

# South East Europe end-of-programme evaluation

December 2015, Budapest



## Executive summary

The final evaluation of the South East Europe (SEE) Transnational Cooperation Programme focused on qualitative data and aimed at establishing project partners' perception of the changes initiated by supported projects. The survey elicited feedback from 113 out of the 122 projects funded through the programme in the period 2009-2014. Respondents came both from EU and non-EU partner countries plus two partners from outside the programme area. They represented almost an equal number of projects from the thematic axes on innovation, sustainable growth, and environmental protection, although the accessibility priority representation was quite strong, too.

The main expectation of organisations joining SEE projects was to exchange experience and build permanent competence networks and 91% of respondents say their expectations were “mostly” or “fully” fulfilled. That is also in line with what the SEE programme was expected to do, in general, i.e. facilitate the building of transnational partnership and joint action.

Respondents consider project-developed new services and tools the most easily recognizable effects from SEE cooperation, although services are not regarded as the main factors in ensuring long-lasting results. Similarly joint planning of investment is described as the second best visible outcome; however, such plans are arguably the least likely to ensure sustainability.

In any case project partners agree that the two primary factors for project result sustainability are stakeholder support and take-up of project outcomes from organisations beyond the original partnership. Around 71% of respondents think the effects from SEE projects in their region could be durable. Almost 80% are intent on continuing the positive changes initiated through SEE cooperation mostly through continuous cooperation with at least some of their SEE partners and by capitalising SEE outcomes. Finally, 92% of survey participants agree that without the transnational dimension of SEE projects, they would not have achieved the same effects in terms of scale or at all.

## Introduction

The overall objective of the South East Europe (SEE) Transnational Cooperation Programme was to improve the territorial, economic and social integration of the eligible area, which covered 16 countries<sup>1</sup>. The main tools to fulfil these goals were transnational partnerships and joint actions. In total, the programme co-financed 122 joint initiatives along four thematic axes, i.e. (1) Facilitation of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, (2) Protection and Improvement of the Environment, (3) Improvement of the Accessibility, and (4) Development of transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas. Projects supported through the SEE programme carried out their activities in the period 2009 - 2014.

The SEE programme underwent ongoing evaluation between 2010 and 2013, which produced three reports with conclusions and recommendations concerning programme management, indicator system, and communication effectiveness.

In January 2015 the programme's Monitoring Committee took a decision to procure the services of external experts who would conduct a **final programme evaluation** focusing on results achieved on the ground. Following the unfruitful procurement process in July 2015 the Committee decided to go through with the evaluation by mobilising the capacities of the programme's Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS).

The JTS invited 1,147 project partner staff to take part in an online survey containing 13 content-related questions, 10 of which - open-end. **The purpose was to gauge the perception of SEE cooperation effects, added-value and sustainability prospects.** The survey was open from 28 July till 3 September 2015. Surveys were followed by 38 individual qualitative interviews (face-to-face, Skype, phone) that engaged more than 40 project partners. Collected data (3,791 individual question replies & 38 interview reports) was analysed in-house during October-November 2015 and served as input to the current evaluation report, as well as to communication material available on the programme's website [www.southeast-europe.net](http://www.southeast-europe.net).

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM, Greece, Hungary, Italy (part), Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine (part)

# Who contributed to the evaluation?

## Online survey

In total 223 persons from project partner organisations participated to the online survey, i.e. almost 20% of all partner institutions. Respondents were partners from 113 out of the 122 SEE projects, i.e. feedback was obtained from 92.6% of all funded networks. They represented all cooperation paradigms possible in the SEE programme, i.e. partners who received support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), or joined cooperation as a 10% partner (through another partner's budget) or a 20% partner (located outside the programme area).

All in all, 80% of respondents were ERDF partners, 16% were IPA partners (some of whom also with experience as 10% partners), around 3% of respondents had only 10% participation experience, 1 ENPI partner from the Republic of Moldova, and, finally, there were 2 respondents who participated through the 20% rule (i.e. from Belgium and Germany).

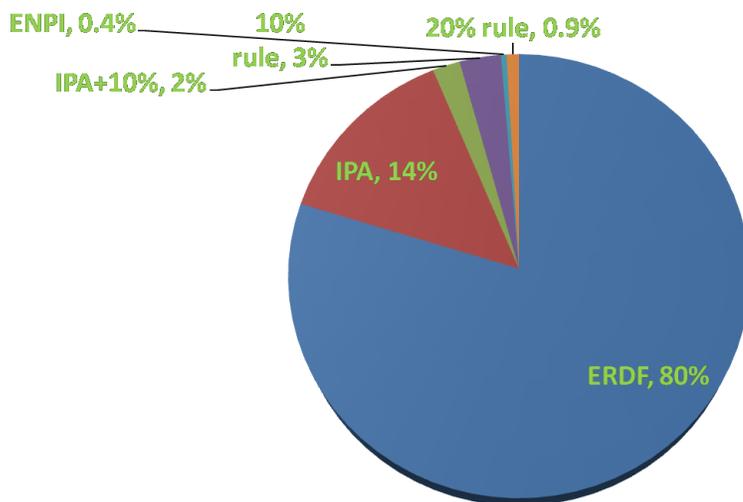


Figure 1 Number of respondents according to funds received from SEE programme

Partners from all 31 projects from Priority Axis 1: Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship took part in the survey, i.e. 100% coverage of this axis. 94% (i.e. 30 out of the 32 funded projects) of projects under Priority Axis 4: Development of transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas also completed the questionnaire. Then follows Priority Axis 3: Improvement of the accessibility projects with a response rate of 92% (i.e. 23 out of 25 funded projects). Finally, the response rate of Priority Axis 2: Protection and improvement of the environment was at 85% (i.e. 29 out of 34 funded projects). The projects with the highest average number of partners responding to the survey are ROSEE - 60% of the partnership, ACCESS2MOUNTAIN - 55% and ID:WOOD and TRACE with 50% each.

27% of respondents cooperated in at least two SEE projects, while 71% had experience with other EU funds in the 2007-2013 programming period.

The highest number of responses was obtained from Italian partners - 38, followed by partner institutions from Romania - 27, Greece - 26 and Austria - 25.

2 IPA partners failed to specify their country and region of origin.

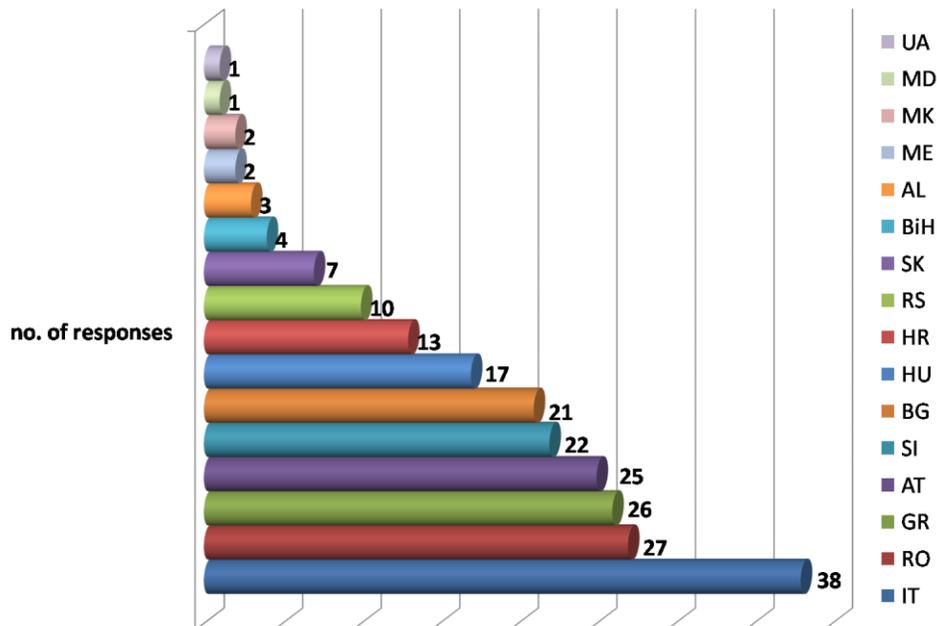


Figure 2 Number of responses per country (SEE programme area only)

## Interviews

In total 38 qualitative interviews were held with individual SEE project partners. In particular, 26 face-to-face interviews were held between end of September and end of October 2015 in six locations: Thessaloniki (GR), Bucharest (RO), Ljubljana (SI), Bologna (IT), Vienna (AT) and Budapest (HU). 12 more interviews were held via Skype or telephone. Interviews discussed effects on the ground of 51 SEE projects after SEE support ceased (~42% of all projects supported through the programme). Interviewed projects were almost equally representing the four thematic axes of the programme, i.e. 13 projects from Priority (1), 13 from Priority (2), 13 from Priority (3) and 12 from Priority (4). Some of the examples used later on in this report are extracted from these interviews.

