

POCTEP ACTION PLAN

FINAL

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project: EPICAH

Partner organisation: [LP] ATLANTIC AXIS OF PENINSULAR NORTHWEST (PT)

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):

- ≡ [PP2] ATLANTIC AXIS OF PENINSULAR NORTHWEST (ES)
- ≡ [PP3] IBERIAN ASSOCIATION OF RIVERSIDE MUNICIPALITIES OF DUERO RIVER - AIMRD (ES)

Country: PORTUGAL and SPAIN

NUTS2 regions: (ES) Galicia, Castilla y León, Extremadura, Andalucía
(PT) Norte, Centro, Alentejo, Algarve

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The Action Plan aims to impact: ☐ Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
☒ **European Territorial Cooperation programme**
☐ Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: INTERREG V A SPAIN – PORTUGAL (POCTEP)

1 | ABSTRACT

The present document is the proposal for an action plan for the improvement of the cross-border cooperation policy instrument for the Portugal-Spain border, with regard to the protection and management of its natural and cultural heritage and its valorisation as an asset for economic growth, employment and fixation of population in border areas. As the current period 2014-2020 is now finished, proposed actions are oriented to produce results during the next programming period 2021-2027.

This document seeks, in a synthetic manner and in close cooperation with the POCTEP Management Authority:

- Transmit the analysis of the current situation of the management and protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the border as well as the effectiveness of the programme to promote it as an engine for territorial development,
- Show the need to improve it in terms of effectiveness and return on investment by financing,
- To highlight the good practices that have been detected throughout the EPICAH project,
- To make known the analysis made by the partners involved in the action plan that refract towards the proposed improvements.
- To propose a new tool to assist the Managing Authority to prepare the strategic documents for the next programming period so it can capitalize the knowledge and good practices gathered during the EPICAH project.

2 | METHODOLOGY

The approach and methodology to be followed in the development of the action plans to improve policy instruments is essentially defined in the Interreg Europe programme itself.

At the project level, the following work documents were generated and served as the basis (as a source of secondary data) to the drafting of this action plan:

- ✓ The report characterizes the current state of the policy instrument about the protection and development of the natural and cultural heritage at the Portugal-Spain border;
- ✓ The feedback reports received from partners after the study visit and thematic seminar organized in the POCTEP territory.
- ✓ The feedback reports to the study visits conducted and thematic seminars organized, containing the analysis and conclusions of each of them as well as suggestions for improvement, sharing of good practices considered relevant to the territory visited as well as Recommendations for the obstacles and problems identified throughout the stay in the territory;
- ✓ The information gathered during the study visits and thematic seminars organized by partners as well as the Forum about tourism organized in May 2019 in Braga. The good practices presented and analysed were the main source of inspiration for this Action Plan.

- ✓ The conclusions and recommendations of the members of the Local Stakeholders Group concerning the POCTEP, collected in the periodic meetings with them;
- ✓ The conclusions obtained with the realization of the online questionnaire on *"how the frontier effect is being potentiated in the protection and development of the cross-border natural and cultural heritage in Europe"*;
- ✓ The report of general recommendations of the experts of the EPICAH project, for the improvement of policy instruments devoted to cross-border cooperation for the forthcoming programming period.

3 | GENERAL INFORMATION AND CHARACTERIZATION OF THE POLICY INSTRUMENT

The land border between Portugal and Spain is the most extensive, oldest and most stable land border in the entire European Union. A border of 1,200 kilometres in length, a "dry streak" that can cross on foot in most of its extension, without natural elements that define it physically and recognized first time by the Treaty of Zamora (1143).

The area of cross-border cooperation represents about 27% of the territory of both countries, and just under 5.5 million inhabitants, in 2012. If the adjacent NUTS are considered, this number rises to almost 15 million inhabitants (2012).

Cross-border territory is predominantly rural, with almost 60% of its territory entering this category, and 50% of its population resides in urban centres with less than 10,000 inhabitants.

The GDPpc of 73% of the EU27 value in the cross-border territories is significantly lower than that recorded in adjacent areas (79%), in Portugal (80%) and in Spain (99%).

