****

Concept Note: EUSAIR Facility Point 2023-2029 main strategic project

Version: 19 April 2023

Contents

[1. Introduction 2](#_Toc132045835)

[2. Project partnership 3](#_Toc132045836)

[3. Main and specific project objectives and expected results of EUSAIR Facility Point 4](#_Toc132045837)

[Main project objective 4](#_Toc132045838)

[Specific project objectives 4](#_Toc132045839)

[Expected Results 5](#_Toc132045840)

[4. Work Plan 5](#_Toc132045841)

[**WP1 Administrative and operational support** 6](#_Toc132045842)

[**WP2 Coordination and Communication** 8](#_Toc132045843)

[**WP3 Support to decision making and capacity development of the implementers** 12](#_Toc132045844)

[**WP4 Monitoring & Evaluation of EUSAIR** 14](#_Toc132045845)

[5. Project organisation team 15](#_Toc132045846)

[6. Time frame 18](#_Toc132045847)

[7. Facility Point estimated budget 18](#_Toc132045848)

## Introduction

The aim of this document is to present a draft project concept note as proposed by the future EUSAIR Facility Point 2023-29 Lead partner (LP) - Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, Slovenia. The concept note has been discussed with Project Partners from all 10 EUSAIR States at the project preparatory meeting in Ljubljana, on 9-10 February and further developed according to their feedback. The external experts who are supporting the partnership in the development of the proposal are in charge also of the evaluation of the existing EUSAIR Facility Point project in order to take into account the lessons learnt.

The project concept note is prepared in accordance with the Priority 4 of the Interreg IPA ADRION programme and the Appendix 3, contributing to enhancement of the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement EUSAIR by supporting its governance mechanism, as approved at the 15th EUSAIR Governing Board meeting.

The EUSAIR Facility Point (Project 1) is one of the three defined operations of strategic importance within the IPA ADRION Interreg programme, which shall perform the four functions:

1. Administrative and technical support to the EUSAIR governance meetings at all levels.
2. Communication and Coordination.
3. Support to decision making and capacity development of the implementers at their levels.
4. Monitoring and evaluation of EUSAIR.

The project concept has been coordinated with the Lead Partners of the other two EUSAIR governance support projects, responsible for the implementation of the remaining functions (EUSAIR Stakeholder Platform (hereinafter Project 2) and EUSAIR Strategic Implementation (hereinafter Project 3). Coordination meetings were held on 15 February online, in Venice on 9-10 March, online on 23 March, 7 April and 18 April 2023.

In the drafting of this project proposal, the experience of the implementation of the current EUSAIR Facility Point project were considered, including the governance studies, EUSAIR evaluation, OECD study and the internal interim Facility Point evaluation (still in progress).

Regarding the context of EUSAIR Facility Point project, the following needs to be considered:

* The EUSAIR Strategy/Action plan is being revised, what may affect the scope of needed support to EUSAIR governance structures (e.g. if new policy areas or Pillars will be introduced)
* The EUSAIR territory covers 10 countries, including North Macedonia and San Marino. The mode of cooperation of San Marino as a third country in the EUSAIR Facility Point 2023-2029 project still needs to be clarified with the IPA ADRION Interreg Programme.
* In light of the division of EUSAIR governance support to three interlinked EUSAIR governance projects, close coordination of activities is needed already in the preparatory phase as well as in the implementation phase.
* The first draft of the manual of the IPA ADRION Interreg programme for the implementation of Priority 4 has recently been prepared and not yet adopted, what may further affect the project concept and budget estimates.

In the preparation of the EUSAIR Facility Point project 2023-2029, the partnership is based on the following principles and aspirations:

* **ORIENTED TO EUSAIR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE NEEDS:**
As macro-regional strategy is a new concept, also its governance is an evolving process that has now entered a new level of maturity when even more tangible results are expected.

The current Facility Point needed some time to become operational and fully functional to support the EUSAIR governance structures. The Facility Point 2023-2029 should also develop further to become a true strategic enabler for the EUSAIR governance structures to effectively realise the EUSAIR Action Plan.

* **PARTNERSHIP COVERING ALL EUSAIR COUNTRIES:**
A clear model of cooperation will be established to ensure cooperation on equal footing and to strengthen the project partners' performance in their respective countries. The intention of the Facility Point is therefore to ensure cooperation of all countries in the governance support project.
* **BUILDING ON THE EXISTING KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS:**The new Facility Point will as much as possible build on the existing teams present within the LP and PP institutions who will be able to capitalise on the attained knowledge, skills, experience. They will resort to the already developed tools and improve or adapt them to the current and future needs.
* **STRENGTHENED INTERNAL CAPACITY**: the intention of the Facility Point is to keep strengthening internal institutional capacities and ensuring the institutional memory.
* **PLANNING AND FLEXIBILITY**: Timely planning of activities is needed, however intensively changing external developments often require the Facility Point to become more agile and to adapt its support. Therefor more flexible implementation formats should be allowed.
* **SYNERGIES AND COORDINATION**:

Supporting the EUSAIR governance through three governance projects, which are closely interlinked, will require clear division of activities as well as coordination of those, which are linked or interdependent. As agreed between the three LPs, a joint coordination mechanism representing the Lead Partners of the 3 projects shall be established.