## What were the expectations and did SEE meet them?

A strong prerequisite for the success of the SEE programme was the match between programme objectives (i.e. overall expected benefits) and the benefits project partners expected from the cooperation. In other words, it was important to check whether programme plans coincided with project implementers' plans.

This was an open-end question, i.e. respondents were free to express themselves. Analysis of most recurrent phrases shows that there were several **main cooperation drivers**, which are listed below based on their frequency of occurrence in descending order:

- a. The opportunity to **exchange experience (32% agree)**: the desire to share experience went hand in hand with expectations for knowledge and good practice transfer.
- b. The opportunity to **build stable transnational networking platforms (26% agree)**: for SEE partners 'networking' meant becoming part of a permanent cooperation platform. A distinct sub-group here wished to strengthen or enlarge an existing partnership.
- c. The opportunity to create new or **improve existing services, strategies or policies (21% agree)**: here most respondents referred to expected improvement *at local level*. In fact, these are twice as many as the respondents referring to

improvement taking place at transnational level. The most widespread expectation, in this respect, was to implement a pilot action or small scale investment through the SEE project that could be further developed afterwards with the help of local stakeholders. Most of the expected positive changes *at transnational level* had to do with accessibility or other shared (mostly) physical assets, e.g. better waterway management of the Danube corridor, improved coordination of passenger and freight train offers, harmonizing the digital dividend usage, etc.

- d. The opportunity to **influence local or international stakeholders (18% agree)**: respondents expected SEE projects to help them connect cross-sectoral stakeholders within a region or a country and, in some cases, across countries. They also thought cooperation would make their organisation more visible to stakeholders. Quite a number of partners also expected their SEE project(s) to facilitate the increase in capacity and skills of local stakeholders to implement public services and policy measures. In this respect they saw the *showcasing of good practices* from partner regions, helping *stakeholders network* with foreign counterparts and joint *training sessions* as an important stimulus.
- e. The opportunity to **build capacity** in the topic of interest (**16% agree**): often SEE projects were regarded as an opportunity for partner organisations to gain new knowledge, become more competent, and enhance the skills of their own staff. In many cases, this process was also associated with getting practical experience in a given field of action. While the learning motivation is closely related to the exchange of experience, not all respondents make this link explicit.

**The majority of respondents stressed at least two of the above** as a motivation to join a SEE cooperation project. That is why the total percentage number exceeds 100.

Having expressed their initial expectations about the effects from SEE cooperation, project partners were then asked to rate the **extent to which these expectations were fulfilled**, i.e. “fully”, “mostly”, “partly”, “not at all”. Respondents had the possibility to explain their choice, too.

➤ **40% say “fully”**

Most of the IPA partners (53%) consider their initial expectations fully satisfied. Also the Moldovan partner (ENPI) says their expectations were fully met. One 20% partner selected this answer, as well. At the same time only 38% of ERDF partners think their expectations were absolutely fulfilled.

➤ **51% say “mostly”**

More than half of the ERDF partners (52%) consider their SEE cooperation experience as mostly in line with their initial expectations. At the same time this was the most common response given by 42% of IPA partners. All 10% partners are of the same opinion, as well as one of the two 20% partners.

➤ **9% say “partly”**

Most of these respondents were ERDF partners and half of these were Italian. Less than half of the respondents in this category explained what prevented them from benefitting from the cooperation process to a greater extent. Some of the reasons are given further below in this section.

➤ **No respondent stated their expectations were not met at all**

Interestingly all 6 ID:WOOD project partners (i.e. 50% of consortium), who responded to our survey, declared their full satisfaction with the SEE cooperation experience. Similarly, all 4 APP4INNO partners, who participated in the evaluation, also declared full satisfaction. 5 out of 6 surveyed Iron Curtain Trail partners complete this trio.

Around 25% of respondents offered explanation for their choice of answer. As expected the ‘fully’ satisfied respondents shared mainly positive comments with reference to project achievements and local impact. The majority of comments about **what went against their expectations** came from partners who selected the “mostly” answer.

Considering the remarks of both the ‘mostly’ and ‘partly’ satisfied respondents it appears that most grievances have to do with the **knowledge or framework gap between partner regions**, which made cooperation outcomes imbalanced. To the disappointment of some partners it seems that in some cases this gap was so significant that the exchange of experience was seriously hampered. The framework gap concerned differences in the legal set-up that prevented the transfer of knowledge. There are respondents who go as far as suggesting SEE-successor programmes to assist lead beneficiaries in partner selection prior to submitting project proposals to avoid such mismatch in the future.

A smaller group of respondents is distinguished by their common challenge of **engaging key stakeholders**, which ultimately jeopardized the take-up of project outcomes and project result sustainability. In some cases political stakeholders showed interest as long as the project was running but severed contacts with project partners afterwards. In others, the involvement of businesses was challenging due to the rigid framework of EU cooperation projects. Many respondents would expect programme bodies (e.g. Secretariat and national contact points) to throw their weight behind project partners to help engage key stakeholders.

Another recurring factor limiting the cooperation experience was **tight implementation timeline**, especially for the last call projects, which had a shorter implementation period. Here some project experience delays in incorporating IPA, 10% and 20% partners in the cooperation work due to overly complex administrative procedures.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary of English ‘integration’ is defined as the process of becoming part of a group or incorporating different organisations in a partnership as equals. The SEE programme aimed at supporting transnational partnerships and actions to improve territorial, economic and social integration. The motivation of SEE project partners for joining a SEE network was mainly to exchange experience and build permanent knowledge platforms, which complies with the definition of ‘integration’. Moreover ca. 91% of respondents state their expectations were fulfilled “fully” or “mostly”. In particular, 90% of ERDF and 95% of IPA partners concur with this opinion. Therefore, we can presume (1) that there is a good match between programme and project partners’ goals and (2) that these goals were mostly achieved.

## What are the most recognizable SEE projects' outcomes?

The purpose of the SEE programme was to be fulfilled mainly through building transnational partnerships and carrying out joint actions. According to the SEE programme result indicators these should result in contributions to a number of thematic fields classified by Annex II of [Council Regulation \(EC\) 1828/2006](#). SEE programme's thematic scope is largely in line with the content of that annex. It needs to be specified that a *contribution is defined as a positive change stimulated by projects in any of these fields and proven by evidence of project outcomes*. It is a qualitative type of indicator.

In this context the next few survey questions explored the perceived project effects on the ground, their prospects for sustainability and how project partners plan to continue working on initiated positive changes. The overall rationale behind these questions was to obtain qualitative information about programme impact in partner locations and the likelihood of sustaining what SEE projects started.

The starting point was then what partners considered as the **most easily seen or recognizable outcome from SEE projects** in their regions. This was an open-end question and the analysis focused on clouds of related words. According to the analyzed data we could distinguish between four main types of outcomes:

- Outcomes that represent a **new service or tool** to be used by project partners and/ or their stakeholders (36%).

For example, the SIVA consortium worked out a [tool](#) that helps local authorities assess and compare costs for alternative projects for broadband network expansion. SENSOR partners produced colour-coded [risk maps](#) for 28,668 km of roads in 10 southeast European countries to establish accident-prone sections and prescribe action. NELI and its follow-up HINT helped establish [e-learning platforms](#) in Romania, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia and Serbia to harmonise vocational training in the Danube river navigation and logistics sector. They also set up [Information and Training Centres](#)

in Enns (AT), Budapest (HU), Sisak (HR) and Galați (RO). The NEWADA project developed the [Danube Fairway Information Services portal](#) to streamline data on Danube navigation conditions in real time.

- Outcomes as part of a **planning process (23%)** for further actions drawing on project methodology, findings of a study or a common approach.

The most recurrent examples have to do with an action plan, development strategy, reference methodology application, feasibility study follow-up, investment plan realization, and policy enforcement. For instance, Veneto Agricoltura (IT) designed a regional strategy for preventing soil pollution using the know-how of GuardEn project. The MMWD consortium produced a reference methodology for population projections that is used by statistical offices across southeast Europe. The ReTIna project helped the Municipality of Galați (RO) develop an investment programme for brownfield regeneration through which they now seek to attract funding. The SETA project enabled Hungarian partners to work on feasibility studies for rail infrastructure improvement in the Győr-Sopron area. Concrete investment is under way there. Finally, Padova (IT) completed a feasibility study for utilising renewable energy sources in marginal urban areas in the region thanks to the M2RES project. Several local municipalities reportedly have started implementing concrete measures based on the results of the study.