The corporate fabric consists mainly of SMEs and micro-enterprises (95%), and 95.9% of the companies in business have fewer than 10 workers, which means that there is greater difficulty in accessing financing and external investments. However, the area of cross-border cooperation is well-endowed of study centres, research centres, technological centres and universities that are dedicated to the valuation of R&D in the business and civil sector.

The area of cross-border cooperation is heterogeneous, identifying three urban axes: Braga-Porto-Vigo, Évora-Badajoz-Caceres and Faro-Huelva.

1	Galiza-Norte de Portugal
2	Castela e Leão-Norte de Portugal
3	Castela e Leão-Centro de Portugal
4	Extremadura-Centro de Portugal-Alentejo
5	Andaluzia-Alentejo-Algarve

In 2002, Portugal and Spain signed an arrangement designed to legally promote and regulate cross-border cooperation between territorial entities governed by public law, known as the *Treaty of Valencia*, which promoted the adoption on 21 May 1980 on the part of the two States of the European framework arrangement on cross-border cooperation between communities or territorial authorities.

The actors who mainly operate in the interventions of the Portugal-Spain border, are of public nature, institutions of the governments of Spain and Portugal, regional institutions as autonomous communities and committees of coordination and development regional (decentralized organs of the Portuguese Government) and local institutions (*diputaciones*, municipal councils/*ayuntamientos*, associations of municipalities, *mancomunidades*, public companies, etc.).

The Interreg Community programmes and the Treaty of Valencia favoured the participation of other bodies or institutions in cross-border cooperation, such as universities, economic or regional development organizations, foundations, NGOs, business and trade union organizations, technology centre, etc.

The programmes of the Interreg community initiative played a decisive role in the development of cross-border territories, not only as catalysts for a cross-border cooperation environment, but also as an instrument for promoting actions Developed in common and in cooperation.

Cross-border cooperation between regional and local entities on both sides of the Portugal-Spain border comes from 1990, recording a spectacular development, giving rise to the creation of different common organizations structures such as consortiums, working communities, associations or EGTCs (European groupings of territorial cooperation), Euro-region's, Euro cities, all of which are intended to promote and coordinate concerted initiatives from both sides of the border.

Since the beginning of the INTERREG programmes, around 2.44 billion euros have been mobilized for investment (national and EU funds), which allowed up to 2017 to finance a set of more than 1,500 projects.

The analysis of the distribution of investments by thematic objectives of the period 2000-2013, allows to know the strategy followed in this period and the investment priorities encouraged and concretized.

- Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting the efficient use of resources, which accounted for 35.5% of the investment;
- The promotion of sustainable transport and the elimination of major bottlenecks in major transport networks, which reached 18% of total investment;
- Strengthening research, technological development and innovation, with 11.6% of the investment made;
- Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, which reached 11.1% of the investment.

4 | NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

The Spain-Portugal border holds a vast and rich natural and cultural heritage, largely common or shared by cross-border communities, and whose importance focuses on the dimensions (social and economic) that it assumes for the development of the territory.

Concerning the natural heritage, this space is characterized by the existence of a large number of natural spaces classified among which are shared and joint managed:

Shared Classified spaces	Parque Nacional Peneda-Gerês/Parque Natural da Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés
	Parque Natural de Montesinho/Parque Natural del Lago de Sanabria y Reserva de Caza de la Sierra de la Culebra
	Parque Natural del Duero Internacional/Parque Natural de Arribes del Duero
	Parque Natural do Tejo Internacional/Parque Natural del Tajo Internacional
	Parque Natural da Serra de São Mamede/ZEC y ZEPA de la Sierra de San Pedro
Cross-border classified and joint management spaces	Reserva Natural do Sapal de Castro Marim e Vila Real de Santo António/Paisaje Natural de las Marismas de Isla Cristina
	Reserva da Biosfera Transfronteiriça Gerês-Xurés
	Reserva da Biosfera Transfronteiriça Meseta Ibérica
	Reserva da Biosfera Transfronteiriça Tejo/Tajo Internacional

In the concrete case of the spaces classified as Natura 2000, it is important to underline, on the one hand, the high number of natural spaces which, along the border, have this classification and, secondly, the fact that this classification is not applied similarly by all countries, as there are cases in which the same ecosystem only receives this classification in the part of one of the countries.

