**Stakeholder workshop**

**Hungary-Croatia Interreg Programme 2021-2027**

Date: 13 April 2021, 10:00

Thematic area: PO4, specific objective “education, training and lifelong learning”,
Interreg-specific objective (ISO) “a better cooperation governance”

List of participants:

1. Miroslava Bato, RA VIDRA, Miroslava.bato@ravidra.hr
2. Luka Magdić - Development Agency of Osijek-Baranja County
3. Zrinka Šajn, HU-HR JS, sajn@huhr-cbc.com
4. Robert Dudas, Pannon EGTC
5. Lorant Deme, HBH Strategy and Development Ltd,, deme.lorant@hbhe.hu
6. From RA VIDRA to Everyone: 10:42 AM
7. Damir Lajoš, Osijek-Baranja County, damir.lajos@obz.hr
8. Senada Ranilović, PORA Regional Development Agency of Koprivnica Križevci County, senada.ranilovic@pora.com.hr
9. Ana Kralj, Public Institution REDEA, ana.kralj@redea.hr
10. Márton Szűcs, Head of JS (SZPI), szucs@huhr-cbc.com
11. Krisztina Erdős, Széchenyi Programme Office, Horizontal Coordination, erdos.krisztina@szpi.hu
12. Tomislav Barbarić, ŽRA OBŽ, Tomislav.barbaric@obz.hr
13. Mladen Periša, Vukovar-Srijem County, mladen.perisa@vusz.hr
14. Richárd Gönczi, SZPI, gonczi.richard@szpi.hu
15. Sandra Majsan, Public Institution REDEA, sandra.majsan@redea.hr
16. Zoltán Tóth, Somogy County Government, toth.zoltan@som-onkorm.hu
17. Helena Valentić, Vukovar-Srijem County, helena.valentic@vusz.hr
18. Eszter Laib, Coordination Office for Municipalities/Ministry of Interior, Hungary
19. Ingrid Szabo, MFEA, Croatia
20. Perica Gabrić, MRDEUF, perica.gabric@mrrfeu.hr
21. Marija Krišto, Osijek-Baranja County, marija.kristo@obz.hr
22. György Márton, Logframe Ltd.
23. Zoltán Pámer, Logframe Ltd.

**Presentation is found in attachment.**

***Summary of discussion:***

**Zrinka Šajn (HU-HR JS)**: Given the number of selected projects for financing in both calls, it is not providing a clear picture. It would be worth to check the number of submitted projects to check the interests and needs. Due to the limited amount of the funds, limits were set by the programme for the two components. This kind of information how many applications were submitted and in the end submitted would give a better picture.

There is a disparity in the economic needs and results from education. A significant amount of such projects were submitted already. Maybe the focus should shift towards education service providers, e.g. institutions providing adult education programmes (narodna sveučilišta), actors as target groups and service providers. The chambers of commerce were cooperating with high schools – with focus on students but also teachers on market needs. Most of the projects were directed towards cooperation between institutions on the same level, e.g. schools with schools, kindergarten with kindergarten. Maybe a more multisectoral approach should be applied. Difficult to achieve that national curricula would change through CBC, but exchange of best practices can encourage to introduce extracurricular activities in line with market needs.

NGOs with their self-financing part are in a tricky position: in both countries partners have to contribute, which causes difficulties for them. Despite of this fact there is a certain number of interested organisations, they contribute also to the increase of the quality of the programme.

**Margareta Aničić (MRDEUF)**. They are interested in all levels of education, from primary schools to adult education; the size of the Programme at this moment is still not known and this will influence education as such; but it would be good that the regional level has its say on this. Small scale infrastructure in education and sports: sports may be supported also in ISO, but there infrastructure cannot be financed.

**Zoltan Pamer (Logframe Ltd.)**: Infrastructure development would not be supported under ISO; only particularly justified equipment.

**Damir Lajoš (Osijek-Baranja County)**. There are some small scale infrastructure needs from preschool to adult education – would be good to have this opportunity in the next programming period as well. Some other sources are also available. In Osijek-Baranja, there are a lot of private schools, even private high-school. NGOs are dealing with adults, therefore a broader approach would be needed. Private education institutions, companies and NGOs should also be able to apply.

**Yvette Szabados (Baranya County Government)**: We need to know how many projects were submitted that were not financed because of lack of financing. Check what were the needs. Universities could be very active partners in these projects. In some other projects, there was training for primary schools, children, environmental topics. This was also good that other programmes supported training. Besides these projects, support is needed in areas where the market is presented. ISO: culture, sport, minority projects are very popular. They were very good projects. Sceptical about cooperation between institutions as they lack capacities, they need to be event hunted. P2P projects are very popular, on the other hand.

**Miroslava Bato (RA VIDRA)**. Education: would like to have more projects related to adult education and create workforce more in line with labour market needs. From preschool to college education infrastructure activities are needed, digital equipment is needed. The last year has proved that on-line equipment in times of pandemic is needed. They have implemented some projects and cooperated with HU partners in this area. Some difficulties occur in differences in procedures. In the sports, tourism and culture projects: lack of funds while waiting for subsidies or approval of funds. Counties and LGUs have great cooperation with HU partners. They cooperate through various projects, there are many interested stakeholders for PO4.

**Zoltan Toth (Somogy County Government)**: Although there are several projects in the topic of education, they do not have suggestions for the next period. Wanted to invite experts in education topics from the university in Kaposvár. Government cooperation is supporting civil cooperation, there were not so many interested beneficiaries in the last period. Cooperation between institutions in CBC projects has been odd.