One of the lessons learnt from the implementation of the first EUSAIR FP project is that the way how project activities are described has to be such that it allows for flexibility. The aim of this concept note is to define clusters of project activities which enable the EUSAIR Facility Point to respond to the needs of EUSAIR governance structures in a flexible manner during the project implementation period.

## Project partnership

As agreed during the inception phase of the preparations for the EUSAIR governance support after 2022 which was running in parallel with the preparation of the IPA ADRION Interreg Programme for 2021-2027, **all EUSAIR countries will participate in the main strategic governance support project** in order to provide quality support to national EUSAIR governance structures, to allow for more effective engagement and communication with stakeholders in all EUSAIR countries and to capitalize on country knowledge which has accumulated during the implementation of the first EUSAIR Facility Point strategic project. This knowledge is crucial for ensuring operational and logistical support for effective participation of all EUSAIR Partner States in activities of the EUSAIR macroregional strategy.

The following institutions have confirmed their participation in the EUSAIR Facility Point 2023-2029 project:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Country** | **Institution** |
| LP | Slovenia | Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development |
| PP | Slovenia | Municipality of Izola |
| PP | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Directorate for European Integration of Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| PP | Croatia | Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Croatia |
| PP | Greece | Special Coordination Service of Planning, Evaluation and Implementation (EYSSA), General Directorate of Strategy, Planning and Implementation of ESIF, Ministry of Development and Investments |
| PP | Italy | Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, General Directorate, International relations and EU Programming department |
| PP | Montenegro | Ministry *of* European Affairs |
| PP | Albania | State Agency of Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC)  |
| PP | North Macedonia |  Secretariat for European Affairs |
| PP | Serbia | Ministry of European Integration of Republic of Serbia  |
|  | San Marino\* | tbd |

\*San Marino expressed high interest in cooperation in the Facility Point project, contributing in activities and deliverables, however the cooperation framework still needs to be defined, as well as their role in EUSAIR as regards the Presidency.

## Main and specific project objectives and expected results of EUSAIR Facility Point

### Main project objective

Facilitate the coordination, communication and implementation of EUSAIR by enhancing the institutional capacity of key implementing bodies, fostering cross-pillar cooperation, increasing the visibility of EUSAIR and by monitoring and evaluating the progress of implementation of joint priorities.

### Specific project objectives

Project specific objectives are defined for each work package:

1. To support effective and efficient functioning of EUSAIR governance structures.
2. To support smooth implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan through harmonised and effective internal procedures and communication, effective cross-pillar coordination, increased visibility of EUSAIR through communication with stakeholders, and cross-macroregional cooperation.
3. To provide EUSAIR governance structures with tools for evidence-based decision-making and build internal institutional capacities.
4. To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan, and recommend possible changes in their implementation.

### Expected Results

1. EUSAIR governance structures supported and facilitated in the implementation of the EUSAIR. The project will support the functioning of the EUSAIR governance structures.

2. Capacity for multi-level-governance and cooperation across borders strengthened. The EUSAIR governance structures will increase capacity to cooperate in strategic policy development across the borders and between different governance levels.
3. Ownership of the EUSAIR, its visibility and added value increased. Achievements of the Strategy implementation will be monitored and evaluated and strategically communicated to the key audiences.

#### Result indicators:

RCR84 Organisation cooperating across borders after project completion: TBD (*IP target 25)*

RCR85 Participants in joint actions across borders after project completion: TBD *(IP target 1.080)*

## Work Plan

The EUSAIR Facility Point 2023 -2029 work plan is based on the four functions as explained in the Appendix 3 and the IPA ADRION Interreg Programme.



This section provides description of key activities and related deliverables.

Some activities require special attention in view of ensuring coordination and synergies with EUSAIR governance support Project 2 and Project 3. Where relevant, these are highlighted in below description.

### **WP1 Administrative and operational support**

**Specific objective:** To support effective and efficient functioning of EUSAIR governance structures.

EUSAIR Facility Point supports EUSAIR key implementing bodies in their regular activities as well as involvement of the youth and their interaction with EUSAIR bodies. Besides the support to National Coordinators in their activities (Governing Board meetings, task forces, working groups), Pillar Co-ordinators and Thematic Steering Groups in their meetings and events, significant support is provided to the EUSAIR Presidency, acting as the driving force of the Strategy for the year. Youth Council will be formed and the cooperation of young in the EUSAIR governance processes strengthened.

**WP1 leader**: LP- Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, Slovenia

**WP1 co-leader:** PP- Secretariat for European Affairs, North Macedonia

#### A.1.1 Administrative and operational support to Governing Board

* Operational support to Governing Board meetings and National Coordinators’ meetings including ad hoc task forces and working groups (travel & accommodation, agenda, materials, organisation of the venue and catering, minutes).