Add to the classified natural spaces, a set of Iberian rivers that configure and determine the development of the border regions (Minho, Lima, Douro, Tejo and Guadiana) whose management (especially of the respective river basins) has been take on an increasingly collaborative.

The rational use of water resources by the agricultural sector has been other area where cooperative management has developed in recent years, favouring the competitiveness of this sector (since it is always fundamental in the economic structure of the Iberian border) and that in many regions of the border is characterized by being irrigated agriculture.

The last two decades have highlighted the wide range of hazards and risks to which the natural values of the border are subject to the demand for joint and collaborative solutions, namely at the level of disaster management (fires, flooding, floods, drought, erosion...) highlighting the advances in civil protection/firefighting.

At the level of cultural heritage, the area of cooperation stands out for its 9 assets classified as world heritage by UNESCO:

- Alto Douro Vineyard,
- Prehistoric rock art sites of Vale do Côa and Siega Verde,
- Old City of Salamanca,
- Old Town of Cáceres,
- Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe,
- Mérida Archaeological Ensemble,
- Évora historical center,
- Doñana National Park,
- Elvas city-border barracks and its fortifications.

This classified heritage joins a very wide range of goods classified as *bienes de interés cultural*, national monuments, real estate of public interest or properties of municipal interest, including archaeological, architectural, historical, artistic or ethnographic.

In general, cross-border cooperation, in this context, is assumed in the form of the creation of networks of heritage elements (museological networks, thematic networks, cultural itineraries,...) or joint events (sporting, artistic...).

The local administration is the sector that increased participation in this investment effort in the tourism valuation of the cross-border territory and the natural, historical and cultural heritage, leadership verified on both sides of the border.

The joint development of tourism is a recurring priority in the specific strategies of most entities dedicated to cross-border cooperation but the lack of coordination among different actions reduce the value for money of the interventions. They remain isolated and producing results only in part of the territory and for a limited time.

5 | MAIN CHALLENGE OF THE POLICY INSTRUMENT

The challenges facing Spain are related to high unemployment, reduced business competitiveness, the fragility of its IR&I system, the scarce efficiency in resource use and the existence of natural risk factors.

In the case of Portugal, the challenges identified as the most relevant are related to the need to increase the competitiveness of its economy, the fight against unemployment through the improvement of education and training levels as well as the increase in efficiency in the use of natural resources.

Both countries share common challenges at the shared border territory: depopulation, lack of economic growth, unemployment.

The area of cooperation logically shares the above mentioned limitations as one of the priority concerns of the rational and sustainable use of existing resources along the border. Possessing an important landscape, historical, cultural and natural richness that represents one of the most important competitive advantages of

the territory is also generator of the need to develop joint solutions to cross-border hazards and risks affecting those same assets.

In this context, **the establishment of local economic development strategies is vitally important** in order to promote and potentiate this competitiveness and fix population.

It is also important to establish a **comprehensive and cross-border view of all shared natural heritage**, and the cross-border cooperation programme is a privileged instrument to eliminate the border effect that still limits this process.

About cultural heritage, attention focuses on the need to improve the archaeological, architectural, cultural, landscape and environmental heritage networks as well as the network of World heritage sites existing in the cooperation area. It is important to study and make known the importance of artistic and cultural values of this whole heritage, creating a social consciousness related to its importance, a critical factor of its use as an element of identification and development of border communities.

In addition, the underwater heritage and the intangible heritage (especially the oral traditions and rituals) constitute virtually unexplored fields on the Portugal-Spain border being potential fields of cross-border cooperation whose impact on the territory is unknown.

