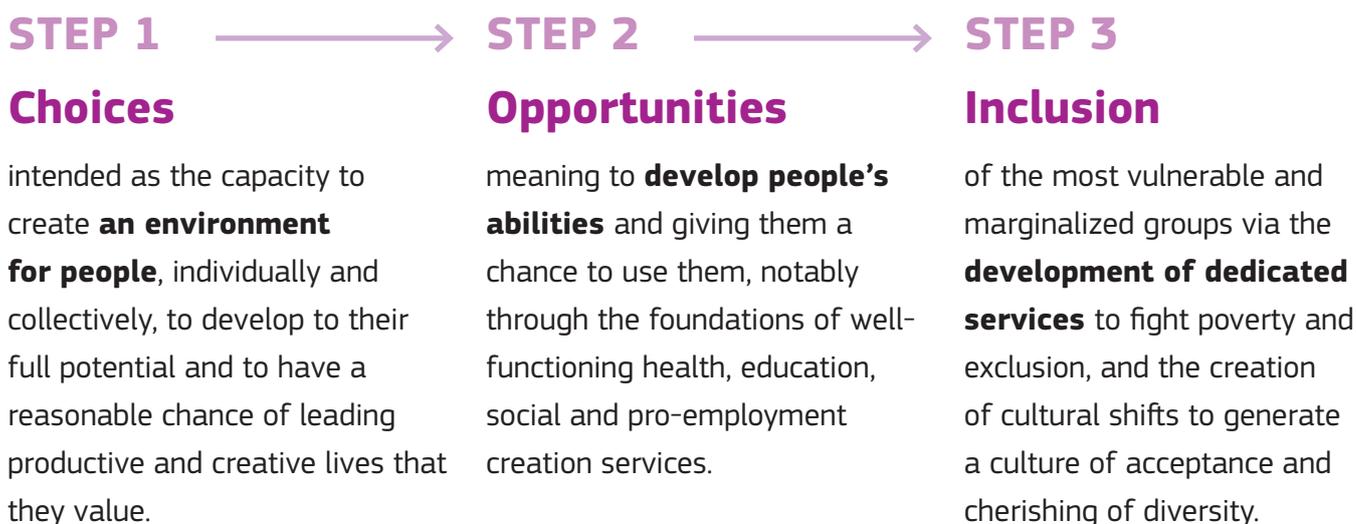
P2P projects and budget per macro-region compared to overall number of projects and budget per macro-region



P2P actions

the different intensities of a single process

Although human and interpersonal relations constitute the key feature of all the ENI CBC projects, those belonging to the P2P sector stress particularly the social dimension. Different phases can be singled out in a typical “P2P cooperation process”:



These three phases should be read as progressive steps towards initiatives of social inclusion and P2P collaboration where “Choices” has the lightest and “Inclusion” the heaviest expected impact.

1 Choices This step refers roughly to initiatives of institutional and community cooperation between peer administrations/actors across the borders to establish the conditions for effective creation of opportunities for social inclusion and/or cohesion and/or provision of social-related services (job creation, health, education, social protection, etc.) by the concerned public administrations or by alternative actors from the civil society.

EXAMPLE: Lithuania-Russia’s contribution to TO5 pivots on the establishment of “durable cross-border cooperation links [...] aimed at promoting traditions and culture of cooperation, strengthening local ties and mutual understanding, strengthening the capacities of local communities to provide community led services, etc.”. This programme priority is classified under “Choices” because it denotes a focus on the early stage of interinstitutional and community cooperation, willing to reinforce links and strengthen mutual understanding towards a common path for cultural cooperation.

The creation of a suitable environment brings onboard the necessity of nurturing values and a favorable mindset. Participation and shared ownership do not come out of the blue; they need to be prepared and developed through awareness and other targeted measures.

EXAMPLE: Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus wants to make use of P2P and peer-to-peer collaboration “to ensure performance, adaptability and stability in tackling common [...] challenges, and involvement of the civil society in the process”. This approach does not entail any specific activity to generate opportunities or support inclusion, but merely encompasses exchanges and collaboration as pre-conditions to step up on the cooperation ladder.

2 Opportunities This step defines activities aimed at fostering such institutional cooperation and establishing the backbone of skill development and preconditions to social inclusion to reduce inequalities and foster sustainable and inclusive growth. It is therefore a step forward with respect to the previous phase.

EXAMPLE: Karelia’s T03 wants to “facilitate the development of sustainable, diverse and versatile cultural services” and aims at generating jobs and enterprising chances. The priority is hence to be interpreted as an enhanced version of institutional or community cooperation towards the creation of opportunities for the region’s dwellers.

3 Inclusion Finally, this step identifies programmes whose structure (priorities, expected results, indicators) aims at developing services and initiatives for cross-border social inclusion and cohesion, reinforcing the existing links between neighbouring regions.

EXAMPLE: Under T04, Mediterranean Sea Basin wants to “support social and solidarity economic actors, also in terms of improving capacities and cooperation with public administrations for services provision”. The related expected results and indicators denote a particular attention in developing the skills of social workers to cover more and better the population by “improved social services”.

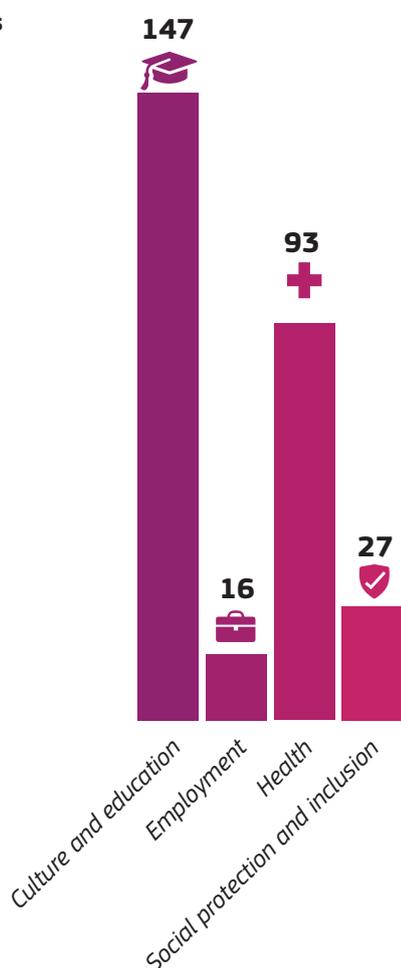
The thematic dimension of P2P projects

In order to describe the richness and multifaced dimensions of P2P, and also with the intention of strengthening the link with the post-2020 programming phase, the P2P component as interpreted by the ENI CBC programmes has been analyzed and the projects have been grouped in four subclusters:

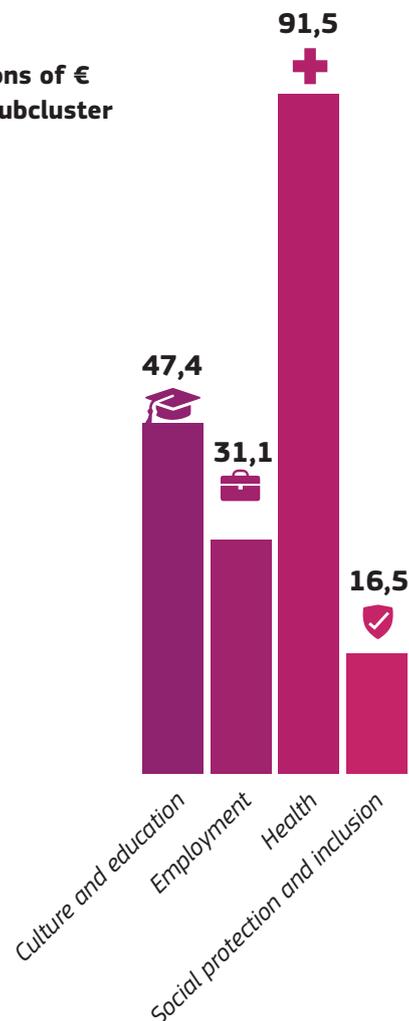
-  Culture and education
-  Employment
-  Health
-  Social protection and inclusion

In figures, more than 50% of the P2P projects addresses culture and education, while one-third addresses health-related topics (33%). Projects related to job creation, employment and economic inclusion count only 6%, although they absorb over 16% of the overall budget. The projects dealing with health-related issues absorb 49% of the budget, followed by the ones dealing with culture and education (25%). In the subclusters on social protection and inclusion the proportion between budget and number of projects remains stable around 9%.