#### Deliverables:

D.1.1.1 Governing Board meetings (12)
D.1.1.2 National Coordinator meetings (12)

D.1.1.3 NC Task Force / ad hoc meetings (12)

#### A.1.2 Administrative and operational support to Thematic Steering Groups

* Operational support to Thematic Steering Groups (TSG) meetings (travel & accommodation, agenda, organisation of the venue and catering, minutes)
* Operational support to Pillar Coordinators (PCs) meetings (travel & accommodation, agenda, organisation of the venue and catering)
* Engaging pillar thematic experts who support the Pillar Coordinator and Co-Coordinator thematically and organisationally, if needed (depending on organisation of the PC function in the country)
* Operational support to Pillar related thematic events (agenda, organisation of the venue and catering, speakers)

#### Deliverables:

D.1.2.1 TSG meetings (60)
D.1.2.2 PC meetings /side events to GB and virtual ad hoc meetings (12)

D.1.2.3 Thematic pillar or cross-pillar events (3 per Pillar/TSG)

#### A1.3 Administrative and operational support to Youth Council.

*Please note that activities related to the youth support are still subject to further elaboration in accordance with the Youth Consultation Task Force*.

In the “Manifesto for Youth by Youth to Shape European Territorial Cooperation” the youth has been recognised in EU as one of key target groups to be addressed in the macroregional strategies. The decision of the Governing Board on the establishment of Youth Council as a cooperation body in the EUSAIR has been taken in March 2022 and confirmed by Tirana Ministerial Declaration, however agreements on when and how still need to be reached. The experience of other macro-regional strategies is to be considered in the implementation of this activity, where support to the establishment and functioning of the Youth Council is also supported by governance support structures.

The PPs find it important to encourage the young in the EUSAIR territory to engage in concrete actions and initiatives that would reflect their needs, help create a community and a sense of place. Education systems and digital technologies are seen as possible tools to effectively reach out and work with the young.

* Support to the establishment of the Youth Council (developing an innovative and effective approach and procedure to engage the young to actively participate in the EUSAIR governance processes, support them in establishing the operation model, etc.)
* Operational support to organisation of Youth Council meetings (travel & accommodation, agenda, organisation of the venue and catering, materials, minutes)
* Support in preparation of inputs of the Youth Council for GB and TSG meetings
* Active participation of youth representatives at GB, TSG meetings when relevant
* Support small scale Youth Council initiatives and actions, engaging the youth in the Adriatic-Ionian territory to concretely address specific themes of common interest (e.g. POPRI).

#### Deliverables:

D.1.3.1 Youth Council Operation Model (1)

D.1.3.2 Youth Council Meetings (12)
D.1.3.3 Youth Council Actions (6)

#### A.1.4 Support to the EUSAIR Presidency

The EUSAIR Presidency rotates annually and represents one of the most intense activities requiring Facility Point assistance and resources. One of its key tasks is the organization of annual EUSAIR Forum, one of the key strategic events in the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region. A parallel process accompanying the Presidency work are the so-called TRIO meetings, which connect the representatives of the former, current, and future Presidency holding country. The Facility Point assists the Presidency-holding country both in content and operational support. It is assumed that the distribution of the Presidency in the coming years shall continue under the same alphabetical order (2024-HR, 2025-GR, 2026-IT, 2027-ME, 2028-MK, 2029-RS, 2030-SI[[1]](#footnote-2)).

* Support in defining and implementing the EUSAIR Presidency programme
* Support in organisation and implementation of EUSAIR Forum
* Support in organisation of TRIO meeting

#### Deliverables:

D.1.4.1 EUSAIR Forums (6)

D.1.4.2 TRIO meetings GB (12)

#### Output indicators at WP level:

* RCO81: Participations in joint actions across the borders: 254[[2]](#footnote-3)
* RCO115: Public events across the border jointly organised: at least 21[[3]](#footnote-4)
* RCO118: Organisations cooperating for the multi-level governance of macro-regional strategies: 67 [[4]](#footnote-5)

### **WP2 Coordination and Communication**

**Specific objective:** To support smooth implementation of the EUSAIR Strategy and Action Plan through harmonised and effective internal procedures and communication, effective cross-pillar coordination, increased visibility of EUSAIR through communication with stakeholders, and cross-macroregional cooperation.

**WP leader**: LP- Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, Slovenia

Coordination: This WP supports the coordination activities between key implementing bodies, especially cross-pillar (cross-TSG) coordination. This will be facilitated by establishing harmonised procedures. EUSAIR Facility Point will provide technical support to TSGs in addressing horizontal topics of the Action Plan. Adjustment of approaches between Pillars and greater exploitation of cross-pillar contents, synergies and efforts is a priority of this WP thus supported by a team of Pillar thematic experts at PPs and additional horizontal strategic thematic experts at the LP. Coordination activities will be supported through internal communication channels providing organised access to all EUSAIR relevant documents and tools.

Furthermore, external issues such as support to the enlargement process in the context of EUSAIR, collaboration with other macro-regional strategies and between the three EUSAIR governance support projects will also be addressed by WP2.

Communication: The EUSAIR Strategy will be communicated to the public and to the stakeholders through **strategically managed communication activities.** Communicating a common vision, mission, principles, targets and added value of the EUSAIR and its results will be in focus. The common and harmonised messages should be conveyed by all governance support projects; communication activities will be coordinated based on a Communication strategy of the Facility Point and coordinated to create synergies and improve reach of different stakeholders.