The modernization of agricultural processes, urban rehabilitation (especially the rehabilitation of the built heritage), the new social profiles (urban consumers seeking the quality and authenticity of the products) has in recent years generated new possibilities for the valuation of endogenous resources, notably through the development of tourism activities. These opportunities also add to the possibilities opened by new information and communication technologies that make global small-scale activities in more isolated (inland) and disadvantaged areas.

To make more visible the value of landscapes (constructed and natural), culture (material and intangible) and identity, the border territories should turn into more attractive and competitive territories **if developed in a cooperative and strategic way**.

One of the most relevant **constraints for the territorial sustainable development at the border between Portugal-Spain** is the lack of common strategies to guide the activities implemented. Of course there are very valuable projects with very interesting results but the lack of coordination between them lead to duplicate efforts, waste money doing several times the same, do not know what is being done in other areas (lack of capitalization) and the worse thing of all: a lack of coherence in the actions implemented.

According to the answers to the questionnaire conducted under the EPICAH project, cooperation agents in the border territories between Spain and Portugal see in the cooperation programme the tool to provide coordination for action. It is claimed that the POCTEP should be an operational tool for the implementation of a joint, shared and consensual medium/long-term strategy for the development of the border.

6 | LESSONS LEARNED

EPICAH project has been essential to realize the real dimension that – well structured – sustainable and smart capitalization of natural and cultural heritage can have on the territorial development. In this sense, as general conclusions, we can state:

- ✓ Tourism is understood as a fundamental tool for the sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage, balancing the needs of protection, conservation and appreciation with the generation of new sources of financing for those satisfaction and with the creation of new attractiveness factors for the territory;
- ✓ The level of cross-border cooperation reached between Spain and Portugal is substantially deeper than that achieved in the other territories of the project, highlighting the full participation of local communities (and their representatives and public or associative) in cross-border cooperation processes;
- ✓ The implementation of cross-border cooperation has, in this territory, a level of dependence on the funding allocated by the respective policy instrument considerably lower than in the other territories of the project;

Taking this into account, following good practices has been identified as the most valuable to improve the POCTEP instrument according to different criteria: results demonstrated, similarities with the Spanish-Portuguese border, etc.

Good practice	Lessons learnt
Realisation, extension and rehabilitation of museal sites in counties of Satu Mare and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg in the context of cross-border tourism	The project aimed at the integration of cultural sites in a region with the objective of increasing its tourism attractiveness. It was a well-designed process: the first was the identification of potential sites where the complex actions have to be implemented. After it and based on the local and regional assets, the partners defined the complementary activities to create an interconnected and intertwined tourism offer. With this process, the project was much more than a simple rehabilitation and sustainable use of cultural heritage: it was much more a joint development of a territorial integrated touristic products.
Route of Medieval Churches – Középkori templomok útja	This is a complex tourism development project based on common religious heritage of the whole region of two neighbouring counties in Romania and Hungary with the participation of more than 30 churches. Visitor-friendly development was implemented in 19 temples, which was complemented by communication and promotion activities. The extensive network of the partners guarantees the long-term sustainability of the results.

Romania – Hungary Gastronomy Route

It is a very good example on how a strategy can help to revitalize traditions and, at the same time, reactivate the economy of territories that are losing population and competitiveness.

This project was aimed to promote traditional products and traditional cuisine as catalyst for regional development at the border region between Hungary and Romania. To achieve it, it created a cross-border route involving producers and restaurants, making the link also to recover traditional recipes.

The most interesting thing is the valorization strategy behind this project that not only addressed to the main beneficiaries (producers and restoration) but also have impact in other sectors like the small business at the cross-border region that take advantage of a re-vitalized economy and the increase in the number of visitors at the area.

