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# CONSULTATION PROCESS

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Description of the consultation process with the stakeholders during elaboration of situation analysis. Methodology of consultations, main findings of consultations

## CBJointStrategy

Elaborating strategic programming and project documents for Interreg Programme between Hungary and Croatia for the period 2021-2027

February 28, 2020

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## 1. Introduction

The elaboration of the Situation Analysis was supported by an intensive consultation process combining various ways of collecting inputs from a wide range of stakeholders:

- Territorial workshops;
- Interviews;
- Online questionnaire-based survey,

The implementation timeline of the consultation activities was as follows:

Tasks	Schedule
Online questionnaire survey	January 24 – February 10, 2020
Thematic interviews (10)	February 5-27, 2020
Territorial workshops (7)	February 18-25, 2020

## 2. Online questionnaire survey

The 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire survey of the project was conducted by the HBH-Logframe Consortium between January 24, 2020 and February 10, 2020, with active contributions from Pannon EGTC, the counties of the programme area and the Joint Secretariat (JS) of the Interreg V-A Hungary-Croatia Cooperation Programme itself. The bilingual (HU-HR) questionnaire was prepared in a way to minimise the effort required from respondents, but to support both the situation analysis and the impact assessment phases of the CB Joint Strategy project.

Survey topics were arranged along the 2021-2027 priority areas of the EU cohesion policy. The following sources were scanned to establish a comprehensive list of potential survey topics:

- Proposal for Common Provisions Regulation, COM(2018) 375;
- Proposal for ERDF and Cohesion Fund regulation, COM(2018) 372;
- Proposal for ETC regulation, COM(2018) 374;
- Baseline study on capacity development of Pannon EGTC and action planning of the Drava Basin (KÖFOP 3.3.3-15. 2016-00002) – 2018;
- Inception Report of the CB Joint Strategy project – 2019;
- Border Orientation Paper Hungary-Croatia – 2019;
- First Phase evaluation of the Hungary-Croatia INTERREG V-A Programme – 2019;
- Actual questionnaires used in the evaluation of cross-border areas and previous cross-border programs – 2013, 2018.

Most important methods considered when preparing the questionnaire were the following:

- In order to motivate and ease information provision, the questionnaire was concise, relying mainly on closed-ended questions (e.g. YES/NO; scales, etc.) At the same time, it offered the opportunity to express criticism and improvement initiatives.
- The survey collected inputs on development goals and cooperation considerations of stakeholders.

- As existing baseline data is not comparable and consistent in some areas, the survey had to provide information on both the current status, and the perceived trends over the past decade.
- Two-dimensional scale evaluation was used for each survey topic: (1) relative development between 2010-2020 (on a scale of minus 3 to plus 3); (2) future importance (on a scale of 1-5). This way, both the past/present tendencies and the future preferences can be analysed for various geographic and sectoral segments, in case of all topics. Note: Zero was excluded from the scale of minus 3 to plus 3, in order to encourage relevant, value-adding answers.

At the same time, basic rules for questionnaire construction were also regarded, including:

- Statements used could be interpreted in the same way by members of different subgroups of stakeholders;
- An open answer category was added to each list of possible answers;
- No assumptions were made about respondents;
- Wording was easily understandable for all educational levels;
- Biased questions were avoided.

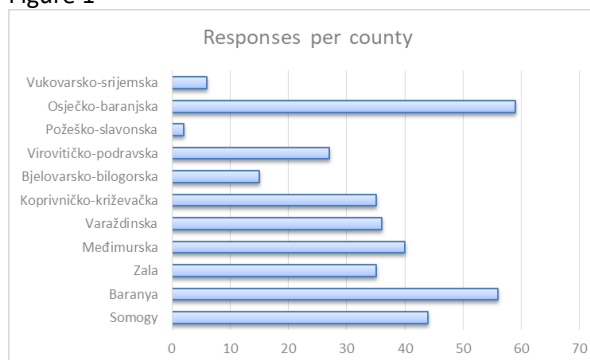
The JS acted as formal host of the survey, while the HBH-Logframe Consortium provided content and helpdesk for the communication and analysis of the responses. The bilingual letter containing the link to the survey was sent to 2,469 targeted stakeholders, including 312 Lead Beneficiaries of former and ongoing HU-HR projects, 879 stakeholders proposed by the counties of the programme area, and 1,278 other partners of the JS (including Project Beneficiaries and other registered recipients of JS newsletters), generally representing the following sectors:

- Local governments (counties, municipalities);
- Public authorities (labour, transport, environment, culture, etc. institutions);
- Business support organisations (enterprise development agencies and foundations, chambers, innovation agencies, industrial parks, business incubators, etc.);
- Enterprises (major employers, development consultancies and experts, tourism service providers);
- NGOs (civil organisations active in social care, culture, tourism, sport, etc.);
- Educational institutions (secondary, vocational, adult and higher education);
- Health and social care institutions.

Upper level stakeholders (including NAs, MAs, national ministries, JS) were not included in the questionnaire survey, as their experience and expectations are channelled through more effective consultation activities (consultation, iterative development, monitoring, interviews).

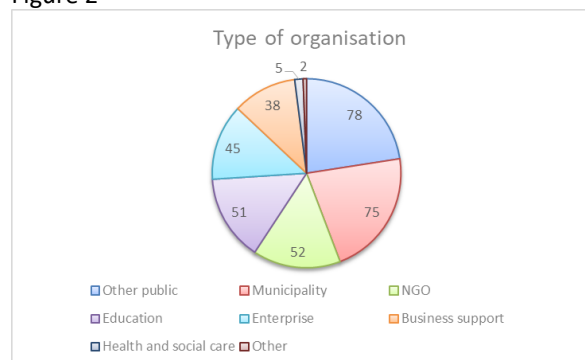
While the Inception Report of the project aimed a sample of at least 100 local actors, the actual turnout of the online survey produced 346 valid (properly filled) answers (Figure 1 and 2).

Figure 1



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Figure 2



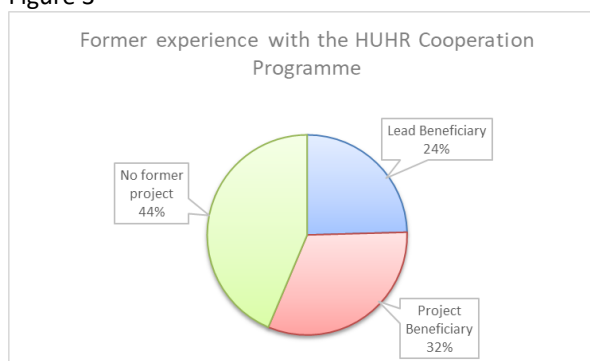
Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

The territorial spread of responses shows a proper balance between the targeted counties, except for the two Croatian territories furthest away from the border (Požeško-slavonska and Vukovarsko-srijemska counties) – apparently the least interested and with the lowest level of motivation to participate within the HU-HR Cooperation Programme area. The number of valid responses from Požeško-slavonska county was so low (2), that it did not allow comprehensive statistical analysis and therefore this county was excluded from the analysis of the survey.

The sectoral typology shows an equal representation of all major stakeholder segments. This balance and the high number of responses allow reliable factual data to be extrapolated and to supplement gaps in available statistics, precisely indicating trends and regional differences as perceived by local stakeholders within the programme area.

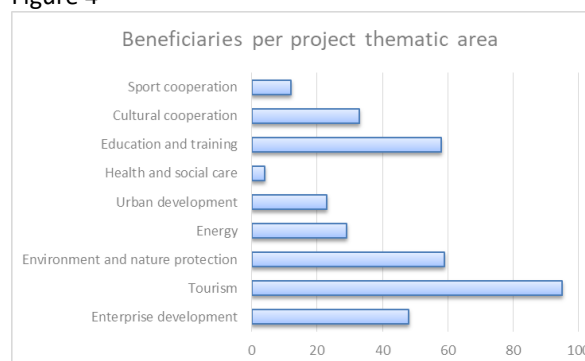
Respondents equally represent beneficiaries of former or ongoing projects, with hands-on experience on the programme, and newcomers potentially interested in the 2021-2027 period (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Figure 4



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Themes represented by the highest number of former or ongoing projects of Lead Beneficiaries and Project Beneficiaries (representing 24% and 32% of all respondents) were tourism (95), followed by environment and nature protection (59), education and training (58) and enterprise development (48 projects).