Number of projects per subcluster



Millions of € per subcluster





The projects aimed at the valorisation of **Culture and education** represent the majority of the interventions (52%). From a budgetary point of view, they tend to be small-scale projects when compared with the other subclusters: 320.000 € against the 650.000 € average of the projects addressing other subclusters. Most of these projects are aimed at recognizing a common identity on both sides of the border and at enhancing this potential in both economic and identity terms. Shared cultural background across border is pivotal also in designing lifelong and vocational education opportunities together with improved availability and accessibility of the additional education services. Education initiatives are also propaedeutic to job creation and employment-related projects. In many cases, P2P projects are combined with the restoration and improved usability of historical, urban or monumental assets, as well as natural sites or natural reserves. The actions are very often aimed at promoting sites or localities in a touristic prospective, and often the combination of tourism and culture recurs in the proposed actions and in the expected results. In several cases, the work on the cultural identity of places is also connected with processes of active participation by resident citizens as well as actions of participatory governance that intend to create bridges and parallels between the cross-border territories involved.



As it can be inferred by the nature of the TOs and the overall strong focus on the fostering of job creation, **Employment** is mentioned in all programmes. In this respect, it can be seen as a contradiction the fact that the subsector itself counts only 16 projects and the majority of them from the Southern regions. Several reasons can explain this. To start with, job creation and employment, including self-employment and self-entrepreneurship, is often tackled by the programmes as a cross-cutting dimension. Therefore, it is easy to find actions aimed at the creation of jobs under culture and education or elsewhere under the TOs related to entrepreneurship, research, innovation and even environment. Specifically, within the P2P cluster, job creation is often foreseen through tourism activities, leveraging on the historical and cultural heritage of the cross-border regions. Less elements are referred to the creation of employment related to social services, although the increasing interest on social business and social innovation is changing the scenario, as the examples of the Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus and Mediterranean Sea Basin Programmes show under T04. On another note, projects under the subcluster “employment” are far bigger than the other projects included under the P2P cluster, with an average budget of around 2 M€ each. Projects falling within this category are large projects mostly aimed at NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) people through a wide range of services ranging from IT platforms with databases for matching employment demand and offer, to the creation of skills and professional training services, to mapping, applied research and exchange actions in the phenomenon of youth unemployment, including interventions aimed at influencing the regulatory framework and its application. The use of new technologies as enabling tools

is naturally a recurring aspect, but more traditional approaches that require a direct contact with the beneficiaries are also followed.



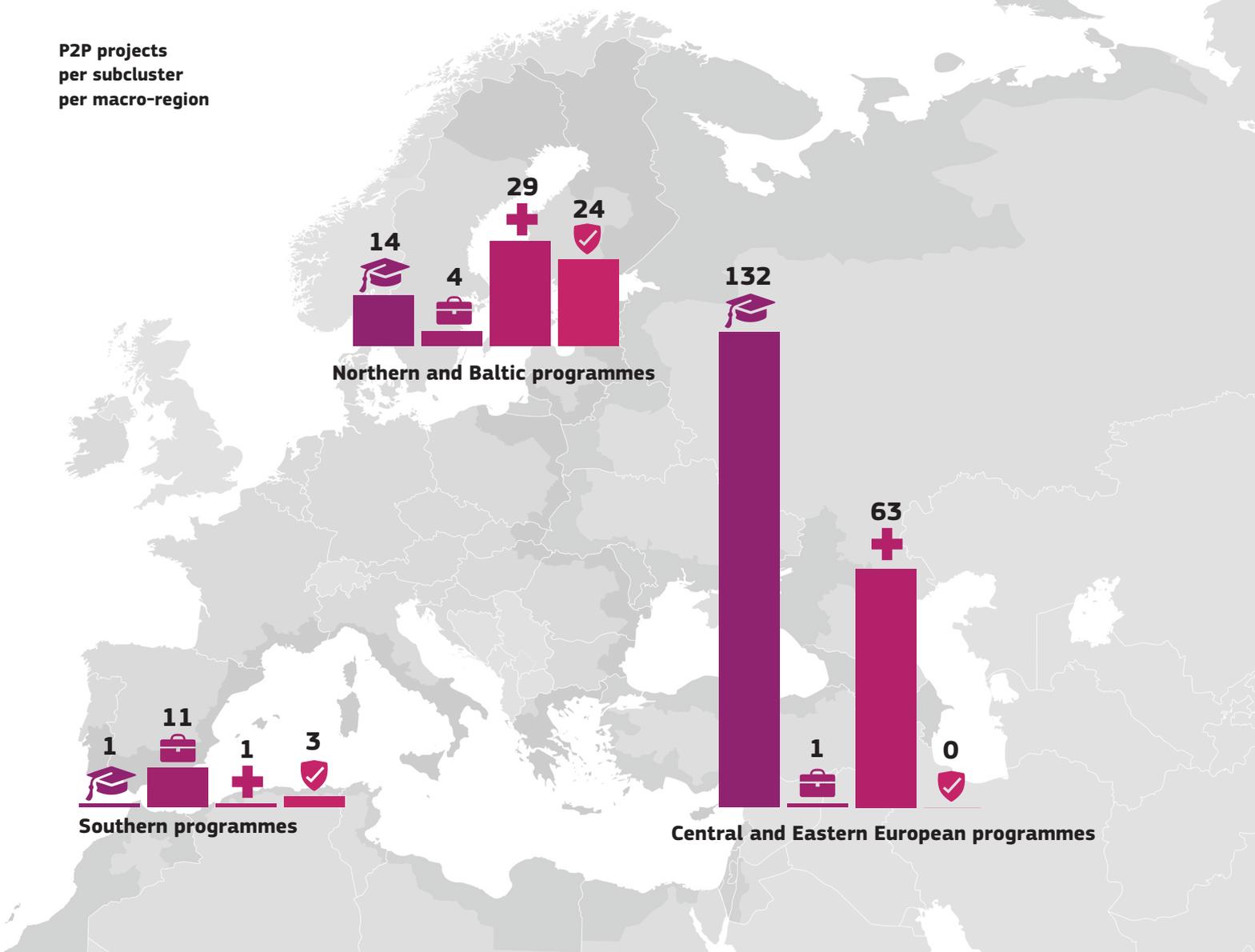
The **Health** subcluster is widely represented within ENI CBC projects and this long before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. It mostly concerns projects of greater importance from a budgetary point of view, with interventions aimed at providing state-of-the-art equipment and technology or improving infrastructures and health services, topped with an important component of skills creation, capacity building and professional updating for operators. In fact, the capacity building aspect often recurs, with the intention of creating synergies between neighbouring structures along the borders or by transferring skills or models of management or delivery of services from a more effective structure to another. The projects that fall within this subcluster are not confined to specific medical or hospital services but often turn to prevention activities that concern elderly citizens, or young people, children, or even tourists who visit the cross-border regions. Referring to healthy behaviours and the general improvement of the quality of life, they can even refer to sports facilities, as well as awareness campaigns to induce healthy behaviours.



The boundaries of **Social protection and inclusion** are well explored by the plethora of projects that falls within this subcluster. These projects vary somewhat depending on their target, the type of intervention and the approach used. About the target, they can devote themselves to the entire population living in the areas of intervention or select the most vulnerable categories, addressing women or young people or particularly vulnerable categories such as elders or the disabled and their families. The activities can range from basic social services to awareness-raising and education or long-life learning activities, with the purpose of making these sectors of population more capable of having a dignified life. The approaches adopted by all these projects are also of interest, because they tend to explore alternatives to traditional welfare systems and aim at promoting active participation and greater self-determination by the population, including the more disadvantaged.