- Outcomes in the form of a transnational network/ **platform for mutual knowledge support** and exchange of experience between partners or their stakeholders (21%).

A good example here is the project Danubeparks and its follow-up Danubeparks Step 2.0. Transnational cooperation connected managers of protected areas along the river Danube in an [association](#) that has created its own brand and greater visibility for joint environmental action. Another example is the ATRIUM project that managed to certify a new European cultural route with the Council of Europe to promote XXth century heritage of totalitarian architecture. Project partners set up an [association](#) to legally represent the route and coordinate partner activities after the end of SEE funding. The ECOPORT 8 project and its follow-up ECOPORT\_TEN established a [network](#) of sea ports

in the Adriatic, Mediterranean and the Black Seas to enable permanent exchange of experience on environmental management.

- Outcomes in the form of **strengthened relations with key stakeholders (19.5%)**.

Responses to the online survey feature stakeholders quite often which underlines stakeholder significance for a successful SEE project. And for some partners the most recognizable outcome from their cooperation project was a positive breakthrough in their relations with local stakeholders. For example, the SEE RIVER project helped reach a multi-sectoral agreement for the development of the Hungarian section of the Drava River. More than 20 stakeholders signed that agreement. Cooperation activities in the frame of the ID:WOOD project enabled the Slovenian Forestry Institute and the Wood Industry Cluster in Ljubljana to form a local network of forest-based industry actors that have continued their collaboration with new initiatives. Through the strategic ClusterPoliSEE project the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency gained stronger negotiation power with the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy and the national Association of Clusters. Thus they managed to design a ready-to-launch cluster accreditation system based on experiences of Austrian and Hungarian partners. In addition, project knowledge on marrying key enabling technologies with traditional industries influenced the formulation of funding schemes under the new Innovations and Competitiveness Operational Programme funded through ERDF.

It should be noted that respondents often referred to more than one of the above detailed effects. In addition, the above examples outline the types of outcomes one could find most often in SEE projects. There were also few stand-alone outcomes that did not represent sufficient critical mass to make a difference in the present evaluation work. Thus cited percentage points do not add up to 100.

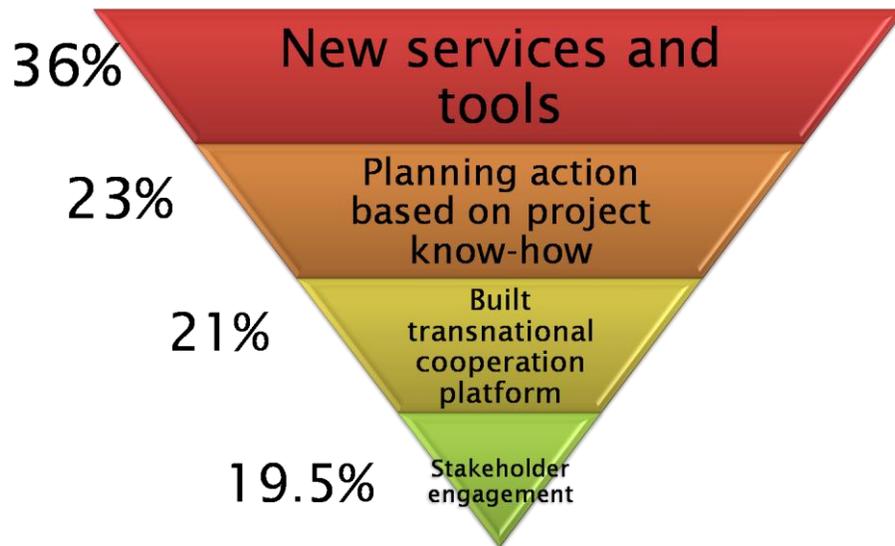


Figure 3 Types of project outcomes considered recognizable by partners

For more examples of project outcomes you can refer to Annex 2 of this report.

### What external factors influenced cooperation outcomes?

Of course, projects were not implemented in a vacuum. We need to take into consideration any external factors that played a greater role in project activity implementation. Therefore, we asked project partners about both **positive and negative external factors** they think **influenced cooperation effects**.

#### 😊 Positive external factors

90% of survey participants provided information on the external factors that had a positive effective on SEE project implementation. Of these, **85%** point out that engaging the interest and **support of stakeholders** has been the greatest positive factor outside their organisation and the project partnership that supported project implementation. For instance, when the Romanian National Institute for Research and Development in Informatics promoted public-private partnerships for deploying broadband through the PPP4Broadband project, they attracted the attention of national authorities and were consequently invited to contribute to the National Digital Agenda Strategy. As leader of the ClusterPoliSEE project Marche region (IT)

organised an international stakeholder meeting in Brussels and thus the consortium managed to establish contacts with representatives of the EU S3 (i.e. smart specialisation) platform, the European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis, the European Cluster Excellence Initiative, among others.

Concerning stakeholders, around **23.5%** of respondents emphasise the importance of having obtained **support from** local, regional or national **decision-makers**, in particular. In some of these cases the support was due to the policy agenda of the day, i.e. partners were lucky that the topic of their project was high on the political agenda and thus policy-makers were interested in project activities and outcomes. For instance, the Carpathian Foundation Ukraine shares that their success in Access2Mountain (sustainable mobility in tourism) was due to the fact that public authorities had defined tourism as one of the priorities in regional development. Now they are able to implement practices they observed in the Alps through further projects supported both by EU and other international funds.

In general, project partners found it easier to bring together all relevant stakeholders and engage them with the backing of a transnational partnership. Support from **international partners** is regarded as a **mark of legitimacy**, which **stakeholders cannot ignore**. For instance, the Budapest University of Technology and Economics cooperated with the rest of the SEETechnology partners to connect science parks and encourage a transnational market uptake of research and development results and technologies. They recount that involving other partners in local activities created stronger engagement from local stakeholders.

Some partners refer to **gaining visibility** before international stakeholders, e.g. Danube Commission, Carpathian Convention Secretariat, and even the European Commission. For this they needed the stronger voice of as many organisations from different countries as possible. In particular, the launch of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region boosted the activities of the Danubeparks consortium and their Action Plan for the White-tailed Eagle was even endorsed by the European Commission.

Smaller groups of respondents considered some other external factors as positive, e.g. **synergies with complementary initiatives** and projects were generally found useful

by ca. **6%** of respondents. For instance, while the South Transdanubian Regional Development Agency in Pécs (HU) was promoting the EuroVelo13 route through the Iron Curtain Trail project, it benefitted from the fact that several infrastructural projects were implemented in the region to extend cycling paths. The Vratsa Agency for Regional and Economic Development (BG) sought to promote innovation in the agro-food sector using the NO-BLE Ideas's platform. It credits the successful involvement of local SMEs with the fact that they could still use relevant funding schemes for rural areas from the 2007-2013 programming period and apply SEE project know-how.

It should be noted that around 22% rather saw the expertise brought by other partners or by external experts as favourable external factors since those were external to their own organisation.

### Negative external factors

As much as **32% of respondents claimed there were no negative external factors** that influenced their project implementation.

The remaining ca. 70% shared information on various predicaments, some more partner-specific than others. In general, four main groups of negative external factors can be distinguished based on partner replies.

- **24% complain of legislative or administrative obstacles.** The majority of these partners say that the administration burden of participating in an EU project was overwhelming. The main remarks concern public procurement rules, First Level Control procedures, and the lack of flexibility on the programme side. The rest complain of national legislative constraints hampering project implementation or result take-up, incl. unreformed legislation, lack of administrative reforms, and election changes.
- **19%** experienced negative influence due to worsened economic conditions, mostly local **budget restraints** that put a strain on partners for pre-financing project activities. The rather long reimbursement periods represented an

additional burden. Also respondents recount lack of funds for implementing investments prepared through projects as an economic restraint.

- For **16%** of respondents the **lack of cooperation** and commitment on the side of **stakeholders** played a negative role for achieving the desired results. This lack of interest was expressed in refusing to take part in project activities or to take-up project results.