Another important part is to strengthen communication, EUSAIR visibility and ownership at national level. Communication and promotional activities initiated by the Pillars will be supported. Media relations will be strengthened to raise visibility, understanding and relevance of EUSAIR in the countries. Each Project Partner will operate a small budget to support national level communication.

**Description of activities and related deliverables:**

#### A.2.1 Communicating the Strategy to the public and stakeholders

Both internal and external communication are of critical importance and are proposed to be jointly developed and their implementation coordinated within all EUSAIR governance support projects to provide the EUSAIR stakeholders with clear, unified, and well-coordinated messages and access to information. Facility Point is responsible for the elaboration of the Communication Strategy.

**The EUSAIR website is to remain a joint entry point** for all the stakeholders in the ecosystem and for specific contents produced by the three governance support projects. To communicate EUSAIR activities and achievements and to increase its visibility and ownership, it will be necessary to provide more contents in national languages. For this reason, dedicated Facility Point communication experts[[5]](#footnote-6) will be appointed in all partner countries and will form an internal communication network to support the implementation of macro-regional or national information campaigns, dissemination of information, production of news items, to extent possible in national languages, support the NC/TSGs in getting attention of country stakeholders and to share good practices and stories at macro-regional level. The network of EUSAIR Contact Points will provide a contact person[[6]](#footnote-7) for the EUSAIR in the country who will be able to reach out to national stakeholders, assist them in connecting with EUSAIR governing structures, be available to provide information on the EUSAIR activities and processes and cooperate with local and national media. The Stakeholder Platform of the Project 2 will be used as a tool by Facility Point to support communication activities (e.g. online communication events).

* EUSAIR External Communication Strategy (including mid-term evaluation/update) and Annual Communication Plans will be elaborated and aligned with all three governance support projects. They provide a basis for harmonised strategic communication of the EUSAIR and its implementation/achievements.
* Coordination of the Network of communication experts to assure coordinated communication activities, dissemination of communication materials, implementation of joint communication actions with PPs and/or Project 2 and Project 3 (including coordination meetings) and maintaining communication materials repository.
* Regular update of the EUSAIR website and providing inputs to IPA ADRION website
* Management of the EUSAIR website (maintenance, upgrade) and cooperation with Project 2 to ensure seamless transitions between the website and Stakeholder Platform
* Integrated graphic design (+ interim update)
* Production of Communication materials: Publications, Newsletter, Videos on pillar related AIR stories (quality videos – showcasing pillar flagships, joint projects), infographics, promotional items providing concise and user-friendly information on the EUSAIR concept and achievements
* Working with media (press releases, press conferences, etc.)
* Design and implementation of online and social media campaigns
* Policy interface (organisation of consultation meetings with civil society and NGOs alongside other regular meetings/events)
* Ensuring EUSAIR contact points (the PP in each country acts as an EUSAIR contact point for stakeholders)

#### Deliverables:

D.2.1.1 EUSAIR Communication Strategy (1, plus 1 update) and Annual Communication Plans (6)
D.2.1.2 Communication contents (publications, videos, newsletters, infographics) (36)

D.2.1.3 EUSAIR website (1)

D.2.1.4 Communication actions (media campaigns, social media campaigns, …) (6)

D.2.1.5 EUSAIR Contact Points Network (1)

#### A.2.2 Harmonised procedures, cross-pillar coordination and coordination between National Coordinators and Pillar Coordinators

Internal coordination and communication are vital for the governance structures to make bolder steps in the implementation of the EUSAIR. The recent EUSAIR and Facility Point evaluations and studies point out that room for increasing the governance capacity exist both in the cooperation formats of governance structures and the services of the Facility Point. Optimising internal communication flows and procedures is important also in light of the expected increased need for cross-pillar coordination as well as addressing of horizontal topics and enlargement processes.

* Support in streamlining and optimisation of internal governance procedures to support the EUSAIR governance structures in Strategy and Action Plan implementation processes.
* Coordination support (regular updates of contacts, managing joint calendar/activity plan)
* Preparing and implementing an internal communication strategy (establishing basic rules, principles and tools of internal coordination and communication, including implementation)
* Management of communication channels and tools: Intranet, file repository and sharing – ensuring institutional memory
* Support to Pillars on addressing *horizontal topics* (activities and deliverables need to be defined specifically for each horizontal topic, however these topics will be defined through the revised Action Plan and are expected differ between the Pillars), including studies, events, exchanges, capacity building.
* Support to Pillars on *enlargement process* on a need basis (making sure specific needs of the candidate countries are addressed through all relevant processes and Pillars of the EUSAIR, whereby the embedding related needs of the IPA III programmes shall be covered by Project 2),
* Assist and coordinate the *cross-pillar information exchange*, transfer of knowledge and good practices to achieve better alignment of Pillars and synergies in implementation.
* Addressing cross-pillar integration needs on actions with cross-pillar character/impact
* Preparation of post 2029 governance support project.