The orientations of P2P projects also demonstrate interesting variations linked to the macro-region in which they are conceived and implemented. 70% of P2P projects are implemented in the Central and Eastern European region, where the actions are particularly concentrated on culture and education, followed by projects related with health. This big number of projects is especially represented by 95 small-scale projects, averaging 77.000 € and addressing culture and education under the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme. In the Northern and Baltic region, projects are more equally spread across subclusters, balancing culture and education with health, social protection and inclusion. Employment and job creation projects are instead more considered by the Southern programmes, with almost 30 M€ dedicated to this subcluster.

**P2P projects
per subcluster
per macro-region**



Beyond the differences found, both geographically and thematically, there is merit in returning to emphasize the cross-cutting and transversal dimension of the P2P sector, as a way of intervention and as an approach. This transversal dimension has been adopted by various programmes, notably Karelia, Lithuania-Russia, Romania-Ukraine, Romania-Republic of Moldova, Mediterranean Sea Basin, Italy-Tunisia and Estonia-Russia.

Although there are no objectively identifiable principles to select good practices, some case studies have been identified by TESIM and will be presented to you in the next section. The choice ensures an adequate geographical and thematic balance in order to represent as much as possible the wide spectrum of ENI CBC's contributions to P2P cooperation. The selection has not been axed only on the expected outputs or achieved results, notably in consideration of the early stage of implementation of some of them, but also on their intended capacity to generate change in the territories of intervention.

Take a look at how many different ideas and initiatives are being carried out across the external borders of Europe: Because neighbours grow up together!"

ENI CBC

Case studies



Culture and education



Employment



Health



Social protection and inclusion

Karelia
CULTURE OPEN
Creating Culture Together



Karelia
ARCHITECTURE
Ethno-architecture of
Fennoscandia in XXI century



Estonia – Russia
FFC
From Family to Society



Poland – Belarus – Ukraine
ROCCO
Restoration of common
culture heritage as a base
for youth and creative
groups from Poland and
Belarus cross-border
cooperation



Romania – Ukraine
**INFECTION-FREE
HOSPITALS**



Romania – Ukraine
EFIGE
Cross-border Ensemble.
Heritage Confluence on
Danube



Black Sea Basin
TREASURE
Joint Cultural Heritage –
Source for Development
of Entrepreneurship in the
Black Sea Basin



Mediterranean Sea Basin
MORETHANAJOB
Reinforcing social and
solidarity economy for the
unemployed, uneducated
and refugees



Mediterranean Sea Basin
RESMYLE
Rethinking Employment
and Social insertion for
Mediterranean Young people
through Local sustainable
development



Northern
and Baltic
projects

Central
and Eastern
projects

Southern
projects



CULTURE OPEN

When the universal language of culture unites people of different origins and backgrounds

PROJECT TITLE	Culture Open: Creating Culture Together
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	03.10.2018 – 28.02.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Karelian Regional Institute of Continuing Professional Education of Petrozavodsk State University (Lead beneficiary, Russia); Joensuu City Cultural Services (Finland); Petrozavodsk City Cultural House (Russia); The Museum of Fine Arts of the Republic of Karelia (Russia); The Petrozavodsk Centralized library system (Russia); Municipal Children Music and Choral School of Petrozavodsk (Russia)
PROGRAMME	Karelia CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	438.952 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	199.212 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Attractive cultural environment
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“We didn’t aim for big numbers, or for the large scale. We wanted to create a safe space for active cultural co-creation, where artists with different backgrounds could join in for small and relaxed events.”

say project partners speaking with one voice

Imagine a place where marginalised people take the centre of the stage, where they lead workshops, they produce art. Where they become culture-creators. It is happening across the borders between Finland and Russia.

Joensuu and Petrozavodsk lay on the two sides of the Finno-Russian border. The two cities share a joint path of cooperation which goes back 20 years in time. To some extent, they also share the same problems, notably in terms of social exclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups. People with disabilities – but also immigrants and heirs of the Russian diaspora – are too often left behind in accessing information, they face stigma and exclusion. This becomes even more evident when it comes to participating in cultural life and leisure activities, a key pillar of mental and physical wellbeing, as it is the active participation in society. The inclusion of people with disabilities and other marginalised groups in cultural and artistic activities is, therefore, the goal Culture Open set for its six partners consortium. The project’s aim is to provide a pattern for sustainable, inclusive cultural services. Elizaveta Druzhinina, the project coordinator in Petrozavodsk, recalls how the project springs from her personal family experience with disability, as well as from the recognition that “our Finnish partners are well ahead of us on inclusion, as a society. We thought the project was a good opportunity to learn from them”.

Given the context and the objective, the Karelia CBC Programme represented the perfect ground to plant Culture Open seeds and see a forest of inclusive cultural opportunities grow. A great deal of attention has been dedicated to persons with disabilities: for example, the project has installed devices to make libraries and city halls more accessible to people with hearing impairment, and it has organized artist exchanges between Joensuu and Petrozavodsk, providing disabled artists with a venue and an opportunity to network with international cultural operators.

Several initiatives have been brought forward, from training culture-providers to make events more inclusive, to mapping accessibility in cultural centres. It was the disabled population itself who helped the experts issue recommendations and make small infrastructural adaptations to remove the obstacles in cultural facilities: it was a co-creation process that goes beyond physical spaces.

Immigrants have also been actively involved in cultural activities. Some examples? A multicultural photography club, photo trips in the nature, masterclasses on Karelian poetry, story-telling workshops at museum. Web-based training courses targeted at immigrants interested in becoming culture professionals were also organised, in fact, they could already show their talents, organising and displaying their photos in a rotating

exhibition. The final purpose was to increase the interaction with citizens from all backgrounds, and to achieve inclusion. Implementing activities together with the target groups has allowed Culture Open to ensure and enhance the acceptance of the project: beneficiaries did not feel like mere recipient of the actions, rather as co-producers whose identities and wills were respected and considered. In fact, participation in a co-production environment is the message spread by Culture Open, or in the words of Henna Karhapää, the project coordinator in Joensuu: “We have found people and people have found us”. An approach that clearly brings its fruits, as Elizaveta recalls how beneficiaries now “come to us and tell us to continue, to keep creating new opportunities”.

Ultimately, these efforts translate into an enhanced engagement of the public administration. Culture Open has produced a set of eight best practices to further inform public decision-makers on the possibility to improve accessibility and inclusion in cultural services: this is a crucial aspect of the project’s sustainability over time, linked to a reinforced commitment by the public administrations of the two cities. “Culture Open has become, in a relatively short period of time, an instrument for cultural accessibility and inclusivity used by local administrations”, says Henna. A recognition already worth several prizes: the “Joensuu Disability Council Accessibility Award”, the Karelia CBC Communication Award, and the nomination within the top five best inclusive projects in Russia for the section “Working for Special Audiences” within the “Intermuseum 2020 festival”.



ARCHITECTURE

Living and loving wooden architecture



PROJECT TITLE	ARCHITECTURE - Ethno-architecture of Fennoscandia in XXI century
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	01.02.2019 – 31.07.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Kizhi State Open Air Museum of Wooden Architecture and Ethnography (Lead beneficiary, Russia); Petrozavodsk State University (Russia); Oulu vocational college (Finland)
PROGRAMME	Karelia CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	490.220 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	223.908 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Attractive cultural environment
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“Historical wooden settlements should be preserved and developed not as an open-air museum but as dynamic communities that grow and develop. New buildings should be modern and comfortable to live in; at the same time, the spirit and authenticity of villages should be preserved. The creation of the right architectural context is essential”.

Olga Titova, from the Kizhi State Open Air Museum of Wooden Architecture and Ethnography (Russia), head of the ARCHITECTURE project

How to save wooden architecture? How to preserve this heritage and at the same time experience it comfortably in everyday life? The partners of the ARCHITECTURE project – co-funded by the Karelia CBC Programme – have decided to join forces and devote their efforts to the conservation and development of wooden architecture: they have created educational programmes and they train students and professors to prepare restorers able to deal with it. The goal of the project is to protect the unique legacy of wooden architecture, a key feature of cultural identity for the Republic of Karelia but also for the whole Fennoscandia, including Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Murmansk and Archangelsk regions).

“This cultural heritage is very vulnerable – explains Olga, head of the project – and needs particular care in its maintenance and protection”. Especially when new buildings are erected next to the old ones: what to do?