Capacity building in Hungary-Slovakia Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013

One of the intervention areas within the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013 was the “Joint development of networking partnership programme and project planning and management capacities”. This action aimed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the policy instrument through networking and capacity building. Some of the supported projects addressed cultural issues (e.g. establishment a network for cultural heritage, creation of value map, development of castle routes, joint planning and capacity building, etc.) – involving and mobilizing of the organisation that are responsible in heritage protection. Potential activities included the following measures (at any relevant thematic field):

- Institution development: development of integrated organisational structures and joint sustainable thematic co-operation networks for joint regional development activities; o harmonisation of the existing development plans, programmes, and elaboration of joint strategies,
- Development of joint project planning and management capacities, common trainings for

	<p>organisations concerning project development and management skills;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public relations work including different types of media to promote and develop crossborder activities to the public
<p>Approach used in capitalization process by the programme Interreg Estonia-Latvia</p>	<p>Very interesting the approach experimented in 2018 by the PI Managing Authority to integrate the products of different projects and areas of the programme, as well as to stimulate the cooperation between projects during and after their realization.</p>
<p><u>ACCESSIT: Itineraries of Accessible Heritage (Italy-France Maritime Programme 2007-2013)</u></p>	<p>ACCESSIT project (http://www.accessit-git.eu) aimed at promoting the integrated management of cultural heritage in the Italian-French maritime (border) area. The idea was the creation of an itinerary that would include the whole tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the territory; an itinerary accessible for all (including disabled people), thanks to new technologies and innovative solutions.</p> <p>The main idea is to boost territorial development through tourism, but also research and innovation for innovative solution to facilitate the access to all. In addition, in this way, the project also works on the principle of equal access to culture, protection and promotion of cultural heritage and its restoration to achieve more attractive resources and territories.</p> <p>Concerning POCTEP area, this project can be a source of inspiration for new dimensions in tourism and cultural valorization projects.</p>
<p><u>Activities on The Golden Way around the cities Tachov (CZ) and Bärnau (DE)</u></p>	<p>The project gives another approach for the management of cultural heritage and supports experimental archaeology research. It also combines re-creation of cultural and immaterial heritage with tourism, research and education, involving directly the community in managing/financing/operating the park. The project is proving the importance of collaboration with education and research, being a scientific reconstruction of a medieval village. It also includes product development: specific</p>

thematic tours: historical, crafts, gastronomy, in a very efficient combination.

It is a good example on how preserving cultural and natural heritage can lead to profitable tourism activity.

It also demonstrate that it is possible combine protection, research and economic exploitation of cultural resources.

This kind of integral project would be desirable for the POCTEP area.

Environmentally Friendly Gastronomy

The main goal of this project was to create and use an educational programme for high school students from gastronomical schools from both sides of the border. Such programme would allow those future gastronomical experts to learn using ecological resources for cooking and to make stronger links with local producers. By this way, the project has moved from encouraging discussions among the farmers via the gastronomy sector and public institutions of regional development to teaching future professionals.

The main strength of the project is to present young students concepts as:

- Environmentally friendly gastronomy
- modern gastronomic trends adopted in the use of local products
- Environmentally friendly behaviour
- Cross-border cooperation through sharing a gastronomic identity

This kind of practice could be transferred to POCTEP region to preserve and promote the interior territories, their economies, traditions and employments there.

Hungary-Croatia (IPA) Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 – Priority 2 Sustainable Use of Natural and Cultural Assets.

In that priority, the specific objective is to convert the region's natural and cultural heritage assets to tourism attractions with income generating capabilities. Furthermore, the Handbook to Tourism Projects in the Hungary-Croatia (IPA) Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 is a firm strategic direction in the new Programme, which tourism development projects have to use as a background.

Cross-border programme France - Italy

This programme organizes annual events in which project beneficiaries can present their work and capitalize results and experiences. This practise has demonstrated its benefits. In fact, in the framework of the Italian Action Plan it is proposed to widen the scope of this activity, creating thematic clusters to capitalize project results.

7 | STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE ACTION PLAN

For each policy instrument to be improved with the support of the Interreg Europe programme, a Local Stakeholders Group was constituted, which accompanies all the development of the project, conducting periodic meetings for the analysis of the lessons learned so far (in particular, the way in which they can positively influence the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy instrument) and the debate on proposals for adopting/adapting these lessons to the territory, not only during the project execution period but, mainly, after their conclusion.