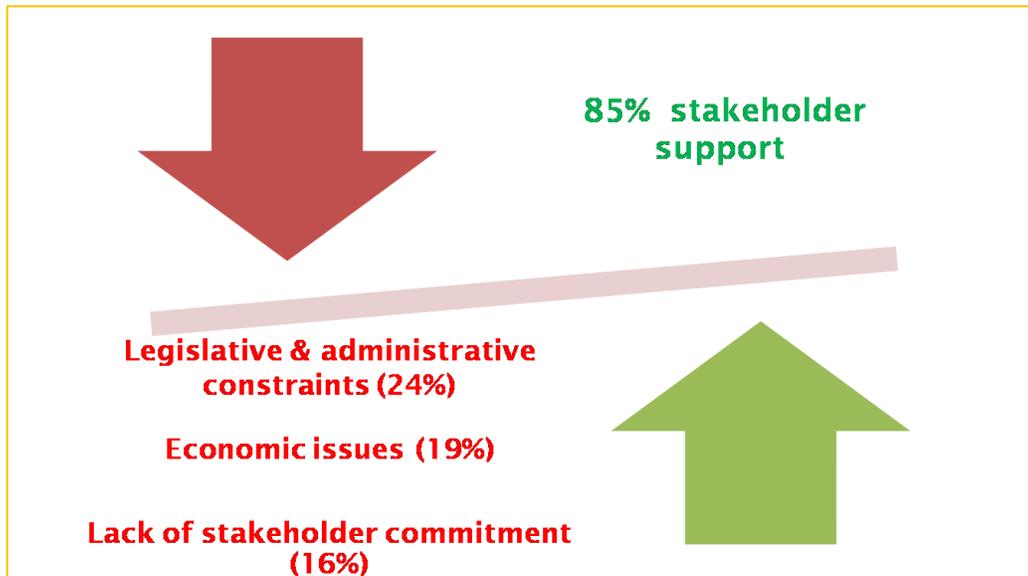


Figure 4 Positive vs. negative external factors

Since all projects supported through the SEE programme were in line with programme priority axes by default (i.e. main funding condition) and thus were also largely in line with the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, the final evaluation survey focused on the nature of expected contributions rather than on their topic. The survey sought to detect concrete positive changes (i.e. contributions) resulting from SEE projects on the ground, in partner regions as well as in the area as a whole. Based on provided outcome examples we can conclude that most projects managed to produce positive effects through new or improved services. It is stakeholder support that can make the greatest difference in turning a project outcome into real contribution to SEE programme objectives.

## How much transnational are SEE cooperation effects?

The transnational character of project activities was an important criterion for assessing the quality of project proposals in the SEE programme. It included four aspects: (1) coordinated management of physical assets shared by at least 3 countries (e.g. road network, river waterway, natural habitats); (2) large-scale knowledge transfer; (3) defining a joint approach to common development issues; (4) aligning policies at transnational level. Proposals were expected to reflect at least one of these aspects.

It is in the implementation stage that projects either manage to carry out cooperation as planned or undergo changes depending on circumstances and external factors. Having finalised project implementation, would partner institutions describe their overall project outcomes as transnational as per the same four characteristics listed above? Respondents were asked to rate each characteristics either as “relevant to a great extent”, or “relevant to lesser extent”, or “not applicable” in view of their own case.

Data unequivocally shows that **exchange of experience** (84% agree) and development of a **harmonised approach to a common problem** (80% agree) are the main distinguishing traits of ‘transnationality’ according to their SEE cooperation experience.

Project partners are shared as to the extent to which co-managing a shared asset (e.g. river, transport route, habitat) is a mark of ‘transnationality’, i.e. 40% say “to a great extent”, 22% - “to a lesser extent”, and 38% - “not applicable”. These responses reflect the fact that ca. 40% of respondents came from projects that did not address a shared physical or environmental asset.

Finally, the majority of project partners (58%) do not consider policy alignment as a main function of transnational projects.

What cooperation effects (i.e. positive changes) would not have been possible without the transnational aspect?

Survey data shows that **92%** of respondents agree positive changes would not have been possible at all or to the same extent without the transnational exchange in SEE projects. Of these, **62%** of the survey participants maintain that the added value came from pooling together knowledge from various experiences, exchanging ideas for solving common development problems, sharing good practices and transferring know-how.



For instance, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology relates that the Access2Mountain project (sustainable mobility and tourism in the Alps and Carpathians) gave them the possibility to produce better quality and much more comprehensive feasibility studies thanks to the exchange of data and know-how on regional railways with other partners. The Automobile Association of Slovenia informs that different partner experiences in ROSEE consortium enabled a wider range of ideas for pilot actions for traffic safety improvement. The Municipality of Berat (AL) shares that the SUSTCULT project served as a transnational catalyst for sharing knowledge and as an interactive meeting place. They were very satisfied with the insight they gained into good practices in sustainable cultural heritage management applied elsewhere.

In some cases partners simply needed to broaden their views and **experience new perspectives**. For instance, the Maribor Development Agency (SI) cooperated in the SEEMIG project addressing transnational actions to manage migration processes. Their cooperation experience brought them new perspectives and possible solutions for migrant services. The two Slovenian partners from Murska Sobota regard the exchange with F.A.T.E. partners as a good opportunity to get new ideas for sustainable city development in degraded areas (the focus of the project was on military brownfields).

Another aspect of transnational exchange of experience is said to be the opportunity to **benchmark experiences**. For instance, the Agency for Regional and Economic Development of Vratsa (BG) appreciates the possibility the NO-Ble Ideas project provided for comparing the agro-food sector developments in partner regions from Albania, Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia. The Bulgarian partner adds that in this process new business contacts were established across countries, notably with Albania. The Centre for Renewable Energy Sources in Pikerimi (GR) credits the exchange of experience with ENER-SUPPLY and M2RES partners for gaining knowledge in different regulatory aspects that could promote energy efficiency and utilization of renewables' potential. For the Centre for Innovation and Economic Development in Forlì (IT) the transnational added-value of the FaRIIn project (focus on responsible innovation) consisted in identifying “trigger points” for debate on research and innovation and the impact a joint approach can have on global value chains.

Not to be neglected is SEE projects' **capacity-building effect** that allowed tapping into the collective knowledge of other partners. For example, the Moldovan partner in TRANSDANUBE finds transnational context most useful in terms of training local stakeholders, as well as accumulating new experiences in sustainable transport and tourism thanks to study visits to partner regions. The Regional Development Agency of Dubrovnik (HR) shares very positive experience from their first transnational cooperation project ever, i.e. A.D.C. They stress the importance of the capacity-building effect derived from exchanging with foreign partners.

In addition to the 62% critical mass demonstrated above, a smaller but distinct group of survey respondents, i.e. **18%**, concur that SEE cooperation helped them **harmonise approaches, policies and actions** towards a common goal. For instance, knowledge

transfer within the ORIENTGATE project, dealing with ways of adapting to climate change effects, helped form a uniform approach to climate projections and harmonise climate vulnerability indicators across southeast European countries, i.e. Italy, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, FYROM, Albania and Ukraine. In another instance, the Austrian lead partner of the projects WANDA/ co-WANDA (managing ship waste on the Danube) and NEWADA/NEWADA duo (maintaining the navigation waterway of the Danube) - viadounau - states that transnational cooperation constitutes approximately 90% of their success. Also developing of a Danube habitat corridor would not be possible without transnational cooperation, claims the respondent from Rusenski Lom Nature Park (BG), partner in Danubeparks Step 2.0. Finally, the Croatian partners of the SEE digi.TV consortium explain that only this type of project could have helped them harmonize the use of the radiofrequency spectrum made available after the digital switch-over.

It should be noted that the harmonisation effect was sometimes consciously sought due to the obligation of Member States to transpose and apply EU directives, e.g. energy performance of buildings, energy efficiency, water.

Furthermore, ca. **16%** of respondents share the opinion that **transnational** projects set a **framework conducive to engaging stakeholders**. For instance, under the umbrella of the large transnational partnership of Green Mountain ROMSILVA (i.e. the Romanian Forest Administration) was more effective in starting a dialogue with local stakeholders who would normally oppose any plans for sustainable management of the Călimani and Domogled nature parks. In another instance, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development Kranj (SI) reveals that when their stakeholders saw for themselves that renewable energy utilization could be used to create employment in rural areas (focus of TERRE project) in Germany and Austria, they became more open to introducing such approaches at home. And to quote the Democenter-Sipe S.c.r.l. from Modena (IT), “the project represented a virtual bubble where also [seemingly] unsolvable local issues found resolution. The reason is that the work at transnational level with local institutions ... [generates] a positive and creative environment.” This Italian organisation was partner in the strategic GIFT project that worked on green intermodal freight transport solutions.