Each country of Fennoscandia has its own architectural features, however, all of them are characterized by the presence of traditional wooden buildings. In Finland and Russia entire villages used to be built in wood. The Kizhi island, located on Lake Onega in Russian Karelia, is famous for its unique historical site: the Kizhi Pogost. This ensemble consists of two large wooden churches and a belltower. The Pogost amazes with its beauty and longevity, though being built exclusively of wood by peasant carpenters. Once this was a very prosperous area, densely populated: today, only 35 historical settlements have survived. And they need a special support not only to preserve ancient wooden buildings, but also to maintain the specific architectural environment. “When new buildings appear, their construction should not jeopardise the spirit and the authenticity of the village – says Olga - At the same time, such places should be modern and comfortable to live in”.

To preserve wood building techniques, the training of restorers is the first activity to embark on. “Since 2014 and thanks to the more recent experience of our project part-

ners, the museum training centre has hosted over 400 people – continues Olga - As first institution in Russia, we have organised courses in collaboration with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCOM), and in 2020, at the premises of our museum, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation has created the Russian National Centre for Wooden Architecture Preservation”.

The Museum’s educational programmes have a distinguishing feature: the professors are not merely theoreticians but true practitioners, engineer-restorers, carpenter-restorers, etc. Activities run on the Kizhi island itself, among the monuments of wooden architecture, the best tutorials ever. The students can “read” the monuments together with the experts to know the traces of reconstruction; they can practice carpentry techniques with tools such as drawknife, they can develop solutions on how to better preserve monuments, and they can study the running restoration processes. The programmes include the study of the historical village of Kurgenitsy: the students have learned how to explore the village, and to measure it using laser scanning. Now the village 3D model is underway, with the reconstruction of the lost buildings, including a chapel and a wayside cross. But where and how to find information about lost religious buildings? The data can be found at the National Archive of Finland (Helsinki): as part of the project, partners have studied the materials of the Finnish professor Lars Pettersson, who had thoroughly re-

searched wooden churches and chapels in the Republic of Karelia during World War II. Today his writings, pictures, description of territories can be found in the archive and have been essential for the reconstruction of the villages: these materials will end up in the book “Churches and Chapels of Zaonezhie (Karelia)” to be soon published.

Another characteristic of the project is the involvement of the local population. The Kizhi State Museum had started working with local communities long before the project, therefore people are quite responsive to the proposed activities. Now partners are explaining to villagers how to preserve their own historical buildings, and they are also raising their awareness about the uniqueness of their settlements. This has led to conservation works being carried out for example for the Church of John the Baptist, in Lelikovo: “We worked with the upper tier, putting the cross and maintaining the tent-roof of the church – explains Olga - conservation helps an historical building stand until a thorough restoration”.

The ARCHITECTURE project is bringing more than just an investment: it raises confidence of small historical communities to take right decisions and to shape their own future. In summer 2019 and partially in 2020, project partners have gone through all the 35 villages with a detailed questionnaire for the residents. People were asked about the history of their villages, the houses, the families. They were also asked about life opportunities: what would they like to do? Which were the obstacles to be prevented? As a result, the project discovered that local inhabitants have a lot of ideas about improving their environment, and a strong willingness to learn. So, even if it was not planned, the project has introduced a training for local citizens on project development and funding opportunities. Not only the World Heritage site – the Kizhi Pogost – is worth visiting: the entire neighbourhood is rich in beautiful villages and churches, and inhabited by a community eager to stay, resist and flourish. This unique cultural heritage encompasses great potential for tourism development.



FFC

Healing the wounds of families at risk



PROJECT TITLE	FFC – From Family to Society
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	01.04.2019 – 31.05.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	NGO “VitaTiim” (Lead beneficiary, Estonia); NGO “A Home for Every Child” (Estonia); Pskov region’s state budget social service institution “Regional Family Centre” (Russia)
PROGRAMME	Estonia-Russia CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	149.473 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	134.525 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Improving cooperation between local and regional communities
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Support to local and regional good governance

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“We support families at risk to deal with their own problems through learning. The families not only turn out to be stronger, but are also empowered to participate in the community life.”

Julia Dem, project coordinator (Russia)

They were targeted as “families at risk”, but now they are stronger, they have learned how to handle their own problems. They can even help others out, becoming proactive members of society. The key words? Empowerment through learning.

It happens in the regions of Narva and Pskov, bordering territories between Estonia and Russia; areas among the most severely affected in terms of unemployment and poverty. It is here where the project “From Family to Society” – implemented within the Estonia-Russia CBC Programme – aims at enhancing the socio-economic inclusion of a variety of families at risk, whose problems are aggravated by the overall situation of a region with very low living standards. We are talking about large families with financial hurdles, single-parent or foster families, families with children who have special needs, families with minority or immigrant background. Each household is unique, and facing unique situations: what they all share is a similar culture, Russian as a common language, and a fragile base to start with.

The idea came from two small associations and a social services institution. They put together a dedicated, small team of five professionals willing to make a difference for those left behind. The diverse background of the partners – one with experience in education and youth, the other in social protection – was a key element to facilitate an innovative, multi-dimensional approach: drawing from their practice with youth, the project partners guided and encouraged families to face daily tasks or novelties counting on their own potential. And results were amazing.

Ten families from Estonia and ten from Russia were selected and assisted: individual meetings were organised for them with psychologists, rehabilitation specialists and social workers. Physical trainings and online events were as well set up among families, to facilitate the exchange of experiences. Sometimes practical problems were also solved, like in the case of a mother left alone with her two children: the divorce was affect-

ing her mental health and was impacting on the children education. Thanks to some of the activities organized under the project, this family was able to solve the most pressing issues.

The project implemented a family-by-family approach: each household was supported in a different, customized way. But there was something they all were confronted with: the challenge to set up an activity, from the initial idea to the final completion. Each family group had to put their skills in practice in what is called “micro-initiatives”, non-formal education events which were the perfect occasion not only to learn, but also to have fun and to bond together. Among the activities selected, there were workshops on communication skills, on conflict management, on IT trainings. The project also offered trainings on project development. “People learned and then challenged themselves – explains Julia Dem, the project coordinator – they could measure their own abilities, and in the end they realized that they were per-

fectly capable of facing tasks or new activities”. In fact, as a following step, families were encouraged to be active in the community, even sharing what they had learned: their engagement was not only beneficial to themselves, but also to the society at large. In the end, they were feeling less isolated, more connected. A real meaning for the word “empowerment”. One family for example decided to organize a public IT-day to teach the community how to code. This event was open to everybody and it was a real success, also because in a scarcely populated area, bringing people closer together is key to any real community growth.

Among the many activities and trainings, a learning programme for social workers was also set up by the project: a new generation of trained social workers can be considered one of the achievements of the project, whose ambition is to support public services in sustaining social inclusion.

Besides its material results, “From Family to Society” is a societal experiment to enhance active citizenship and participation in community life, with potential for expansion on a greater scale. The current COVID-19 crisis and its socio-economic aftermaths are certainly impacting even more on fragile families, cracking a door open for a stronger commitment to psychological and social support, also at cross-border level.



ROCCO

*Boosting heritage potential
to create culture*



PROJECT TITLE **ROCCO – Restoration of common culture heritage as a base for youth and creative groups from Poland and Belarus cross-border cooperation**

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD 01.07.2019 – 30.06.2021

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED Puchaczów Commune (Lead beneficiary, Poland);
Department for Ideological Work, Culture and Youth Affairs of Liachavičy Raion Executive Committee (Belarus)

PROGRAMME Poland – Belarus – Ukraine ENI CBC 2014-2020

TOTAL BUDGET 2.655.000 €

PROGRAMME FINANCING 2.375.000 €

PROGRAMME PRIORITY Promotion of local culture and history

THEMATIC OBJECTIVE Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage



“The touristic potential of our region is far greater than the flow of tourists that comes to us.

We keep losing opportunities because the region has an underdeveloped tourist infrastructure.”

Krzysztof Michalski, representative of the lead beneficiary

When we think of historical sites and tourist destinations in a country, we generally consider big cities, without giving much thought to the treasures hidden in smaller towns and villages. The Liachowice district (Belarus) and the Puchaczów commune (Poland) present common features, with the population of both regions living out of agricultural activities, with modest income. At the same time, both settlements are close to famous tourist destinations – Lublin (Poland) and Brest (Belarus), but do not seem to benefit from this flow.