#### Deliverables:

D.2.2.1 Governance processes & workflows (total 17 documents elaborated: TSGs- 5, 1 GB - 1, PCs -1, pillar thematic experts -10, calendar 1, activity plans -6)
D.2.2.2 Actions for horizontal, enlargement and cross-pillar coordination and processes (10)

D.2.2.3 Post 2029 governance support project (1)

#### A.2.3 Coordination with Facility Point Project Partners and EUSAIR governance support projects

The Facility Point Lead Partner will be responsible for the overall project management and coordination with Project Partners, communication and coordination with EUSAIR governance structures, coordinators with Projects 2 and 3, the IPA-ADRION Interreg Programme and other stakeholders. A project steering group (PSG) will be established for Facility Point project to review the progress of the implementation. Regular meetings will be held between the LP and WP leaders. Project content, financial and risk management will be set up and reporting at partner and project level established, project interim and final evaluation activities will be coordinated.

Coordination between EUSAIR governance support projects is of vital importance to ensure synergies, avoid overlapping or duplication of activities in interlinked functions. A joint cooperation mechanism will be established in the form of a Joint Steering Committee comprising the Lead Partners of the three governance support projects. Regular exchanges are planned on a quarterly basis to plan, exchange on progress, align and coordinate activities. The chairing of meetings will rotate between the 3 Lead Partners.

The Facility Point and its project partners network is present in all participating countries and can therefore assist the other EUSAIR governance projects 2 and 3 in particular when they need to reach out to stakeholders in the countries where they do not have their own partners. The scope of this assistance will be clearly defined and agreed. The primary areas of coordination comprise:

* Preparing a joint annual implementation plan in the areas where coordination is needed (communication, stakeholder engagement and embedding, capacity building, strategic project development) or any other relevant that the LPs identify.
* Communication: Project 1 is responsible for communication and will coordinate the internal/external communication strategy with the Project 2 and Project 3. For external communication, the 3 LPs will align activities/inputs and deliverables in the Annual Communication Plan). Project 1 and Project 2 will coordinate technical activities related to the communication infrastructure of the EUSAIR website and Stakeholder Platform.
* Capacity building: Project 1 is responsible for the capacity building function and will focus on identified needs of the EUSAIR governance support structures. For the possible capacity building related to financial dialogue/embedding, stakeholder involvement and engagement, the support of Project 2 and respectively, for the strategic project development the Project 3 will provide capacity building.
* Stakeholder involvement and engagement: Project 2 is responsible for this function. The preparation of stakeholder engagement plan will be coordinated with Project 1 and Project 3 to integrate the needs identified by the two projects (and respectively of the EUSAIR governance structures) and to maximise effects of planned activities. Stakeholder Platform as a tool will be used by all 3 governance support projects and EUSAIR governance structures.
* Strategic project development: The Project 3 is responsible for this function. Thematic assistance in selection and development of strategic projects, especially in view of assistance provided by pillar thematic experts will be provided by Project 1 and the support in related stakeholder engagement by Project 2.
* Financial dialogue and embedding process: The function is the responsibility of Project 2. Assistance of Project 1 in organisation of national embedding processes will be coordinated, especially in countries where the Project 2 does not have project partners.

#### Deliverables:

D.2.3.1 Coordination meetings of the Joint Steering Committee of 3 projects (24)

D.2.3.2 Joint annual thematic and operational work plan of 3 governance support projects concerning the implementation of interlinked activities (6)

#### A.2.4 Cross-macroregional cooperation exchange of good practices with the support of Interact

* Support in establishing cooperation between TSGs and Priority/Policy Areas, Action Groups of other macro-regional strategies to exchange knowledge, transfer good practices, enable peer learning, possible elaboration of project ideas, etc.
* Support in establishing links between related projects and involvement in projects aiming at sharing knowledge and best practices among macroregional initiatives (promoting Associated PPs in strategic projects of other MRSs, mirror projects to reach stronger impact, especially in countries whose territory is covered by more than one macro-regional strategy, joint projects, especially with EUSDR).

#### Deliverables:

D.2.4.1 Cross macro-region exchanges and partnerships (meetings, events) (15)

*Output indicators at WP level*:

* RCO81: Participations in joint actions across the border: 33[[7]](#footnote-8)
* RCO115: Public events across the border jointly organised: 25[[8]](#footnote-9)
* RCO118: Organisations cooperating for the multi-level governance of macro-regional strategies: 10[[9]](#footnote-10)

### **WP3 Support to decision making and capacity development of the implementers**

**Specific project objective:** To provide EUSAIR governance structures with tools for evidence-based decision-making and build internal institutional capacities.

**WP leader**: PP Municipality of Izola, Slovenia

**WP co-leader**: PP Ministry of European Affairs, Montenegro

Evidence-based decision making: The WP will assist the EUSAIR governance structures in evidence-based decision-making. The NCs and PCs need up to date and concise information on the EUSAIR strategy implementation developments, relevant upcoming trends, their possible effects on the Pillar activities or the overall territory. Necessary studies/input papers will be elaborated to provide relevant insight into specific topics allowing the EUSAIR governance structures make informed decisions and to identify emerging gaps that would need addressing. These studies and reports must be accessible in a user-friendly manner through a knowledge database. It is the task of the EUSAIR Facility Point project to ensure availability of generated knowledge and support its use in decision-making of EUSAIR governance structures. These knowledge formats will also be available for use of the Project 2 (e.g., for engagement of the youth or e-learning) and Project 3 (e.g. for further development of project ideas).