### 3. Thematic interviews

Ten thematic interviews with key actors were organised and implemented in order to gather information on the present situation of the programme area and also to collect the preferences of relevant stakeholders about the directions of the new programme. Interviews conducted by Pannon EGTC and the HBH-Logframe Consortium were conducted either as In-depth individual interviews (focusing on technical topics, as well as the individual's knowledge, plans and attitudes), or group interviews (interview with 3-5 people focusing on the same topics).

Each thematic interview was conducted based on the same structure of topics to be covered:

- Most important positive (strengths/weaknesses) and negative (opportunities/threats) aspects of the Hungary-Croatia border area.
- How could cross-border cooperation promote these objectives in the area?
- Appraisal of the interventions and the performance of the selected thematic objectives (TO3, TO6, TO11, TO10) and specific objectives of the 2014-2020 programme.
- Preferred policy objectives and specific interventions for the 2021-2027 period.
- Assessment of project development/implementation capacities in the border area, areas to be improved.

Based on the symmetry principle, 5-5 interviews were planned on both sides of the programme area. Subjects to be interviewed were selected to represent all territorial areas (from national levels to counties) and all priority objectives (with PO5 considered as a horizontal area addressed under all other objectives), according to the following matrix (Figure 5).

Area	PO1: Smart	PO2a: Green	PO2b: Low carbon	PO3: Connected	PO4: Social
Croatia					
National level	Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds (February 5 2020)				
Međimurska			MENEA (Feb 11, 2020)		
Koprivničko-križevačka		KK county (Feb 19, 2020)			
Virovitičko-podravska	VIDRA (February 21, 2020)				
Osječko-baranjska				OB county (Feb 25, 2020)	
Hungary					
National level	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Managing Authority (Feb 20, 2020)				
	Széchenyi Programming Office, JS (Feb 25, 2020)				
Baranya		University of Pécs (Feb 27, 2020)			
Somogy	SMVKA (Feb 11, 2020)				
Zala				Zala County (Feb 24, 2020)	

Figure 5: Breakdown of interviews by counties and sectors.

Source: own compilation.

## 4. Territorial workshops

The aim of the territorial workshops implemented was to create interest towards the programme, by involving all main stakeholders into the programming process thus transforming it into a real co-creating process. Main purposes included:

- Brief the stakeholders about the process of programming;
- Share preliminary findings of the situation analysis and get feedback;
- Inform the stakeholders about the framework conditions in the new programming period, the role of cross-border cooperation and the available policy objectives;
- Get acquainted with the experience of previous cooperation programmes;
- Get to know preferred development priorities.

All implemented workshops had two main thematic parts:

- In the first phase the stakeholders were informed about the results of the descriptive analysis, pointing out the main characteristics of the different thematic areas. Attendees gave their opinion and modification requests to the analysis.
- In the second phase proposals on the 2021-2027 cohesion policy and policy objectives were presented in relation to the new Interreg Programme between Hungary and Croatia, and preliminary results of the Online questionnaire survey were highlighted. Stakeholders expressed their opinion and preferences on the POs. As a result, a development map of development ideas was prepared for each workshop location, reflecting the joint development preferences of county stakeholders.

Target groups invited for the workshops included:

- local governments (county, cities);
- local and county level public authorities (transport, environment, culture etc.);
- business organisations;
- NGOs;
- development agencies;
- educational organisations, universities;
- programme management bodies;
- relevant experts of different thematic fields.

Territorial workshops were organised in programme area counties:

- Three events were implemented in Hungary:
  - o Baranya County: February 20, 2020, Pécs;
  - o Somogy County: February 21, 2020, Kaposvár;
  - o Zala County: February 24, 2020, Zalaegerszeg.
- Four events were implemented in Croatia:
  - o Međimurska – Varaždinska counties: February 18, 2020, Čakovec;
  - o Koprivničko-križevačka – Bjelovarsko-bilogorska counties: February 19, 2020, Križevci;
  - o Virovitičko-podravaska – Požeško-slavonska counties: February 21, 2020, Virovitica;
  - o Osječko-baranjska – Vukovarsko-srijemska counties: February 25, 2020, Osijek.