A well-developed tourism infrastructure is a prerequisite for attracting visitors to any region. However, local governments often do not have the capacity to engage in this direction. And this is where a project like ROCCO – implemented in the framework of the ENI CBC Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme – comes in, with the idea to enhance the potential of cultural heritage in the region, to attract visitors and ultimately to favour economic development. Tourists who go to Lublin and Brest could be drawn to the neighbouring regions, which would help not only to generate additional income for local populations, but also to preserve the cultural heritage of the area. In the end, to create a platform where local communities from both sides could meet, exchange, communicate.

To do so, the partners have started the reconstruction of two historical farmsteads which were in extremely poor condition, the Lachert Manor in Ciechaniki (Poland) and the Rejtan Manor in Hrušaŭka (Belarus). These two historic farmhouses were not chosen by chance. The first building was built in the 19th century: it is an historic manor of great interest to architecture professionals because it belonged to one of the most popular Polish architects of the 20th century, Bogdan Lachert, who reconstructed it in a modern style. The building was last restructured after World War II, therefore it is easy to imagine the enormous amount of work that needs to be done. But once finalised – most probably in autumn 2021 – the manor will be hosting a museum dedicated to Lahert, a permanent exhibition, and temporary exhibi-

tions of furniture and objects presenting the contribution of Polish artists to the development of industrial design. Among the featured group have been chosen the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Lada Artists Cooperative, the Kraków Group and the Praesens Art Group. The building is also going to accommodate a wide range of educational activities: workshops, lectures, seminars and meetings, cultural events for tourists, researchers, architects, and people interested in visual arts. “We expect also the flow of foreign tourists to increase – says Krzysztof Michalski, from the Puchaczów Commune – as many residents of the region have relatives who have immigrated to Western Europe and the USA”.

The second manor is a wooden house in Hrušaŭka (5 km away from Liachowice, Belarus). The architectural complex consists of a main building, a chapel, a park, and the stables. In recent years, the site has attracted about 1.000 tourists annually, including visitors from Poland, even though it remains unusable and can only be seen from the outside. Its conditions were worse than in the other manor: since it is made from wood, the first step was about reinforcing the basement, then, the walls and roof were repaired, followed by stairs, windows, and doors. The walls and basement of the nearby chapel have also been drained, and the roof replaced. Both buildings are going to host a cultural centre for tourists and citizens, to be used for different events. “Many tourists come to Hrušaŭka for two

to three hours – says Dmitry Makaruk, coordinator and representative from the Belarusian partner – If we create a proper infrastructure, we could be able to retain them for three to four days”.

The pandemic has affected the implementation of some activities: twelve events were planned, but most have been postponed, and some must be replaced because they cannot be conducted on-line. For example, the re-enactment of the Liachavičy fortress battle will be replaced by a festival of artistic folk groups.

Youth exchanges and cooperation of artistic groups, as well as meetings of both communities, are planned after the reconstruction is completed and the pandemic restrictions are lifted. Both partners expect that the number of people who participate in cross-border events in the region will increase from 1.000 to almost 6.000. “This is the first project we have done together, and it is an exceptionally good experience for both sides – continues Krzysztof Michalski – we have learned a lot, also how to be patient, to listen to each other. Patience is one of the keys for successful cooperation”.

The project has an important long-term mission: to raise awareness of the shared history of Poland and Belarus. So, it could remain relevant even in the next programming period. Dmitry Makaruk: “I would like to give a piece of advice to new applicants: they need to learn how to work together, how to dedicate a great deal of interest in everything that is happening on both sides of the project”. “This program is a fantastic base for implementing small projects. Some beneficiaries are afraid to apply because they cannot prove a cross-border effect – concludes Michalski – but in cultural projects, the cross-border effect in border areas can be found in everything”.



INFECTION-FREE HOSPITALS

Everything is in your hands: so, clean them!



PROJECT TITLE	Infection-free hospitals
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	01.01.2020 – 31.05.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Utility Non-profit Enterprise “Central City Clinical Hospital of the Ivano-Frankivsk City Council” (Lead beneficiary, Ukraine); Sighetu Marmatiei Municipal Hospital (Romania)
PROGRAMME	Romania-Ukraine ENI CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	311.381 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	280.243 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Support to the development of health services and access to health
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Common challenges in the field of safety and security

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“This project was crucial for the hospital: at the time of the pandemic, it provided the equipment needed to avoid the spreading of infections, including COVID-19.”

Uliana Sydor, Head of Marketing and Strategic Planning Division of the UNE “Central City Clinical Hospital of the Ivano-Frankivsk City Council” (Ukraine)

Infections know no borders, walls or even doors. The spreading of infections is a universal problem across health structures: according to the statistics, not only patients are at risk, but also healthcare workers, who generally face the danger of infections through the routine work in the emergency/trauma triage wards, intensive care units, etc. Therefore, the Central Hospital of Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukraine) and the Sighetu Marmatiei Municipal Hospital (Romania) decided to join forces through the Romania-Ukraine ENI CBC Programme, and to improve infection prevention in their structures: when they started, they didn't know that COVID-19 was behind the corner, and their activities turned out to be of crucial importance once the pandemic broke out. Thus in 2019 the two hospitals designed a project aimed at protecting both medical staff and patients from infections in the hospital environment.

Following the experience of the EU counterpart, a new cleaning procedure of cabinets was introduced in the Ivano-Frankivsk structure. This was essential to avoid the spreading of contamination from patients affected by COVID-19: deep cleaning of cabinets reduces the contagion in the corridors. Both partners also purchased quality equipment minimizing the diffusion of infections: anaesthesia machines with

special masks for non-invasive ventilation to prevent the dispersal of contamination during surgeries, drying cabinet thermostatic for sterilizing the equipment, biological microscopes to detect bacteria in the blood and other devices to swiftly trace the turbidity of a bacterial suspension.

Activities also targeted children and adults: several awareness raising campaigns explained the importance of disinfecting hands as a preventive measure to the spreading of infections. “The first part of the campaign entitled “Everything is in your hands” was a two-hour event outside our hospital, in the street, targeting by-passers – says Uliana Sydor from the Central Hospital of Ivano-Frankivsk – We asked people to disinfect their hands and then to test their cleanliness through a special machine. The ultraviolet detected the areas on the palms which were not clean enough if the exercise had not been carried out correctly. We tested nearly 30 people, and it turned out that disinfecting hands is not as easy as it seems!”

Thanks to local media, the campaign reached around 3.500 people. Later, a similar activity targeted children in the local polyclinic: due to an active lifestyle, kids can spread infections much faster than adults, and at the same time, they are ready to pick up things more easily. “Our

26 little patients were very keen to play the game of hands, they did not pretend to know everything, as adults do, and were very curious to try” – remarks Uliana.

But as an effective prevention requires new knowledge and experience from the medical staff, it was time for a conference targeting doctors, interns, hospital administration. The participants discussed the measures introduced in the Ivano-Frankivsk hospital, the new cleaning system, the treatment protocols, the lessons learnt over the past year. Thanks to live broadcasting, the conference was joined by medical staff from other hospitals of the region and beyond. It was just the beginning: a series of trainings for both health structures took place online and offline, to enhance the capacities of the doctors on specific infection-prevention issues, such as the problems of antibiotic therapy, or the management of the resisting anti-infection agents.

“The pandemic prompted us to learn many things from our Romanian partner, for example, from the very beginning we organised a laboratory for COVID testing – continues Uliana – and when the vaccination started in Romania, our European colleagues shared their protocols with us”. COVID-19 urged to remember an important lesson: infection prevention and readiness for an immediate response have a great value, they can save people's lives. Working together is a way to be stronger when fighting a common enemy: because neighbours grow up together and give each other a hand.