In the case of the "Interreg V-A Spain-Portugal" policy instrument, the Local Stakeholders Group consists of:

- Management Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat and National Coordinators of the policy instrument,
- Iberian network of cross-border entities (RIET),
- Xunta of Galicia (Regional Government - represented by the Regional Advisor of Culture, Education and University),
- Junta of Castilla y León (Regional Government – represented by the Regional Ministry for Culture and Tourism)
- University of Vigo,
- University of Salamanca,
- University of Extremadura,
- University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
- University of Aveiro,
- *Diputación* of Salamanca (County Council),
- *Diputación* of Huelva (County Council),
- Border Iberian Urban Triangle (TRIURBIR).

This listing could be added with the 36 Municipal Councils of *Galicia* and Northern Portugal that are members of the Atlantic Axis and the 42 Municipal Councils from *Castilla y León* and North Portugal that are members of AIMRD because they are also informed of the evolution of the project in a periodic manner and their inputs are taken much into account by the partners in the area POCTEP.

It was with these stakeholders that the partners of the project, Atlantic Axis of the Northwest Peninsular and the Iberian Association of Municipalities of the Douro Riverside, shared the knowledge and good practices learned in the activities developed within the EPICAH project.

The stakeholders' role in the definition of the action plan was active as they not only were informed about good practices and intermediate results of the project. They had the opportunity of contribute in a more direct way giving their opinion about partners' proposals and proposing their own ideas to improve the document. Finally, in May 2019, almost all of them attended to the Forum organized in Braga about Sustainable Tourism at Border Areas, a forum where all attendees (almost 200) had the chance to speak and contribute to the debate. For instance, one proposal from stakeholders reflected in the document is the need for more exchange meetings between the beneficiaries and the Managing Authority, especially in the preparation of the programming period but also during the execution for eventual adjustments. Currently, this kind of meetings is almost exclusively during the presentation of each new programme.

8 | IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

In coherence with the above points, an action plan was elaborated to promote the contribution of POCTEP to a greater and more effective valorisation of the natural and cultural heritage for the harmonious and balanced development of the cross-border territory, through the valorisation of the cross-border natural and cultural heritage and its economic sustainable exploitation through tourism.

The temporal horizon for the implementation of the measures proposed cover the second phase of the EPICAH project that is 2020 and 2021 with the aim of contribute to the capitalization process of the current period 2014-2020 and to produce results on time to be used in the preparation of the strategic documents for the next programming period 2021-2027.

7.1 Background

One of the main limitations shared by the EPICAH project policy instruments is how to value the assets of cultural and natural heritage shared by the border regions in a harmonious and coherent manner and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the investments made in their preservation and protection.

The exchange of EPICAH experience activities showed that tourism activity is currently the main tool to achieve these objectives through:

- ≡ An effective promotion and dissemination of Heritage;
- ≡ Make the Heritage visible and part of a tourist experience of the destination;
- ≡ Increase and disseminate knowledge about each cultural or natural asset;
- ≡ Add value and attractiveness to Heritage by establishing innovative ways to visit, experiment and learn about Heritage (through between emotional narratives and the application of new technologies)

Once the natural and cultural heritage of border regions, in its great majority, is shared, common and / or complementary between the border territories, it seems logical to work in this area through cross-border cooperation programs. The objective of doing so is to achieve common results and guarantee the coordination of the measures taken on both sides of the border, avoiding divergences and trying to create synergies.

The border between Spain and Portugal has a wide diversity of natural and cultural resources that can lead to sustainable development of border regions based on tourism-related activities. This is especially important if we consider that these regions are currently areas of low population with serious demographic problems. In this sense, the new economic activity will allow these regions not only to recover their socioeconomic development but also to retain (and attract) the population.

In this context, the cross-border cooperation program between Spain and Portugal (POCTEP) should, as other cross-border cooperation programs already do, address tourism as a fundamental instrument for the management and sustainability of natural and cultural heritage, along with its ability to create employment and economic growth in a sustainable way. This is something that is already being done in some way, but the proposal of this Action Plan is to do it in a more structured way to guarantee the profitability and sustainability of the results obtained, as well as the synergies and alignment of the objectives of the different projects funded.