The workshops were held in national languages, and included meals (coffee break, lunch) for the participants. Invitations were sent out by the county presidents, and political representatives of host counties attend each event. Attendance of the workshops varied between 27-46, the total number of invitees taking part in the events was 248.

## 5. Main findings of the consultation process for the situation analysis

### PO1 A smarter Europe

Stakeholders in Koprivničko-križevačka and Baranya counties reported the lowest levels of progress in terms of enterprise development and innovation, while the highest improvement was perceived by Virovitičko-podravka county. Respondents of the latter county (Virovitičko-podravka) proved to be the most optimistic among the counties of the programme area, as their average for perceived improvement was the highest in the case of 4 out of 5 policy objectives. On average, programme area stakeholders reported:

- the highest improvement in terms of ‘Development of production equipment’;
- medium progress in areas like ‘Cross-border cooperation of enterprises’, ‘Development of production technologies’ and ‘Innovation activities’;
- and lower figures for ‘Participation in professional networks’ and ‘Participation in dual education’.

The average improvement in the programme area was perceived as highest among the POs (0.97), while the standard deviation of county averages was medium (0.28).

Stakeholders listed ‘Development of production technologies’, ‘Development of production equipment’ and ‘Innovation activities’ as most important development priorities of the future, but generally prioritised PO1 areas as very important (with an average figure of 4.33 out of 5.00).

Figure 6



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Figure 7



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.



## PO2 A greener, low-carbon Europe

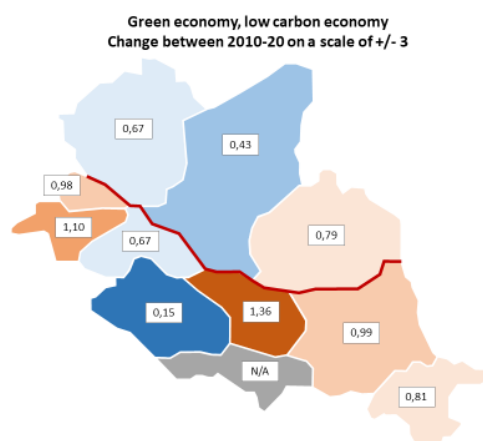
Stakeholders perceived slightly higher differences per county in terms of progress in green and low carbon economy, with Bjelovarsko-bilogorska county at the lowest end and Virovitičko-podravska county on the highest. On average, programme area stakeholders reported:

- very high improvement in 'Energy efficiency investments in the public/institutional sector';
- high improvement in 'Developing sustainable forms of tourism', 'Use of renewable energies' and 'Energy efficiency investments in the business sector';
- medium progress in 'Cross-border development of tourism attractions', 'Energy efficiency investments in the household sector', 'Protection of natural habitats', 'Pollution prevention', 'Use of low carbon forms of transportation' and 'Preference for local products or producers';
- low level of improvement in 'Fostering traditional craftsmanship' and 'Reduction of packaging waste';
- while only limited progress in terms of 'Circular economy solutions'.

The average improvement in the programme area was perceived as second highest among the POs (0.84), while the standard deviation of county averages was medium-high (0.34).

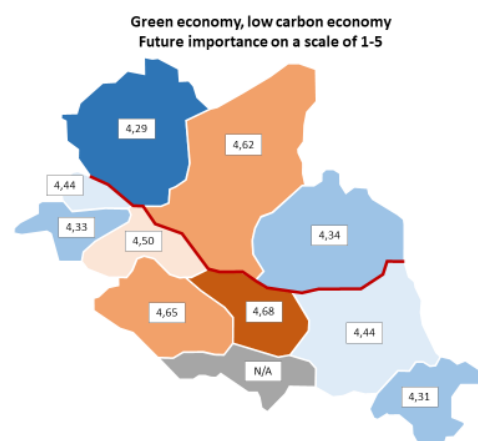
Stakeholders listed 'Pollution prevention', 'Protection of natural habitats', 'Reduction of packaging waste', 'Preference for local products or producers' and 'Developing sustainable forms of tourism' as most important development priorities of the future, but generally prioritised PO2 areas as extremely important (with an average figure of 4.45 out of 5.00).