Capacity building: The capacity building activities for the EUSAIR governance structures will be organised to improve strategic policy development, identification and implementation of flagships, to foster cross-pillar cooperation and to better address horizontal topics and other relevant topics, including cooperation with other MRSs. Capacity building will consider identified current needs as well as future emerging needs, including those of Youth Council (if relevant). This activity is significant also in view of ensuring training contents and access to training materials for the newly appointed members of the governance structures. Capacity building will also include project partners to strengthen their capacities in providing quality support to EUSAIR governance structures and in engagement with EUSAIR stakeholders (as regards communication activities). The Stakeholder Platform will serve as a tool / channel for capacity building.

This WP will be implemented with strong support of pillar thematic experts and assisted by external expertise and services, especially for the set-up of activities. It will be coordinated by the LP thematic experts who will also support cross-pilar and horizontal topics. Training topics related to the functions of the Project 2 and Project 3 will be covered by the respective projects and will be defined under the joint coordination mechanism on a need basis.

#### A.3.1 Knowledge management to support evidence-based decision making

* Knowledge management support for EUSAIR governance structures: providing regular overview of status, developments and outputs of key EUSAIR processes (strategic project development, embedding, monitoring & evaluation, Action Plan revision, youth inclusion…) in user-friendly and easily accessible formats.
* Observing the situation and trends of the macro-region: conducting a periodical analysis (3 times during project implementation – 2024, 2026, 2029) of the socio-economic state of the region in general and specifically per pillar taking into account existing reports/studies and data/indicators (EUSAIR, EU, UN, OECD, WB, WTO…) to detect and inform EUSAIR governance structures, especially TSGs on key trends and developments in the macro-region.
* Conducting a Gap analysis concerning the state and trends of the macro-region and Strategy implementation; how could EUSAIR support response to the identified trends through existing actions, is there any need for reshaping, re-focus). This will facilitate strategic decisions of the GB and TSGs and possible revision of the Action Plan.
* Support to enlargement process specifically related to the EUSAIR and Action Plan (providing expert analysis/recommendations for specific policy areas/sectors), whereby financial dialogue/embedding function will be covered by Project 2.
* Macro-regional issue papers (as the basis for strategic decisions) upon request of the GB (4)
* Macro-regional thematic issue papers on request of the TSGs (2 per TSG)
* Strategy/Action Plan revision processes.

#### Deliverables:

D.3.1.1 Macro-regional knowledge database on EUSAIR processes (1, regularly updated)
D.3.1.2 Periodic macro-regional review of trends, gap analysis and challenges (3)

D.3.1.3 Macro-regional issue papers (14 - 4 for GB, 10 for TSGs)

D.3.1.4 EUSAIR Action Plan revision report (2)

#### A.3.2 Capacity building

* Needs Assessment with special attention to candidate countries (twice, at the beginning and after 3-4 years of implementation)
* Development of capacity building programme (+ interim revision) and yearly capacity building action plans, aligning of those with Project 2 and Project 3 for expertise related to their functions.
* Thematic capacity building for governance structures on Action Plan actions as back-to-back with TSG meetings (by external experts)
* Development of capacity building modules for governance structures and project partners (e.g. policy-to-project loops process, communication, embedding (with support of Project 2), strategic project development (with support from Project 3) and funding instruments, specific topics on demand like green procurement, strategic foresight, deep demonstrations and other relevant topics identified …)
* Support to enlargement process concerning areas of the EUSAIR and Action Plan (support better understanding of issues/needs of candidate countries and how they could be better addressed by EUSAIR processes (e.g. topics related harmonisation with Pillar relevant *aquis* chapters, Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, innovation & research, regional development, and other topics identified by TSGs/GB),
* Study visits (within and outside MRS), joint exchange events/meetings, good practice exchanges.
* Administrative and operational capacity building for newcomers (key implementing bodies newcomers kit, Youth Council newcomers kit, PP newcomers kit, support to PCs/TSGs)

#### Deliverables:

D.3.2.1 Capacity building plans/programmes (based on needs analysis) (3)

D.3.2.2 Capacity building actions for members of EUSAIR governance structures (12)
D.3.2.3 Capacity building - joint trainings for Facility Point project staff (6)

D.3.2.4 Capacity building for members of Youth Council (6)

#### Output indicators at WP level:

* RCO81: Participations in joint actions across the border (597: 27 PP s+ 90 YC + 12\*40 average)

### **WP4 Monitoring & Evaluation of EUSAIR**

**Project specific objective:** To monitor and evaluate implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan, and recommend possible changes in their implementation.