Around **9%** of project partners say transnational projects **help design common methodologies, tools, models, policies or strategies**. Usually these replies came from projects dealing with transport or environmental issues or focusing on shared physical assets. For instance, the Romanian partner from Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca recounts the creative cooperation of partners from the five countries sharing the territory of the Tisa river basin. They say it would not have been possible to jointly design an Integrated Territorial Development Strategy of the Tisa Catchment Area on their own. Subotica- Palić Fund for Micro-regional Tourism Cluster (RS) is satisfied with the specific ATRIUM methodology for managing ‘controversial’ heritage and carrying out digital cataloguing of relevant case studies. The Romanian lead partner of the projects NELI/HINT states that transnational work is crucial for the harmonisation of vocational educational standards, curricula and certification for navigation and logistics professionals working on the Danube.

In general, respondents mention **more than one of the above aspects** of transnational cooperation **as adding value** to their individual goals.

### **SEE transnational cooperation and the integration of EU and non-EU regions**

One of the main characteristics of the SEE programme was that the eligible area consisted of an equal share of EU and non-EU countries, which made it necessary to use three different funds, i.e. ERDF, IPA (for the Western Balkans) and ENPI (for the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine<sup>2</sup>). That is why the programme’s overall aim of territorial, economic and social integration put an emphasis on bringing closer together peers from both EU and non-EU countries.

We asked project partners whether they thought SEE projects managed to fulfill the promise of supporting integration in terms of enhancing cooperation and closing the development gap. The majority of survey respondents, i.e. **57%**, are **convinced** this was the case. **Half of the non-EU partners agree** with this statement. 36% of

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<sup>2</sup> The initial plan was for Ukraine to benefit from ENPI funds. However, the complicated administrative procedure for signing an international agreement with the European Commission was finally unsuccessful. Ukrainian partners thus participated as 10% partners.

respondents do not deny the integration effect but do not consider SEE cooperation as the main integration driver. Circa 43 % of non-EU partners fall in this group. Finally, 7% of all surveyed partners do not see a direct link between the two.

From responses to previous questions we established that the two primary expectations from SEE projects were to facilitate the *transnational exchange of experience* and *build permanent networking platforms*. This trend is confirmed by the fact that an overwhelming majority of respondents believe ‘transnationality’ equals “exchange of experience”. In addition, most partners are confident that the added value of the transnational approach is pooling in of diverse knowledge that facilitating know-how transfer, as well as capacity-building. Thus even if the most noticeable project outcomes reportedly represent mainly local, and to a lesser extent transnational, services or investment plans, they still depended on the know-how and experience amassed at transnational level. Finally, transnational cooperation supported by the SEE programme made a noticeable contribution to the integration of EU and non-EU countries, even if it was not the main integration driver.

## Can SEE cooperation effects be sustained?

Upon establishing the most noticeable SEE effects on the ground and the external factors that influenced their formation, we turn to project partners to gauge how sustainable (i.e. long-lasting) these effects would be. Survey participants first responded to a closed-answer question asking them to assess the relevance of 7 predefined sustainability criteria considering their own region. These criteria were applied in final project reports for providing qualitative information on project achievements. In the survey respondents rated each criterion with “most” or “less relevant” in ensuring sustainable project effects in their region and/ or in general. The outcome:

- i. **86% agree that improved key stakeholder relations are the most relevant sustainability enabling factor.** This may explain why 68.8% of survey respondents also state that, in general, they follow-up on whether stakeholders use their projects’ outputs.
- ii. **84% agree the uptake of project results beyond the partnership area is an important precondition for sustainability.**
- iii. **75% agree that the continuous cooperation with project partners,** even when programme funding is over, is a sustainability factor.
- iv. **74% agree project outcomes are sustainable, if the project managed to stimulate policy changes.** This is in contrast with the opinion of the majority of respondents who do not consider policy alignment as a main function of transnational projects (ref. previous sections).
- v. **70% agree that sustainability can be ensured by pilot activities-turned-new services.** Ranking the newly developed services outside the top three here clashes with the fact that new tools and services are reportedly the most visible outcomes of SEE projects (ref. previous sections).
- vi. **67% agree that, if projects manage to improve public services provided by partner organisations through cooperation, then cooperation results can be considered sustainable.**
- vii. **Project partners are shared on whether the realization of investments prepared by SEE projects is a guarantee of sustainability: 48% say “yes” and 52% say “no”.** There seems to be ambiguity towards project-prepared

investment since planning investment with the help of transnational know-how is the second most visible outcome of SEE projects according to survey respondents (ref. previous sections). This ambiguity may have to do with the fact that the realization of these plans is conditioned on availability of further financial resources and continuous stakeholder support.

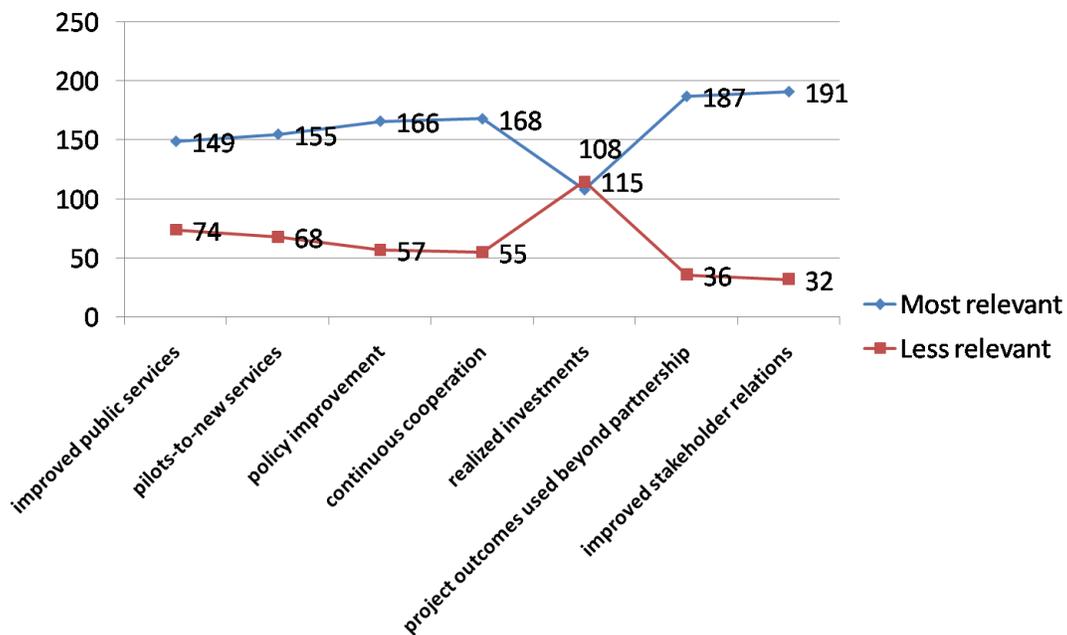
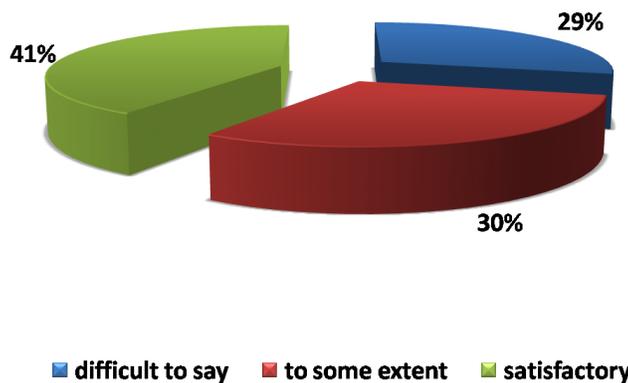


Figure 5 Number of votes for each sustainability criteria

In view of the above predefined criteria project partners were then asked to assess **how sustainable they think their project outcomes would be in their regions**. They could choose from a scale of 1 to 3: (1) “difficult to say”; (2) “to some extent”, i.e. at least one criterion fulfilled; and (3) “satisfactory”, i.e. at least three criteria fulfilled.



*To some extent = fulfills at least one predefined sustainability criteria*  
*Satisfactory = fulfills at least three predefined sustainability criteria*

Partners were also given the possibility to share additional comments and 68% of survey participants used this opportunity. About 35% of these respondents gave more or less **concrete examples** of how SEE effects are sustained in their regions.

One such instance is installing photovoltaic panels on the local administration building in Banja Luka (BiH) as part of a demonstration and awareness-raising action for renewables (TERRE project).