EFIGE

Enhancing traditions to revitalize tourism in lower Danube

PROJECT TITLE	EFIGE – Cross-border Ensemble. Heritage Confluence on Danube
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	08.02.2020 – 07.08.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Administrative Territorial unit Tulcea county through Tulcea County Council (Lead beneficiary, Romania); Executive committee of Izmail city council of Izmail District of Odesa region (Ukraine); Local group for sustainable fishing in Danube delta (Romania); Galati association for sustainable development Prut Dunare (Romania)
PROGRAMME	Romania-Ukraine ENI CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	1.052.018 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	946.290 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Preservation and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“The paradox is that tourists come to see the Danube Delta, but do not see the local culture.

We want to create a cultural hub and keep tourists longer.

The infrastructure we are creating will continue to be used for fairs, festivals and workshops in our region.”

Leonid Artamon, Consilier, Serviciul de Accesare Fonduri Externe Consiliul Judetean Tulcea (Romania)

More than twenty nationalities live in the lower Danube region: there are Lipovans, Greek, Hungarians, Turks, Italians, Germans, Ukrainians, Armenians, Tatars, Roma, Bulgarians, Rumanians, and others. Their natural coexistence in this small region creates an invaluable asset, rich in its diversity and variety of forms: customs, handcrafts, gastronomy, artworks and much more. The culture of these nationalities has largely been preserved in the villages, but tourists are very often unaware of this heritage, made of traditional handicrafts, special dishes or home-made wine.

The EFIGE project aims at increasing the visibility of this cultural heritage and at providing a platform for communication between different minorities, with the purpose to preserve the cross-border traditions and to attract tourists. The project focus is mainly in three areas: Galati and Tulcea in Romania and Izmail in Ukraine, three towns bordering the Danube river, with a high concentration of natural and historical sites, but a low level of investment in touristic and cultural facilities.

The project partnership – formed by two municipal administrations and two associations – is determined to revert this situation, creating a communication platform between minorities and a centre for collection of traditions and cultural

heritage, where events and exhibitions can be held.

To do so, the project partners are carrying out the rehabilitation of Izmail local library: the facade, the roof, the windows, and doors...everything is being replaced, modernised and redecorated to host a large exhibition hall that will present different ethnographic collections, film screenings, concerts and all sort of cultural events. The library is slowly becoming a space for communication and creation. A smaller, more intimate hall is also being built in the library to conduct roundtables, trainings, and debates. As Tetiana Pasmarnova – project communication manager – points out, national minorities on both sides of the border do not actually have the opportunity to communicate: EFIGE is essentially creating a platform for such interaction. “We are not talking about just a series of exhibitions, but about the creation of a centre for cooperation and a venue for cultural events”.

In Tulcea, project partners are building an exhibition space, this time on top of a floating pontoon. The presentation of the different cultural and historical elements will be set in an atypical museography format and will provide a sensory experience on board of a raft to up to 30 passengers, enthusiasts of history. “We

are not preserving culture in a traditional museum, we want to give the people the opportunity to “touch” culture”, explains Tetiana. Indeed, the pontoon will not only bring together elements of different cultures but will also show how they can be used: visitors will be able to try out different tools and traditional household items. The pontoon will be open to the public at the end of September 2021, as a unique place where local minorities are represented.

Along with the infrastructural works, the project partners are collecting a sheer amount of information about everyday life and practices; culture is alive and spread throughout different villages, so not many people know about it. This precious material is also going to be used to produce an itinerant movie and a CD album. During several days, the organisations have filmed and taken photos in different settings to immortalize habits, traditions, recipes, songs, landscapes, and customs. The movie will be one of the most tangible results of the project. “This project shows that the culture of national minorities is alive, and it helps to preserve it”, says Tetiana.

The project is contributing to the creation of a cultural cluster which will impact on the development of the touristic industry and other related businesses in the region, such as small inns, restaurants, or souvenir shops. Thanks to the project, the flow of tourists is expected to increase by 2% in 2023. Yet, as Leonid Artamon recognizes, it is not possible to collect the richness and variety of the heritage of this region in one single project. There are so many nationalities, and their culture is so fruitful and diverse, that the idea of an EFIGE2 project may take shape very soon.



TREASURE

The fascinating underwater museum of the Black Sea

PROJECT TITLE	TREASURE – Joint Cultural Heritage – Source for Development of Entrepreneurship in the Black Sea Basin
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	18.09.2018 – 17.07.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Constanta County Council (Lead beneficiary, Romania); Bulgarian Association for Transfer of Technology and Innovation (Bulgaria); District Government of Enez (Turkey); Ungheni District Council (the Republic of Moldova)
PROGRAMME	Black Sea Basin ENI CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	939.544 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	864.380 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Jointly promote business and entrepreneurship in the tourism and cultural sectors
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage



“We have underwater treasures in most of the countries participating in the project. The interest for these objects is high, these items are not easy to access: therefore, it is exciting to reach and visit them somehow, bringing attraction to the area.”

Florentina Caramitru, representative of the lead partner organization, Constanta County Council (Romania)

Can underwater cultural heritage of the Black Sea Basin be preserved? Could this be turned into an opportunity to develop entrepreneurship in the cultural and touristic sectors? This is a bet that TREASURE aims to win: promoting and protecting underwater heritage, while spinning an economic opportunity out of it for Bulgaria, Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Turkey. Even creating an under-water museum to bring tourists down into the deep see to enjoy a visit.

The UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage defines it as “all traces of human existence having cultural, historical or archaeological character which have been partially or totally under water, periodically or continuously, for at least 100 years”. We are talking about different items, from sites to artifacts, from vessels to statues, aircrafts and even human remains: the Convention embraces the concept of heritage as a common asset and encourages responsible public access, knowledge sharing, and public enjoyment.

This is what the TREASURE project – implemented by the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme – is about: raising the touristic attractiveness of the region,

protecting and promoting subaquatic archaeological rests and offering a unique experience as an alternative to traditional tourism. The four partners behind TREASURE are aware of this and hence have joined efforts to unveil the sunken world under the water and to bring it closer to the most curious and intrepid visitors.

A clear example is the subaquatic museum in Enez (Turkey) located two kilometres away from the shore: the visitor has to dive eighteen metres deep to admire the replicas of a Nike goddess statue, of an antique lion figure or of the model of Ainos ancient town fortress, placed exactly where the original ones were found. The latter remain well protected in a museum, ready to be appreciated by the less intrepid visitors. To ease the access to the underwater wonders, diving courses and guided visits are being organised. Similarly, the Bulgarian partner – BATTI NGO – is offering diving courses, this time, to students of the local universities. “Our purpose is to encourage them to explore the sea and get to know our local heritage”, says Florentina Caramitru – from Constanta County Council.

With the same objective, the underwater archaeology unit of the National History

and Archaeology Museum (Romania) is collecting data and visuals from their findings in the sea bottom, and developing a 3D hologram and video footage that will be displayed in several museums. Thanks to the hologram projections, the artefacts that were found in the most inaccessible spots will be brought up to the surface and enjoyed by the general public. This happens in the autumn 2021.

In April 2021, the partners also completed the reconstruction of a three-stored Cultural and Sports Center in Enez. The Center hosts non-governmental organisations and small and medium size enterprises that promote sports and culture both for tourists and locals. In not even one month, around 150 people have already taken part in the activities, from water sports like diving, sea skiing or canoeing to pilates and fitness, to music and painting workshops. The Centre is very active, bringing new life from all-comers to the area.

Due to the pandemic outbreak, activities had to slow down and the project has received an extension until late 2021, when it will finalise with the creation of a digital atlas, showing the underwater spots scattered throughout the area and the most interesting places in the four partner countries. In short, the positive changes brought to communities on all sides of the basin thanks to the project, pursue the preservation of the underwater treasures, and the development of the touristic potential of the Black Sea, impacting on the economic growth of the region. “If the area becomes more attractive – say Florentina – tour operators, transport agencies, museums, restaurant, hotels will also be able to profit”.





MORETHANAJOB

When working is more than just a job

PROJECT TITLE	MoreThanAJob – Reinforcing social and solidarity economy for the unemployed, uneducated and refugees
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	04.09.2019 – 03.09.2022
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	An-Najah National University (Lead beneficiary, Palestine); Ministry of Public Works & Housing (Jordan); Mutah University (Jordan); Business Consultancy and Training Services (Lebanon); Eurotraining Educational Organisation (Greece); Centro Studi e Iniziative Sociali – CESIE (Italy); Nablus chamber of commerce and industry (Palestine)
PROGRAMME	Mediterranean Sea Basin ENI CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	2.051.000 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	1.846.000 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Social and solidarity economy
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty



“Together with our partners, across the Mediterranean we all face the same issues regarding refugees, or about the unemployment rate of low skilled, poorly educated people. We all have common problems and we are in search of common best practices, to be adapted to our conditions.”