**Senada Ranilović (PORA)**: Education and P2P: both components have been very important for them. There were many projects in education: preschool and primary schools were interested, situated near the border that have also minority kids. They had very good cooperation with Hungarian schools. In Hungarian the education system centralisation causes difficulties in applying for projects, but things went smoothly. Regarding simplified cost options: could be very good if they are really simplified. Mostly municipalities are beneficiaries, NGOs not that much. LGUs do have contacts in Hungary. Regarding P2P for smaller infrastructure would be an incentive for them to apply for joint projects. In thematic cooperation other institution could also participate – not only cooperation of other institutions within their organisation system, but could also cooperate with institutions from other sectors (e.g. physical planning, health).

**Zoltan Pamer**: P2P is a relatively easy issue. Solution could be a more limited funding for thematic cooperation and leave a somewhat higher budget for the P2P projects.

**Krisztina Erdős (SZPO)**: The language issue should be tackled when speaking about ISO and P2P. There are good examples in the AT-HU programme tackling language knowledge: how they can be taught in preschool years and kindergarten. The project “BIG” was very popular among kindergartens, first classes of primary schools, focused on teaching German and Hungarian. Some ideas might be inspiring. Encourages to consult other programmes that deal with topics of education. There could be some good ideas, not only financing infrastructure. The title of the priority “cooperative border region” could be maybe changed to “cooperating”, to have a better meaning.

**Ana Kralj (REDEA, Međimurje)**: Agrees with colleagues from PORA regarding thematic cooperation and cooperation in education. The whole area of education needs to be included from preschool to adult education. Also, formal and informal organisations such as NGOs provide education that may be included. Education is also centralised in Croatia, regarding curricula, but in other areas cooperation is possible, such as organisation and development of other parts in education. Physical education could be also a good ground for cooperation. Small scale infrastructure equipment can be a good opportunity for them. Prefinancing caused problems, long payment periods. It is an issue on the level of the ministry to tackle. Health care may be relevant, especially in times of pandemic.

**Damir Lajoš**: Partial solution to prefinancing: the county signed contracts with banks, providing to NGOs and other organisations. Interest is subsidized, banks follow the process of the project and wait for the refund, only then the bank starts to charge. The programme is used by NGOs and schools. It would be better to have solutions on national level. Now, they have more projects going on, because of this support. Regarding the involvement of NGOs in projects, there is a new trend that students form NGOs and they start being mature enough to handle projects like this. For them it is much easier to enter into project partnerships than schools. Collateral was the biggest issue. For small scale projects no collateral is needed. The fact that the county is behind the projects was sufficient, only a “zadužnica” (IOU) is issued. For infrastructure projects collaterals are requested. The bank insists that the credit line is being followed. No credit funding was received in advance. The bank covers costs based on receipts that are being paid. Refunding of the interest is paid only for the amount that is spent, not the amount approved. This makes the contract complex.

**Zoltan Pamer**: Pefinancing is an issue to be solved on the level of national states. This solution may interesting also for Hungary.

**Mihály Dan (Ministry of Interior, department for e-government)**: Better cooperation governance in Hungary digital local governmental services are provided mostly centrally; there is a centralised municipality e-services system. They do not see direct regional cooperation possibility. Within Europe, e-government will be provided through main platforms for CB digital public administration. Other projects on local government level across the border are welcome.

**Zoltan Pamer**: Digitalisation, public administration systems may be a good project topic: people may be sometimes forced to find official documents e.g. property certificate, company registration, that would make sense to exchange knowledge on these issues.

**Marton Szűzs (HU-HR JS)**: Management of a small project fund, giving over to another organisation, has been a tricky thing. The JS should maintain control anyway over the small projects fund, however they are usually considered as an organisation keeping distance with project implementing bodies. It could be an EGTC, if partner countries decide this way, but JS needs to keep control to have this properly managed. There is an approval procedure needed from the EC. Audit would be a separate procedure, programme approval would be even longer.

Application of simplified cost options: there is work going on the EU level. Some of them would be very useful to use, some are difficult, e.g. standard scale of human costs. This would be hard to apply. (changes in suppliers, different prices in different counties). Flat rates and lump sums for normal projects were easier, e.g. for project preparation costs, office equipment.

**Krisztina Erdős** will participate in an Interact workshop on simplified cost options on Friday 16.04. Simplification is complicated.

**Zoltan Pamer**: Simplification of preparation costs as lump sum has been a very good tool. It was easier to do it administratively. The real question is how it will be controlled by the FLC. Sometimes it can be more complicated. More important issue is budget flexibility: how much the budget should be broken down, how flexible is reallocation. The option of *projects with limited financial volume* should be applied.

**Perica Gabrić, MRDEUF**: Concerning ISO, it is up to a later decision how it will be managed.

**Zoltan Pamer:** Conclusions:Croatian side prefers status quo in education, Hungary has no clear opinion on this issue. Although the economic competitiveness approach may be maintained, allowing other organisations to apply (apart from vocational institutions and higher level education organisations) may be a compromising solution. Those education projects that fall out due to this focus may be applied under ISO. Or completely divide these categories into two.

For P2P: decision should be made on making a small project fund, however the JS should keep control anyway. General cooperation under ISO should focus on topics that are not covered by other areas. More limited funds for thematic cooperation., but more funds for P2P.