Another example is using the tourism-related feasibility studies prepared by the TRANSDANUBE project to attract EU funds and private investors in the southern part of the Republic of Moldova.

Also the fact that the M2RES project outcomes have inspired Romanian companies to explore initiatives in producing energy from waste as reported by the Centre for Promotion of Clean and Efficient Energy in Bucharest.

SEE projects CC-WaterS and CC-Ware have improved collaboration between the forestry and water supply sector in the Vienna region (AT), which is to ensure measures are taken against water shortages under climate change conditions.

In another instance, Hungarian partners managed to start investment planned through the SETA project (i.e. aimed at improving freight rail transport in the region) by implementing measures for electrification of railways lines, modernization of Szombathely station and building a new wye track at Zalaszentistván.

Furthermore, the Local Development Agency Pins from Skrad (HR) reports increased interest of local SMEs from the wood sector into their services one year after the project's end, stating that improved services happened thanks to the capacity building effect of the ID:WOOD project.

An example of policy improvement was shared by the Geological and Geophysical Institute of Hungary, who report the development of the Hungarian minerals policy based on the SNAP-SEE results.

Local policy impact is reported for Arad (RO) where the integrated urban revitalisation plan was designed using the ViTo project methodology. The plan was adopted by the local council and new projects are in the pipeline to realise planned investment.

Finally, conservation activities undertaken in northern Italy by the BE-NATUR consortium attracted the attention of private companies who are now willing to support future actions.

These respondents offer **further sustainability factors**, such as the **increased awareness** or **capacity** of partner staff institutions and stakeholders on project-related topics. For example, the City of Zagreb (HR) shares the positive effects of capacity building workshops for public administration staff in the field of energy efficiency held through the TRACE project. Also partners refer to **capitalisation of project results** in terms of using them as starting point for new initiatives or spin-offs. For instance, the Institute for Spatial Planning in Bratislava has used software decision-support tools and the GIS portal created through the Donauregionen+ project (spatial development concept for the Danube region) in several new initiatives.

## How do project partners support sustainability?

Sustainability may depend on stakeholder goodwill; however, it also depends on project partners, as well. So we asked them how they plan to continue working on the positive changes already initiated through SEE projects. 79% of survey respondents provided sufficiently clear information on their future plans. Overall, there seem to be **five main courses of action**:

- 1) **41%** of respondents say they maintain **continuous cooperation with at least some project partners in other formats**, i.e. frameworks other than European territorial cooperation, e.g. bi-lateral, informal networks.

The Southeast Europe Research Centre located in Thessaloniki (GR) informs us that they continue cooperating with a number of partners from SEE innovation-related projects (i.e. INTERVALUE, SEE Science, VIBE) on a bilateral basis. For example, together with some former VIBE partners they created the [SUPERFOUNDERS](#) accelerator aimed at supporting Balkan start-ups.

The Centre for Social Innovation based in Vienna (AT) states that they still collaborate with 50% of project partners from EVAL-INNO and FORSEE even on topics linking indirectly to their SEE experience.

- 2) **Capitalising project results**, e.g. through new funding for realizing planned investment or for extending achievement effects by building upon them - this is the plan of **39%** of respondents.

Bologna implemented a pilot to improve rail transport services with the help of RAIL4SEE project. After the project's end the pilot has grown into a larger scale action funded through regional and national resources.

Open Youth Institute from Sofia (BG) was a partner in the ROSEE project focusing on improving road safety. They are using lessons learned in that project in a new initiative supported from Erasmus+, i.e. [IMPACT](#), implemented between 2015 and 2017.

- 3) Preparing **follow-up cooperation projects** is the course of action planned or already undertaken by **38%** of the respondents to this question.

Forest Association Styria (AT) was involved in two SEE projects on similar topics (innovation in the wood sector), i.e. ID:WOOD and FOROPA. Using the outcomes of these projects they prepared new cooperation initiatives seeking funding through Horizon 2020, Alpine Space and Central Europe. Furthermore a locally-focused project was submitted to national funding authorities in September 2015. Another 3 local projects are being implementing with the association's own funds and the support of local stakeholders.

The Environmental Protection Agency of Covasna (RO) indicates that outcomes of the ORIENTGATE project (climate change adaptation) were integrated into a new project seeking support from INTERREG EUROPE, through which part of the original partnership wishes to continue cooperation.

- 4) Incorporating project knowledge in partner activities or **taking-up project results** incl. by stakeholders (**15%**)

The City of Zagreb (HR), who was a partner in the TRACE project addressing energy efficiency and performance of buildings, reports that project results facilitate current administration tasks related to the public building stock.

Thanks to tests of advanced traveler information services using real-time traffic data in Thessaloniki supported through the SEE-ITS project the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (GR) established cooperation with regional authorities. This, in turn, resulted in transforming pilots into permanent services for the citizens.

Danube Floodrisk produced a set of models to help plan flood event prevention and mitigation measures. The models are now used by relevant national authorities in Danube riparian countries, as well as by researchers who build upon them.

5) **Dissemination** and promotional activities to spread project knowledge and outputs (15%)

The Automobile Association of Slovenia cooperated on two different aspects of road safety with the SENSOR and ROSEE projects. SENSOR road risk mapping activities produced a lot of useful data, which various Slovenian stakeholders are now keen to utilize.

PPP4Broadband partners created [Centres of Excellence](#) in partner regions as dissemination channels for the main project outcomes and for capitalising on achievements. According to the Bulgarian partner, the Technical University of Gabrovo, partners continue updating the main project platform with fresh data.

In general, survey respondents highlight **more than one course of action for achieving sustainability.**

Long-lasting effects from SEE projects can be expected in the cases where relations with stakeholders were positively influenced by the cooperation process, as well as in the instances where SEE outputs have been taken-up by institutions beyond original partnerships. Survey respondents are confident that at least 71% of achievements have a good chance of sustainability. Provided examples give insight into how project partners view durable project effects. The fact that almost 80% of surveyed partners are also intent on continuing initiated positive changes is encouraging.

## Project partner advice for future transnational cooperation programme services

The last part of the final evaluation survey sought to assess the satisfaction with support services for SEE applicants and beneficiaries provided both at programme - Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), and national - SEE Contact Points (SCPs) level. Respondents provided also valuable recommendations for what can be improved in the SEE successor programmes.

74% recounted their experience with SEE Contact Point (SCPs) services and shared ideas for improving national-level support structures. Of these, 37% declared their satisfaction with services provided by NCPs.

However, ca. **30% would appreciate stronger SCP support during project implementation**, e.g. to explain programme rules, help with reporting and First Level Control (FLC) procedures, stakeholder outreach, and even with project result dissemination. Also ca. 10% think the SCP staff would benefit from capacity building activities that would make them more helpful in providing project implementation guidance. Finally, 9% would expect cutting the red tape mainly concerning FLC procedures.

58% of respondents shared comments on the work of the JTS and 36% of those express their satisfaction with the JTS services. The reason for the lower response rate could be that most of survey participants were project partners with little contact experience with the JTS. In general, European Territorial Cooperation rules prescribe that Secretariats maintain contact mainly with project lead partners.

**24%** of respondents **see room for improvement in JTS services in the more timely and constructive guidance for project generation and management**. This group would expect intensified contacts with project partners (not only lead partners) as well as more frequent instructional events. In addition, **23% wish for less red tape** and simpler reporting procedures. They would also appreciate more flexibility. Around 9% of partners would like to see quicker report approval and reimbursement of funds.

## Annex I Online survey template

The online survey template can be viewed by following this link:

<https://form.jotformeu.com/52004056143340>

The 223 completed forms are stored in the SEE Secretariat's archived documents and will be available for reference upon request to the SEE Managing Authority.