**WP leader:** Special Coordination Service of Planning, Evaluation and Implementation (EYSSA), General Directorate of Strategy, Planning and Implementation of ESIF, Ministry of Development and Investments, Greece

This WP aims at further developing and harmonising the EUSAIR monitoring system according to the revised Action Plan and adjusting it to the needs of the implementing bodies. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of EUSAIR Strategy and Action Plan and recommendations for improvements of the implementation (including embedding, strategic project development and governance) is one of four key Facility Point functions. Monitoring and evaluation will comprise of two different yet indispensable functions to be implemented by two separate experts/consultants that will be responsible for all Pillars and countries. Pillar thematic experts as well as PP coordinators will be involved as necessary to provide evidence and data in preparation of progress, monitoring and evaluation reports. Additional data will also be provided by Project 2 and Project 3 based on further alignment of the needs. The purpose is to ensure one centralised database supporting the needs of EUSAIR governance structures in relation of monitoring and evaluation.

#### A.4.1 Further development of harmonised EUSAIR monitoring system

This activity builds on the already established EUSAIR monitoring system, which will be upgraded and harmonised in accordance with the revision of the Action Plan and the need for harmonisation between Pillars. The activity will provide the basis for preparation of monitoring reports.

* Monitoring System upgrade and maintenance (building on existing monitoring system, the lessons learned and taking into account possible revisions of the Strategy and/or the Action Plan).
* EUSAIR Pillar Implementation Reports (annual report per TSG including monitoring and progress report with a summary page for publication) demonstrating actual implementation and added value of the Strategy
* Capacity building on EUSAIR monitoring.

#### Deliverables:

D.4.1.1 EUSAIR Monitoring System upgrade (1)

D.4.1.2 Annual Monitoring Reports (6)

#### A.4.2 Further development of harmonised EUSAIR evaluation system

* Development of an EUSAIR Evaluation Plan
* Inception (establishing the baseline)/midterm/final EUSAIR evaluation report (building on 2022 EUSAIR evaluation report)
* Evaluation capacity building

#### Deliverables:

D.4.2.1 EUSAIR Evaluation Plan (1)

D.4.2.2 EUSAIR Evaluation Reports (3 – inception, interim, final)

This WP takes into consideration also project activities of the other two EUSAIR governance support projects relevant for the EUSAIR implementation. The Project 2 and Project 3 will need to contribute the necessary data and information.

#### Output indicators at the WP level:

RCO118: Organisations cooperating for the multi-level governance of macro-regional strategies (TBD)

## Project organisation team

The project work plan will be implemented mainly by partners’ staff in order to generate and accumulate knowledge and strengthen cooperating institutions, ensure continuity and institutional memory.

The staff shall be primarily employed by LP/PPs with some specific expertise outsourced. The intension is to ensure a dedicated and stable project team coordinated by LP and work package (WP) leaders.

***Key project team functions comprise:***

The future EUSAIR Facility Point project requires a well-coordinated network of experts and staff employed/engaged by the project partnership. In order to implement the 4 key functions of the project efficiently and effectively, shared responsibility, commitment and regular communication is necessary.

***Description of key project team functions****:*

#### Overall project management and coordination – LP level

* **LP project coordinator** - responsible for the overall project implementation and strategic guidance, coordinates the project team, coordinates with the EUSAIR implementing bodies, the EUSAIR governance support projects 2 and 3, and IPA ADRION programme.
* **LP project manager** (deputy project coordinator) – responsible for monitoring of the project implementation and financial management, coordinates reporting at partner level, prepares project progress reports, communicates with PPs and the IPA-ADRION programme in relation to reporting, financial matters and project changes.
* **LP communication manager** – responsible for the implementation of the communication strategy and communication action plans, coordinates PPs communication experts and contact points in partner countries, organises project communication activities, collects information on activities in PP countries. Coordinates communication related activities with EUSAIR governance support projects 2 and 3. Responsible for the content management of the EUSAIR website and social media, and coordinates with the Stakeholder Platform.
* **LP project assistant** – provides operational/organisational assistance to LP project coordinator, project manager and communication manager.
* **LP strategic thematic experts** – responsible for the strategic (policy) support to EUSAIR governance structures and PP thematic experts. Content related following of the overall EUSAIR activities of the Pillars concerning specific topics/functions (youth, capacity building, governance approaches, monitoring&evaluation, embedding&strategic project development, decision-support needs and activities, following of TSGs activities), coordination and support to PP thematic experts primarily in specific horizontal topics (e.g. EU Green Deal), identifying gaps and developing proposals, inputs, discussion papers for EUSAIR governance structures in cooperation with project coordinator.