Figure 8



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Figure 9



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

## PO3 A more connected Europe

Though regional differences can still be shown, stakeholders perceived the lowest differences in terms of PO3 areas (improvement of connectivity, accessibility and digitalisation) per county. Varaždinska and Vukovarsko-srijemska counties received the highest figures for progress perceived by local

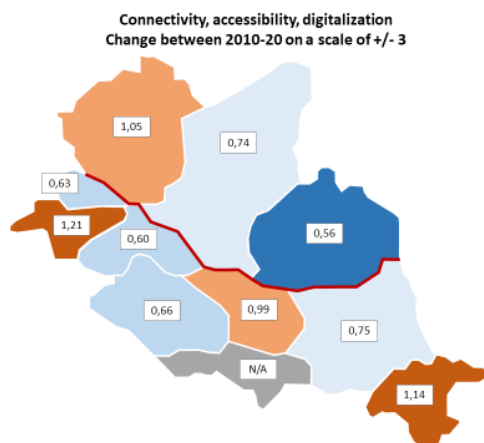
stakeholders, while Baranya received the lowest score. On average, programme area stakeholders reported:

- extremely high improvement in ‘Penetration of internet and digital communication’;
- high improvement in ‘Accessibility and use of e-services’, ‘Digital skills of working age citizens’, ‘Access to public administration, education and labour services’ and ‘Accessibility of the nearest border crossing’;
- medium progress in ‘Accessibility of regional administrative centre’, ‘Use of state-of-the-art IT solutions (cloud storage, AI)’, ‘Use of intelligent or smart city solutions (transportation, utilities, services)’ and ‘Cross-border employment’;
- low level of improvement in ‘Accessibility, quality and use of services across the border’;
- while reported actual degradation (-0.58) in terms of ‘Accessibility, quality and use of railway transportation’.

The average improvement in the programme area was perceived as third among the POs (0.82, almost equal to PO2 ranked as second), while the standard deviation of county averages was medium-low (0.24).

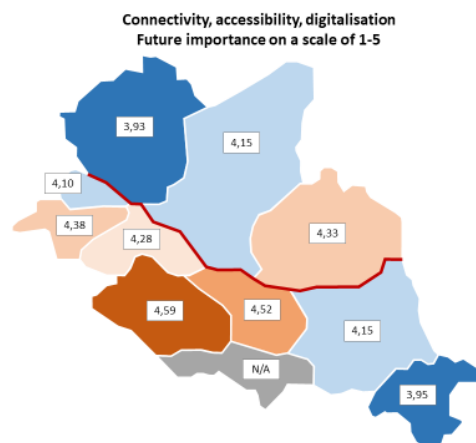
This is the policy objective, where the average future importance best correlates to the perceived progress of the past decade: usually counties showing the lowest progress ranked the policy area as most important in the future. Stakeholders listed ‘Digital skills of working age citizens’, ‘Penetration of internet and digital communication’, ‘Use of intelligent or smart city solutions (transportation, utilities, services)’ and ‘Accessibility and use of e-services’ as most important development priorities of the future, and generally prioritised PO3 areas as important (with an average figure of 4.24 out of 5.00).

Figure 10



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Figure 11



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

#### PO4 A more social Europe

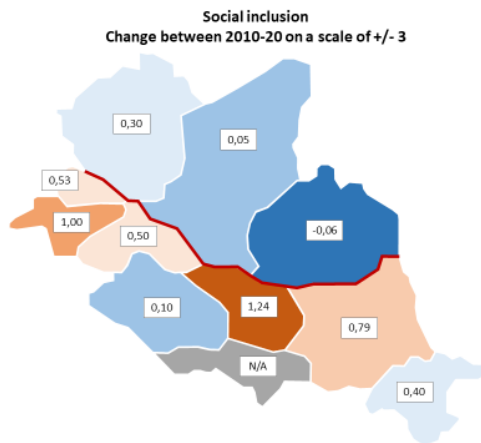
Stakeholders perceived the largest differences per county in terms of progress in social inclusion, with Baranya county at the lowest end and Virovitičko-podravska county on the highest. On average, programme area stakeholders reported:

- medium progress in 'Quality and accessibility of education and training services' and 'Social position and prospects of the local HU/HR minority',
- low level of improvement in 'Use of social innovation and civil participation solutions', 'Quality and accessibility of health and social care services' and 'Social position, integration and quality of life of elderly people',
- while only low progress in terms of 'Inclusion of Roma people in education and employment'.