## Annex II Examples of recognizable outcomes

- ☑ Together with project partners we examined the infrastructural and organisational improvements, which could make the SETA corridor more attractive for freight and passenger transport. For example, a feasibility study made it clear that the travel time between Vienna and Zagreb can be reduced significantly through e.g. electrification of the missing lines and building a new way track at Zalaszentistván in Hungary. The studies elaborated in this project can serve as a supporting material for the future developments. **SETA (GYSEV ZRT., HU)**
- ☑ We now use the tools SIVA pilots produced in planning broadband investments. In particular, the cost reduction assessment tool for broadband network expansions, and the planning tool for identifying areas where development of information and communication technology is needed. **SIVA (GR)**
- ☑ The main focus of the project was to promote the use of cultural values for development. This was achieved through networking, stakeholder involvement in all project activities, and building the capacity of cultural site managers and practitioners following a transnational methodology. Thanks to SUSTCULT we designed the Management Plan for the Historical Town Centre of Berat and its buffer zone and promoted Albanian heritage sites on the project WEB GIS Platform. Also we now have a ready Business Plan and Marketing Strategy for the selected sites in the Historic Center of Berat. **SUTSCULT (AL)**
- ☑ ClusterPoliSEE reports and recommendations along with those of 2 similar projects - Clusterix and Clustrad - were presented to the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy as main relevant policy maker, as well as to the Association of Clusters in Bulgaria. As a result a cluster accreditation system has been prepared to be introduced in the next few months based on the experience of Hungary and Austria. The project know-how will be used in delivering the OP Innovation and competitiveness 2015-2020, i.e. to create synergies between key enabling technologies and traditional industries and fund new measures for clusters' support. **ClusterPoliSEE (BG)**
- ☑ Since many regional railways suffer from difficult economic downturn our partnership wanted to investigate whether incorporating them into tourism and

- leisure activities could bring them back to life. A consultancy analysed 18 regional railways in partner countries and made recommendations for concrete measures. We are proud that the [Mariazeller Bahn](#), operated by the partner NÖVOG in Lower Austria, is now very successful on the tourist market thanks also to recommendations worked out in the frame of **Access2Mountain (AT)**.
- ☑ The most recognizable outcome is signposting of the **Iron Curtain Trail** in Serbia financed by Serbian Ministry of Trade, telecommunications and tourism which came after we produced the relevant strategy documents in the SEE project. Also as result of the **Transdanube** project, soft mobility became part of the new Serbian Tourism strategy (2015-2020). **(RS)**
  - ☑ Inclusion of the project for a sustainable production area in Sežana, for which we made a feasibility study through SEPA, into the regional development programme for 2014-2020. **SEPA (SI)**
  - ☑ **SENSOR** developed road colour-coded risk maps showing the rate of death and serious injuries on 27,000 km of roads in 10 countries including Slovakia. Also the consortium did Road safety Star Rating, i.e. an inspection vehicle screened 19,000 roads in partner countries and the resultant material was then analysed against safety 30 factors affecting crash rates. Star Rating was done for all 8 NUTS3 regions of Slovakia. Based on these Safe Road Investment Plans were produced with the help of an online tool for each partner country. They can be used as a free-standing scheme, or as part of road maintenance programmes, or as rehabilitation schemes. **SENSOR (SK)**
  - ☑ **Datourway** project outcomes resulted in new initiatives undertaken by our stakeholders. For example, through the project we, as Regional Development Agency, set up the Network of Tourism Stakeholders in the Croatian Danube Area, i.e. Osijek-Baranja and Vukovar-Srijem counties. Joint work within this network has led to new tourist initiatives and projects incl. private market reactions, some of these having a cross-border component with Hungary and Serbia. Here we can mention, e.g. PIADER-Programme for Tourism Investment Attraction in the Drava Eco-Region; CROSS MARKETING ACROSS BORDERS- Innovative Marketing, Management and Funding Strategies in Practice for Event Organisers; Central Danube ConnecTour, etc. **DATOURWAY (HR)**
  - ☑ In the **TRANSDANUBE** project one of the outcomes for us was a feasibility study that examined how we can connect our region of Bakony Hills to the Eurovelo 6

bicycle route. The other outcome was the soft mobility tourist packages targeting people who come to discover our region by bike. In the packages we give advice where to stay, eat or how the tourists can reach their destination. We also offer our bicycle rental network. **TRANSDANUBE (HU)**

- ☑ An Energy Investment Forum (office) was established in the Municipality of Piraeus. The aim of the EIF is to link public institutions, citizens and investors for the implementation of energy projects. The Piraeus EIF staff already prepared grant applications worth EUR 1,5 million to install 15 photovoltaic panels in city schools, replace inefficient lighting and implement additional energy efficiency measures. **TRACE (GR)**
- ☑ After our participation in BE-NATUR we observe improved cooperation with regional and local stakeholders with whom we continue pilot projects started in the SEE project. For instance, we continue with the adapted sustainable management of special wetland areas with horse power. In the SEE pilot “Pferdeheu” we collaborated with land owners, farmers, Natura2000 site managers, the Styrian League of Nature Protection and the Work Horse Association) on an indirect management approach for protected wetlands in Ausseerland and the Enns Valley. As a result the Province Government of Styria highly recommended “Pferdeheu” as very important intervention for nature protection and the maintenance of biodiversity. They included this measure the new Austrian ÖPUL Programme (Agri-environmental Programme to enhance environmentally-friendly management of agricultural areas) starting 2014/2015, so that it can be applied in other relevant protected areas as well. After the BE-NATUR closure we continue with awareness raising activities linked to inland water habitats, e.g. excursions, science days and science weeks that we organise at local Natura 2000 sites for interested people. **BE-NATUR (Agricultural Research and Education Centre Raumberg-Gumpenstein, AT)**
- ☑ The most recognizable outcome was the piloting of a cross-country regional foresight exercise in the Digital Content sector based on a specific methodology of the FORSEE project. This was an unique multi-country level exercise involving 8 SEE countries and 13 partner organisations. **FORSEE (RO)**

- ☑ We prepared a [feasibility study](#) for Potenza for the deployment of renewable energy sources in our region that will be implemented as a project with the new ERDF OP. **ENER-SUPPLY (Basilicata, IT)**
- ☑ Thanks to HINT in Rousse we launched an Information and Training Center to promote professions in the field of inland waterway transport. A concept for a transnational training river ship was developed in the consortium that will seek further support in the future. **HINT (BG)**
- ☑ TRANSDANUBE supported the creation of tourist information centers in 14 local museums with special signs and equipped with mobile exhibition stands. Through the project we were able to develop a tourist manual and a feasibility study for tourist locations in the southern part of the Republic of Moldova. **TRANSDANUBE (Association of Tourism Development in Moldova)**
- ☑ The most recognizable outcomes from MMWD for us are the reference methodologies for population projections and policy scenarios that take into account migrants and migration movements. **MMWD (BG)**
- ☑ Danube FIS (Fairway Information Services) Portal : [www.danubeportal.com](http://www.danubeportal.com)  
**NEWADA (AT)**
- ☑ We managed to bring together almost all significant organisations that are active in the forest-based industry in our region. This has resulted in new joint activities also after the end of project's lifetime. **ID:WOOD (SI)**
- ☑ Our organization has gained new and more professional experience based on cooperation during SEE projects. Albanian NGOs are more capable to initiate projects and have competent staff. **ENER-SUPPLY, M2RES, TRACE (AL)**
- ☑ The main outcome in the Marche region was the pilot action -P.U.L.S.E. - Pushing Policy Makers- Skills to Leverage Smart Economy. This was a training activity aimed at reinforcing the regional policy makers' competencies and skills in managing clusters and smart specialization, also using the e-learning **ClusterPoliSEE** platform (<http://www.clusterpolisees3.eu/>). The main achievement is the increasing of the competences and skills for all the participants. It also provided awareness of policy makers in respect to the important role of clusters as innovation hubs and it gave the basis to prepare the participants in facing challenges related with innovation and competitiveness of SMEs at transnational level. Moreover, P.U.L.S.E. highlighted some aspects on clusters of particular importance to understand

- how they can: a) provide competitive advantages to businesses in the development of innovation, in terms of cost, organization, production management and marketing; b) intensify the collaboration between the production system and the scientific system; c) facilitate the transfer of practical knowledge and skills in manufacturing processes. **(IT)**
- ☑ The main outcome in the Marche region was the testing of application of a Customer Relation Management (CRM) tool in selected SMEs. Such systems require low investment and are designed to facilitate the company in managing regional or global operations and relationships with suppliers and customers by elaborating and processing market data. The level of satisfaction with the pilot in Marche was high among involved SMEs, who reported they would continue using this system in the future. **Asviloc Plus, Marche (IT)**
  - ☑ One outcome is the definition of a Common Frame of performance characteristics for a ‘mild home’, i.e. a residential building (house) of near-zero energy needs that has a do-it-yourself option and is affordable to low-income people. Using these characteristics we developed a Market Analysis for such buildings tailored to the needs of the town of Feltre (Belluno Province, IT). Analysis outcomes helped us launch a design competition for the construction of ‘mild homes’ in a pilot area of the town. By the end of the project we were able to initiate an investment process that will see the realisation of an eco-green village utilizing the ‘mild home’ methodology. Further to that, the SEE project help partners stimulate local supply chain for building energy efficient structures like ‘mild homes’. Our Transnational Supplier Database contains data about 314 companies and 824 products in the area whose services can be used for the replication of the mild home and eco-green village concepts. The know-how for realisation these concepts is gathered in our final publication: [How to build and Eco Green Village based on MILD HOME](#). **MILD HOME (Venice, IT)**
  - ☑ The most recognizable outcomes are the implementation of a sharrow in Maribor (i.e. shared-lane marking indicating that part of a road is shared with cyclists) and a cyclist counter display (i.e. traffic technology literally counting bikes) for increased road safety in Piran. **ROSEE (SI)**
  - ☑ The most seen outcome from my SEE project in my region is a territorial operational plan which supports public in Croatia to develop and advance