Imad Ibrik, Project Coordinator, An-Najah National University (Palestine)

For a person at risk of social marginalization, an employment is often more than a job. Working is the key for a more comprehensive social inclusion that touches several spheres such as housing, education, and the access to other fundamental civil rights. This is why the project MoreThanAJob stresses the path of social and economic inclusion through the accessibility to a decent job for a vast range of people at risk of marginalization, including migrants, poorly educated or low-skilled persons, disadvantaged women, young persons out of the job market.

The driving principle of the project is that everybody should have a fair chance in life, regardless of the socio-economic condition of departure and against the economic cycles' downturn. “As partners, what we all face is a generalized lack of coordination between local services, even in the same neighborhood. This is a systemic problem – says Lulia Tarantino, CESIE Italy – present in all the countries and contexts involved in the project.”

The MoreThanAJob project – implemented by the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme – fosters the collaboration between the so-called Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) actors, including NGOs, the non-profit sector, those public services responsible for ensuring social inclusion, as well as the emerging world of social business and social enterprises, the so called “work inclusion social enterprises” (WISE). “Social enterprises are our ideal target – continues Tarantino – with their active involvement of vulnerable subjects in a perspective of job inclusion”.

Building upon preexistent cooperation patterns, the project involves a plethora of stakeholders, from the academia to the public sector, from the private to the non-profit. All five countries participating in the project – Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Italy and Greece – share a similar scenario: a multifaceted negative spillover of the economic crises, starting from 2008 onwards, and a high percentage of refugees. Around 15 million people (migrants and refugees) born in a third country are currently living in the region and need to find a job or to enter the educational

system. These people constitute the ultimate target of the project, together with other marginalized categories, including a vast portion of youth – heavily present in the region – neither in employment or in education or training (NEET). Each country, each territory is struggling now to face the same issues. By analyzing and considering differences and similarities, the project aims at joining forces and facing the problem together.

The services and opportunities delivered vary, from family and income assistance to health and counselling services, from education, training and career guidance to employment support. Also the modality differs: if in Lebanon – a more centralized country – it is easier to involve central government bodies, in other countries, such as Italy, local autonomy has the prevalence. MoreThanAJob started in September 2019 and is currently halfway through its implementation, spinning around three different directions: the capacitation and empowerment of key actors, a broad networking both at local and cross-border level, and the policy making.

The capacitation is achieved through a programme of training and trainings-of-trainers – for SSE actors and public administrators – to enhance the capacity of public authorities to plan and implement social services. Integrated policy approaches to social inclusion were designed during a series of seminars, focused on the role of social economy in promoting inclusion among vulnerable groups. The main scope is to create an environment where the ownership is shared among local institutions and service providers. Beyond traditional training, the workshops explored a peer-to-peer dimension towards the creation of a propitious ecosystem for the social inclusion. Also, the capacitation pushes organisations towards a social entrepreneurial approach, stressing professionalism, management and financial sustainability. “Innovation and self-entrepreneurship are very important – says Imad Ibrik, of the An-Najah National University

in Palestine – and we need new ways for both sustaining the services and creating jobs”. The empowerment of SSE actors is promoted also through the direct financial support of 200.000 € in sub-grants for the implementation of innovative initiatives in social services schemes, with the aim of making the project a catalyzer for hopefully 500 new jobs per year. Between May and June 2021, calls for subgrants to SSE actors have been launched in Greece, Palestine, Jordan and Italy.

The networking is assured also through the development of an online portal, aiming at supporting the cooperation and dialogue between SSE actors and public administrations. “For now, the portal it is an indirect communication channel for the partnership – says Tarantino – but in perspective one of the purposes of the portal is to allow communication in English, Arabic, Italian, Greek and English because the differences in the partnership make the exchange rich and heterogeneous.” More broadly, the portal provides access to the welfare services for the final beneficiaries on their territories and at the same time connects practices from the four countries. COVID-19 consequences and restrictions disclosed even more the cross-border potentialities of the portal.

MoreThanAJob also plays an important role on policy making and institutional awareness. So far two policy briefs have been issued, describing the ways to integrate project results into future policies, and containing recommendations on how to support the socio-economic inclusions of refugees, based upon the specific experience of projects' activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sharply increased the need for a portion of society to be economically and socially included. Adjusting its workplan accordingly, MoreThanAJob plays today a role which is becoming even more important. The persons at risk of social exclusion are growing on the two shores of the Mediterranean and the need of joining forces for a better and more integrated response is becoming a must across all the countries and territories.



RESMYLE

*Green economy
as a potential job
market for youth*



PROJECT TITLE	RESMYLE – Rethinking Employment and Social insertion for Mediterranean Young people through Local sustainable development
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	30.08.2019 – 29.08.2022
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Coopérative d'Activité et d'Emploi Petra Patrimonia – CDEPP (Lead beneficiary, France); Association pour le Développement Rural (Lebanon); Association pour l'Education Relative à l'Environnement de Hammamet (Tunisia); Jordanian University of Sciences and Technology (Jordan); Institut Supérieur des Sciences et Technologies de l'Environnement de Borj Cédria (Tunisia); Jeune Chambre Economique de Tunisie (Tunisia); Union Association pour la Participation et l'Action Régionale – Centre Méditerranéen de l'Environnement (Union APARE-CME) (France); AMESCI (Italy); Consorzio Formazione Lavoro e Cooperazione Società Cooperativa (Italy)
PROGRAMME	Mediterranean Sea Basin ENI CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	2.197.247 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	1.977.522 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Professionalization of young people (NEETS) and women
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty



“The ENI CBC MED Programme stands out from other regional initiatives as it valorises local People-to-People actions and it supports human and community development at cross-border level. It provides an opportunity to bring together partners with different backgrounds and experiences that do not usually work together in the framework of national programmes.”

Hiba Fawaz, Association for the Development of Rural capacities (Lebanon)

According to Eurostat, 27.8% of young Italians are neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET); 23.3% of young people (between 20-34) in Lebanon are unemployed. Across the Mediterranean region, young people are experiencing increasing difficulties in the access to employment due to the successive crises in the financial and economic sectors, let alone the recent COVID-19 emergency. There are disparities between the requests of the job market and the graduates' qualifications; moreover, young people with little or no education are highly marginalized and increasingly distanced from employment.

At the same time, the growing concerns for environmental protection in the Mediterranean might provide new opportunities, given the lack of skills in several areas such as waste sorting, eco-mobility, water management, renewable energies, risk prevention, etc.

The RESMYLE project – the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme – responds to this double challenge, rethinking the employment and social integration of the young people in the Mediterranean through sustainable development. The initiative builds up on the experience of another CBC project from the 2007-2013 programming cycle, “ILE – Initiatives Locales pour l’Environnement en Méditerranée”. The project partners acknowledged the unexploited potential of green economy as an important element for jobs creation and local development and decided to draw a new initiative at the crossroad of the social and environmental fields. Yet, the project was not conceived to promote the informal economy but rather to focus on and reinforce local strategies and local entrepreneurship.

In RESMYLE nine partners from five countries are working around three complementary areas of intervention: environmental education, hands-on trainings, and support to eco-entrepreneurship.

In the first component, the partners seek to integrate sustainable development top-

ics in the support actions carried out by the organizations working on integration of NEETs in the Mediterranean, so that young people are aware of sustainable development and can take initiatives for the benefit of their communities. RESMYLE has recently launched its first call for projects in mobilizing young people on the environmental and sustainable development issues. At least 12 initiatives (two in France, Italy, Lebanon and Jordan and four in Tunisia) led by youth organizations, environmental organizations or organizations in charge of social inclusion of young people, will receive 4.000-8.000 € grants to implement own activities among NEETS such as information campaigns on sustainable development (waste, climate change...) led by young people, construction and testing of educational tools co-designed with young people, implementation of educational actions in schools etc.