#### National/Project partner level:

* **PP coordinator** – responsible for the implementation of the project at PP level, coordinates activities of the PP and coordinates with members of the EUSAIR implementing bodies in the country, organises partner level reporting, implements country-related activities of WP1, contributes to WP2 and WP3, cooperates in the project monitoring and evaluation activities. Responsible for the organisation of communication activities at PP level (dissemination, national communication actions, contribution to communication contents).
* **WP leader** - coordinates the implementation of the WP (in practice this might be the task of PP coordinator at the PP coordinating the respective WP); prepares inputs for the annual plans, coordinates and monitors activities, prepares inputs for progress reports, cooperates with EUSAIR governance structures. Provides inputs for coordination of activities with Project 2 and Project 3.
* **WP co-leader** – supports the implementation of WPs, leads particular activities (A1.3, A3.2).
* **PP communication expert** - contributes to project communication activities at the Strategy level, implements communication activities in the country, provides communication inputs on events and activities taking place in the country, cooperates in the production of communication contents, supports dissemination of information. In practice, the role is taken by e.g. PP coordinator, who is supported by external services.
* **Pillar thematic expert (engaged by PPs)** – provides assistance to Pillar Co-ordinators regarding thematic expertise and supports pillar-related activities of WP2 and WP3, including thematic support (overview of trends, analyses, preparing or organising issue papers, cooperates in the revision of Action Plan, supports Pillar monitoring) and provides administrative support to Pillar Coordinator. He/she also assists in thematic activities of the governance supports projects 2 and 3 (mainly in strategic project development and embedding) based on prior agreement of the scope of work.
* **Monitoring&Evaluation expert**: sets up the monitoring system, collects and organises inputs to feed the system, proposes the Evaluation Plan, coordinates/prepares annual monitoring reports, engages evaluation experts and coordinates evaluation activities with stakeholders, organises as necessary capacity building for governance structures and PPs.
* **Capacity building and decision-making support expert** - provides support to Project coordinator/LP thematic experts in identification of capacity building needs and programme development, organisation of capacity building actions. Cooperates with the responsible for the Stakeholder Platform for development of e-learning contents.

## Time frame

**Total project duration:** 6 years

**Indicative project start date:** September 2023

**Indicative project end date:** August 2029

## Facility Point estimated budget

The estimated total budget for the implementation of EUSAIR Facility Point as the main EUSAIR strategic governance support project and its four functions foreseen in the IPA-ADRION Interreg Programme for the period of 6 years is **10 721 300 Euro.**

EU co-financing (85 %): **9 113 105** **Euro.**

Table 1 Facility Point Estimated Budget - detailed (revised as of 19. 4. 2023)

| **WP/ Activity** | **TOTAL** |
| --- | --- |
| **WP1 ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT** | **5.191.050** |
| Staff input - FTE per WP | 12,8 |
| Staff costs | 1.957.500 |
| Travel and accomodation  | 229.125 |
| Office and administration | 293.625 |
| External expertise and services | 2.710.800 |
| **A.1.1 Administrative and operational support to Governing Board** | **983.550** |
| **A.1.2 Administrative and operational support to Thematic Steering Groups** | **1.714.500** |
| **A1.3 Administrative and operational support to Youth Council** | **771.150** |
| **A.1.4 Support to EUSAIR presidency**  | **1.721.850** |
|  |  |
| **WP2 COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION** | **1.564.000** |
| Staff input - FTE per WP | 1,5 |
| Staff costs | 270.000 |
| Travel and accomodation  | 27.000 |
| Office and administration | 40.500 |
| External expertise and services | 1.226.500 |
| **A.2.1 Communicating the Strategy to the public and stakeholders** | 1.035.000 |
| **A.2.2 Harmonised procedures, cross-pillar coordination and coordination between NC and PC** | 297.500 |
| **A.2.3 Coordination with EUSAIR governance support projects**  | 186.500 |
| **A.2.4 Cross-macroregional cooperation exchange ...** | 45.000 |
|  |  |
| **WP3 DECISION MAKING & CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTERS** | **3.255.050** |
| Staff input - FTE per WP | 11,6 |
| Staff costs | 1.831.500 |
| Travel and accomodation  | 213.825 |
| Office and administration | 274.725 |
| External expertise and services | 935.000 |
| **A.3.1 Knowledge management and support evidence-based decision making** | **2.512.100** |
| **A.3.2 Capacity building** | **742.950** |
|  |  |
| **WP4 M&E OF EUSAIR** | **711.200** |
| Staff input - FTE per WP | 2,1 |
| Staff costs | 358.500 |
| Travel and accomodation  | 38.925 |
| Office and administration | 53.775 |
| External expertise and services | 260.000 |
| **A.4.1 / A.4.2 Further development of harmonised EUSAIR monitoring / evaluation system** | **711.200** |
|  |  |
| **GRAND TOTAL** | **10.721.300** |
| Staff input - FTE per WP | 26,5 |
| Staff costs | 4.417.500 |
| Travel and accomodation  | 508.875 |
| Office and administration | 662.625 |
| External expertise and services | 5.132.300 |
|  |  |
| **Sources of funding** |  |
| Interreg funds = 85 % | 9.113.105 |
| Own co-financing = 15 % | 1.608.195 |

1. Only early preparations of the Forum considered as the event itself will fall outside the project period. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. PCs + deputies (16), TSG members (130), NCs (18), YC (30+30+30) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Forums, thematic pillar and cross-pillar events [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. PPs (9) + NC (18) + TSGs (app. 40 institutions) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Communication expert function will be appointed either to the Facility Point staff or to an external expert. The budget for the implementation has been however decreased compared to previous one. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. EUSAIR contact person could be e.g. Project Partner Coordinator or Communication expert. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. 3 MRS x 10 institutions [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. D.2.2.2 + D2.4.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Project 2 and 3 (2), MRS (3), TSG (5) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)