The average improvement in the programme area was perceived as lowest (0.54), while the standard deviation of county averages was very high (0.42).

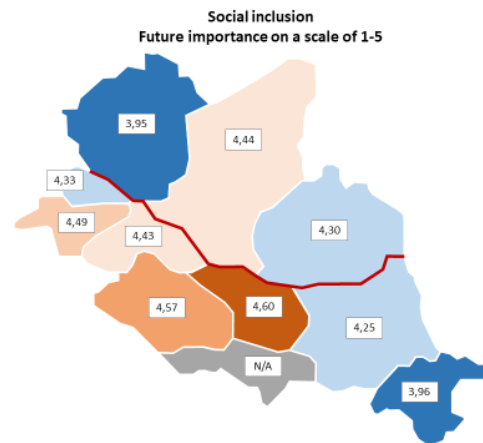
Stakeholders listed 'Social position, integration and quality of life of elderly people', 'Quality and accessibility of health and social care services' and 'Quality and accessibility of education and training services' as most important development priorities of the future (proportionally disfavouring the social position of ethnic minorities like Roma people and local HU/HR minorities), but generally prioritised PO4 areas as very important (with an average figure of 4.34 out of 5.00).

Figure 12



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Figure 13



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

## PO5 A Europe closer to citizens

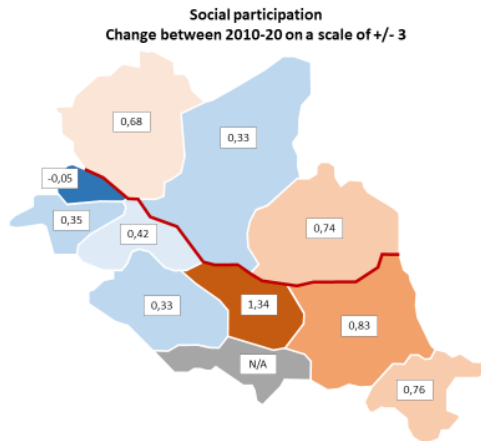
Stakeholders in Međimurska county reported the lowest levels of progress in terms of social participation, while the highest improvement was perceived once again by Virovitičko-podravska county. On average, programme area stakeholders reported:

- the highest improvement in terms of 'Willingness to cooperate with people, institutions or enterprises across the border',
- medium level in 'Cross-sectoral (public-private-civil) cooperation in research and innovation',
- lower level progress for 'Knowledge on the culture, traditions and history of people living across the border',
- while reported actual degradation (-0.18) in terms of 'HU/HR language skills of citizens'.

The average improvement in the programme area was perceived as fourth among the POs (0.60), while standard deviation of county averages was high (0.38).

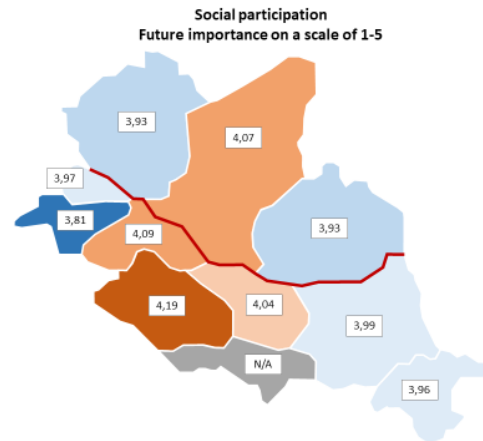
Stakeholders listed ‘Cross-sectoral (public-private-civil) cooperation in research and innovation’ and ‘Willingness to cooperate with people, institutions or enterprises across the border’ as most important development priorities of the future, but generally prioritised PO5 areas with lower relative importance (in comparison with other POs, with an average figure of 4.01 out of 5.00).

Figure 14



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.

Figure 15



Source: 1<sup>st</sup> online questionnaire based survey, HBH-Logframe Consortium.