- policies for improving the energy efficiency in buildings and implement the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive successfully. Further, an Energy Investment Forum was set up on the web page of the Croatian Covenant of Mayors Club, which is very useful for Croatian cities to find investors for energy projects. **Envision 2020, TRACE (HR)**
- ☑ Through the EASE&SEE project our local business support unit facilitated the set of a public- private partnership, i.e. a local agreement between a social enterprise and three traditional Venetian manufacturers. By using luxury tissue and glass scraps offered by the manufacturers, the social cooperative created a new fashion upcycling collection with high social and environmental added value. Other social cooperatives located in the Veneto area, who were involved in the project, expanded their market potential and activated new business relationships outside their traditional business arena. **EASE&SEE (IT)**
  - ☑ Pilot project from Giurgeni for a photovoltaic power plant of 0,5 MW and the legislative provisions approved by the local council, which banned PV plants to be built on agricultural land. The research realised during M2RES project was the way to learn the latest about waste to energy technologies like plasma gasification, which will be implemented as a pilot project in a poultry farm in Romania. **M2RES (RO)**
  - ☑ The climate change adaptation strategy for wetland ecosystems of Attica Region of Greece was endorsed by the Regional Authority. The strategy is based on climatic parameter research and geospatial data collected through the ORIENTGATE strategic project. **ORIENTGATE (GR)**
  - ☑ The most recognizable outcomes for us are the functional spatial decision support system (SDSS) online portal and a [GIS portal](#), which include the area of all (three) Slovak Danube regions (NUTS3). In addition, new public planning services were created in the Nitra Self-Governing County on the basis of the projects' outputs. The project also helped boost the cooperation of the Slovak NUTS3 regions and the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development in the field of spatial planning and in preparation of new interregional projects in that field. Donauregionen+ methods for spatial indicator comparison and aggregation were used in some other projects in the area of Bratislava County, e.g. in developing socio-economic analyses of the city Bratislava and the town of Senec). **Donauregionen+ (SK)**

- The cooperation in the WANDA project increased our stakeholders' awareness about the issue of ship waste management. In addition, through the pilot actions we upgraded and further extended the network of ship waste collection facilities in the Slovak stretch of the river Danube. **WANDA (SK)**
- The JEWEL Model project enabled us to establish a one-of-a-kind urban centre for participatory urban regeneration projects in our region. It also gave us know-how for the organisation of a creative and cultural industries incubator. **JEWEL Model (Centru, RO)**
- Smart mix of dissemination and educational activities resulting into increased capacities and expertise of public actors concerning the use of public-private partnership (PPP) models for broadband deployment. The PPP models developed in the project framework. **PPP4Broadband (RO)**
- The most easily seen outcome of our project is the core network established among ports of two seas (the Mediterranean and Black sea). These sea areas are afflicted by the same problems and can benefit from developing common solutions, e.g. by sharing policies and best practices. **ECOPORT8, TEN ECOPORT (IT)**
- Preparation of national applications for UNESCO World Heritage Site status in the participating countries **Danube Limes Brand (AT)**
- Joining the No-Ble Ideas network made possible the organisation of an international meeting of investors, innovators and entrepreneurs from all partner countries in Bulgaria as part of the project international competition for best innovation ideas. **NOBLE Ideas (BG)**
- The networking effect in the pilot area of Nafpaktos, which served as a case study for the project, was impressive. It tested the project methodology for assessing the vulnerability of cultural sites to human activities. The international visibility helped engage local stakeholders and redirect relevant ROP activities in the area. **CHERPLAN (GR)**
- Establishment of a collaboration network on a specific topic including large industries, SMEs, intermediaries, and research units on national and on cross-border level. **FOROPA, ID:WOOD (AT)**
- The agricultural adaptation measures identified during the pilot study and disseminated in the region to the main stakeholders. **ORIENTGATE (RO)**

- Iron Curtain Trail** helped us integrate our regional "Three Rivers" bicycle route into the EuroVelo 13 route. This involved setting up a regional action plan and feasibility studies for the missing (connecting) sections. The **Build SEE** project helped us develop a case study about the social regeneration project of Pécs-Kelet area, so that others can learn from Hungarian experience. (South Transdanubia, **HU**)
- Inauguration of a green terminal facility for ship waste management on the Hungarian stretch of the river Danube. **WANDA (HU)**
- Trained team for supporting Croatian SMEs from the wood sector. That kind of support is now recognized by SMEs which start to use these services. **ID:WOOD, (HR)**
- DANUBEPARKS** enabled the protected areas along the Danube to establish a network for sustainable cooperation and develop a "trademark label". Today, DANUBEPARKS is well known, recognized and respected as a key stakeholder for nature conservation along the Danube. It is recognized as a good practice for transnational cooperation for nature protection not least through the Natura 2000 Award 2015 we received from the European Commission. (**AT**)
- The Tisa catchment area (19.5% of the Danube River Basin) is territory shared by five countries and faces challenges of environmental, economic, infrastructure, and social character. Following a series of national studies focused on regional development, climate change impact, and natural and anthropogenic risks of the Romanian Tisa River stretch, we became aware that a joint transnational approach to the above mentioned challenges was highly required. Then we were invited to contribute to the TICAD project to help improve public awareness about the need of acting together, create a common database to support transnationally coordinated decision-making, and formulate recommendations for interconnected actions at the transnational, national and regional levels. The most important outcome for us was the Territorial Analysis of the Romanian Tisa Catchment Area and the Development Strategy of the Someş Catchment Area (Tisa tributary). They exemplify cross-border development strategies for strategically important sub-basins of the Danube. **TICAD (RO)**
- Thanks to ROSEE a new school curriculum for the subject "Road Safety Education for Road Risks Prevention" (optional school course) was elaborated

- and it got approved by the Romanian Ministry of Education. Starting with September 2015, parents of kids in primary school can opt for this course and add it in their kid's programme. Another tangible result from the project was that several improvements were made to the road safety environment in various locations around Bucharest. Within the project we held professional training courses for people involved in road safety inspections and audits or participating in tendering of road construction works. More than 100 persons were involved from the public as well as private sector. **ROSEE (Bucharest, RO)**
- ☑ Valuable studies and analyses covering all aspects of digitalization process (legal, technical, economic, communications) have been produced as project deliverables and made available to Bosnian national authorities. **SEE digi.TV, (BiH)**
  - ☑ Increased awareness among domestic companies regarding foreign market demands. **ID:WOOD (BiH)**
  - ☑ Multi-sectoral Agreement on the development of the Hungarian Drava section signed by 20+ stakeholder organisation. **SEE RIVER (HU)**
  - ☑ Elaborated wild fire risk map for the region of Velingrad Municipality following SEERISK's methodology and using the project software tool. **SEERISK (BG)**
  - ☑ The set up of a new assurance program through which farms can protect maize production without using pesticide and can lower production costs. **Guarden (Veneto, IT)**
  - ☑ Improved services provided to users of the inland waterway. **NEWADA (BG)**
  - ☑ The creation of an urban center, i.e. a space dedicated to a participative process for urban planning linked to the urban regeneration. **Jewel Model (IT)**
  - ☑ The most noticeable outcome from one of our SEE projects (GeoSEE) is the interest from experts operating in the field of geothermal energy regarding the conceptual designs of the hybrid RES systems. **GeoSEE (SI)**
  - ☑ From scientific point of view becoming part of studies of species and environment of such great scope was the best outcome of the project. Probably the most visible is the pilot action of restoring a small forest of Black poplar on the bank of the Danube. **Danubeparks Step 2.0 (BG)**
  - ☑ An integrated territorial offer in order to attract further foreign direct investments through available public-owned real estate. The offer has made it

possible to attract a good number of companies to our industrial parks in City of Oradea. **POLYINVEST (RO)**

- Influence to the Greek Minerals Policy that was announced in 2012. **SARMa, SNAP-SEE (GR)**