

## CITIZENS' SUMMARY

### of the contents of the annual implementation report / year 2017

*(Article 50(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)*

In 2017 the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme has become fully operational: The process of setting up the programme management bodies has been completed (Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat, Albanian and Montenegrin National Info Points, Certification Authority, Audit Authority), communication activities have been started and the 1st Call for Proposals has been successfully closed.

Programme documents and manuals have been developed by the Joint Secretariat in order to support beneficiaries in project implementation, while communication and promotional materials have been distributed to stakeholders during several programme events. Three Programme Launch Events were organized in March, respectively in Bari, Tirana and Podgorica; they were a valuable occasion to meet institutional representatives, journalists and potential beneficiaries and present the 1st Call for Project Proposals.

The First Call for proposals (16 March – 30 May) focused on the four programme priority axes (competitiveness of SMEs, tourism and culture, environment and energy, sustainable transport) and had a total budget of 30 million EUR. Support to applicants was provided through guidelines, 2 Info-days, 8 Open days. 195 project proposals were submitted, 145 passed the eligibility check and underwent the quality assessment, performed by 6 internal assessors for each project, against the selection criteria set in the call. The Joint Steering Committee additionally made a policy assessment, which was submitted together with the technical assessment to the Joint Monitoring Committee for decision. The score grid decided on 23 November was published on 12 December. With the available budget, 22 projects at the top of the score grid are financeable, before the project optimisation process, which could make additional funding available.

The project selection works were characterized by active cooperation of all partners and were concluded with great satisfaction of the representatives of the Partner States, the European Commission and the Managing Authority/Puglia Region. A joint understanding was also reached on the thematic projects, which will be started during 2018.

The Programme was also promoted in several conferences and external events.

All in all the Programme is fully aligned with the EU principles of good governance and may already show some good practices: 1) Strong programme partnership, successful cooperation with Albanian and Montenegrin national authorities, which supports also the pre-accession exercise; 2) Effective and efficient programme management, with focus on effective processes, outputs, results, impacts on territories, and constant monitoring/evaluation; 3) Simplification and support to partners, with sole electronic communication between MA/stakeholders, help desk, open Days, FAQs, online tools, support to project planning; 4) Focus on quality and concrete impact on territories, with strong involvement of Italian, Albanian and Montenegrin partners in the project selection process.