In the second component, the partners organize hands-on field trainings for young people, focusing on sustainable development and intercultural missions to environmental NGOs. To do so, the project partner AMESCI, Associazione Di Promozione Sociale (Italy), is setting up the Mediterranean Practical School for Sustainable Development in order to expand this manner of learning. The activities foresee the development of an online tool to train 24 facilitators in charge of organising and implementing training on the ground in the five partner countries, where each partner will set up 15-days practical workshops for young people with a focus on sustainable development. Consequently, 24 young people will be involved into three-months mobility missions to the Mediterranean environ-

mental NGOs based in one of the countries of the partnership.

In the third component, the partners provide support to young Mediterranean eco-entrepreneurs through the creation of a Mediterranean network of six eco-incubators in the partner countries: 18 eco-innovative projects led by young people will be sustained financially.

The multi-institutional and multi-stakeholder approach of the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is the perfect scenario to enhance the development of projects such as RESMYLE, created to give wings to the heterogeneous and fragmented context of the Basin. For example, the dynamism of the civil society in the Southern Mediterranean – namely in Lebanon and Tunisia – and their capacity to innovate in the field of social economy, at the crossroads between the real economy and social policies – puts them at the core of social economy actions, and this programme offers them the opportunity to raise their voice, share their concerns and vision.

In the long run, RESMYLE is set to create 300 direct jobs for young people.

The relevance of this topic is now even more important after the COVID-19 crisis, as the aftermath of the pandemic will result in a major economic downturn and will have a large effect on the loss of jobs and employment opportunities mainly for disadvantaged groups. Accordingly, focusing on those individuals, and enhancing their skills and capacities is crucial, especially when it is done via a response to environmental challenges with remain of main concern throughout the region.



COVID-19: from emergency to recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a serious setback for cross-border co-operation, impacting many regions' economies and mobility, as well as citizens' access to health services. Quite suddenly borders were closed, putting communities and whole regions at strain. At the same time, the crisis has shown how interdependent we all are with our neighbours, and how a multilateral approach is more important than ever. In a swift response to the crisis, on April 2020 the European Commission managed to launch the "Team Europe" package to support the EU Partner Countries in the fight against the pandemic. Resources were combined from the Commission, the Member States and the European financial institutions: the 20.000 M€ originally pledged now stand at over 40.000 M€.

This support was initially focused on an emergency response to humanitarian needs, then enlarging into strengthening health, water and sanitation systems and finally turning into mitigation of the social and economic consequences of the epidemy. Other measures were introduced to face the challenges posed by the virus: the Commission has adopted two Corona Virus Response Investment Initiatives, enabling the regions on both sides of the EU external borders to benefit from the same opportunities as the internal EU border regions. Exceptional and useful measures were introduced to use cohesion policy funds (2014-2020) to finance initiatives related to the outbreak of the epidemy such as investments in the healthcare sector, support for SMEs and the labour market. The deadline for projects implementation was also extended, and programmes were granted more flexibility, liquidity, and simplification in several spheres of implementation.

As time goes by, activities against the pandemic are relentlessly fine-tuning. For their very nature, cross-border cooperation programmes and specifically P2P activities can be of great help in the recovery of communities, building resilience and delivering concrete results on the

ground. Citizens and businesses are struggling with the crisis, the most vulnerable groups are at greater risk of exclusion, initiatives such as job retention schemes or resilience-fostering of health systems are more needed than ever.

Leaving no one behind in the joint endeavour to overcome the pandemic is the challenge stretching from today's ongoing projects to the next programming cycle.

Looking ahead

The post-2020 programming period



A more social Europe

a Europe closer to citizens

Since 2019, the EU has debated its future approach to the Neighbourhood Policy, in accordance with the lines of its renewed Regional and International Cooperation Policies. Now that the debate is concluded, a number of relevant inputs can be analyzed and can feed the dialogue on the new structure of Interreg NEXT programmes 2021-2027.

In a post-2020 perspective, P2P can be considered both as a stand-alone domain or an approach to achieve overall goals, notably to promote cooperation among citizens. P2P-oriented initiatives contribute in fact to all specific objectives listed under the regulation on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund, but this contribution relates in particular to **policy objective 4** – “A more social Europe” – implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, which is the 2017 EU blueprint for delivering new and more effective rights for citizens. Policy objective 4 encompasses and synthesizes the Pillar’s content, and strongly intertwines with the SDGs.

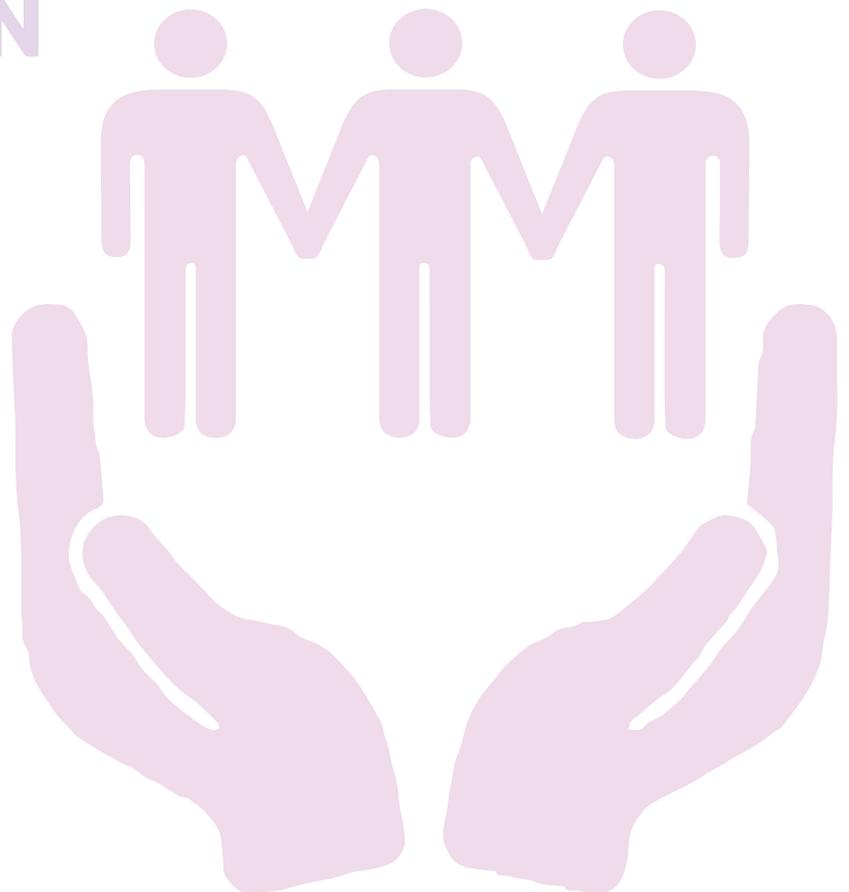
It is nestled in the Pillar by:

- ◆ Enhancing the effectiveness of **labour markets** and improving access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure and promoting social economy
- ◆ Improving equal access to **inclusive and quality services in education**, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training
- ◆ Promoting the socioeconomic **inclusion of marginalised communities**, low-income households and disadvantaged groups including people with special needs, through integrated actions including housing and social services
- ◆ Promoting the socio-economic **integration of third country nationals**, including migrants through integrated actions, including housing and social services
- ◆ Ensuring equal access to **health care** and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family and community-based care
- ◆ Enhancing the role of **culture and sustainable tourism** in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

P2P cooperation is also addressed under **policy objective 5**: “Europe closer to citizens” by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives. This objective is developed by the Regulation through two specific objectives “fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism, and security”, in urban areas (1st specific objective) and in areas other than urban areas (2nd specific objective).

Ultimately, P2P cooperation under Interreg NEXT will also pivot on **Interreg-specific objective 1** – “A better cooperation governance for Europe and its neighbourhood”. Under this objective, Interreg NEXT programmes are specifically asked to “enhance sustainable democracy and support civil society actors and their role in reforming processes and promoting democratic transition. Trust building via P2P actions is also an important element to be supported under this objective”.

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE COOPERATION





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