Therefore, the Spain-Portugal cross-border cooperation program should:

- 1) **Capitalize the results got from the projects already implemented in the current programming period 2014-2020**, avoiding duplications in the future and creating new products based on what already has been developed in the last years.
- 2) **Define and implement a strategic plan for cross-border tourism** that establishes a common (and shared) vision for tourism development, including the main guidelines for stakeholder action border to achieve that vision;

The methodology proposed for the strategic plan is a good practice already implemented by the Hungary-Croatia Cross-Border Cooperation Program (IPA) that has developed a "Regional Tourism Products Plan" and a "Manual for tourism projects" as the basis for launching call of proposals for activities related to tourism.

Both good practices (presented and explained to the partners by the group of experts of the project) were studied in depth during the period of analysis of the results of the joint survey and the development of the joint report. To obtain more information about the action related to the Manual (since the Management Authority of this program is the same as the Hungary-Slovakia program) a representative of the program was invited to share this experience in the event of the Braga project (May 30)

In the implementation of its priority 2 "Sustainable use of natural and cultural assets", this manual is used as a **background document** for tourism interventions approved by the program, establishing a strategic concept applied to all projects in the tourism area: **a common framework that aims to reinforce the achievement of program results.**

This procedure can also be useful to define both the limits and the objectives of the "use" of tourism as a tool for the protection, promotion and valorisation of natural and cultural heritage assets in border areas.

7.2 The actions

A) Organize a capitalization forum of cooperation projects/actions in the field of tourism for the POCTEP area

In particular, partners concerned by this action plan¹ will develop this first action in the following way:

0. **Creation of a working group to define the main guidelines and objectives of the Capitalization Event.** It will be a working team integrated by EPICAH partners in Spain and Portugal to which also the Managing Authority of the Programme will be invited, as well as related structures such as the Joint Secretariat, and some relevant experts in the tourism and territorial cooperation field.
1. **Define the working lines of the Capitalization Event.** The Working team will define the execution guidelines of the event: city, venue, program, date and target in terms of attendance.

¹ Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (PT), Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (ES), Iberian Association of Riverside Municipalities of Duero River (ES).

As a minimum, the event will address all stakeholders within the POCTEP area that have developed a project in the fields of tourism or natural/cultural heritage promotion/preservation during the period 2014-2020.

It will be an inclusive event oriented to the exchange and debate between all attendees. In this sense, at this stage the working group defined in step 1 will identify all relevant stakeholders for the event.

2. **Implementation of the Capitalization Event.** The main objective will be:
 - ≡ Identify the main results and challenges identified for the cooperation, as well as potential synergies among projects to guarantee their sustainability.
 - ≡ Capitalize the results got with the aim of, in the post 2020 period, work on them, avoiding duplications and finance again the same actions as in previous periods.
3. **Conclusions/recommendations and its transmission to the Managing Authority of the POCTEP.** The Managing Authority will then transmit these conclusions/recommendations to relevant management structures for the program so they can consider them when drafting the final reports of the program.

Players Involved

Eixo Atlantico do Noroeste Peninsular (ES and PT) and AIMRD.

They are the partners of the EPICAH project at POCTEP area, therefore they are the main responsible for the implementation of this action. They will be the responsible of organizing the event.

POCTEP Managing Authority and other related structures like the Joint Secretariat

Their role within this action will be take active part in the event as speakers in order to exchange directly with the attendees.

Final beneficiaries of POCTEP projects in the area of tourism and preservation/promotion of natural and cultural heritage

They will be the attendees to the event (max 2 per beneficiary). They will have the opportunity to share and exchange directly with managing structures of the programme and between them too which have been the strong and weakest points of the programme in this concrete area during the present period (2014-2020) and which are, in their opinion, the main challenges for the future.

Timeframe

The timeframe for the implementation of the described action cover the second phase of the EPICAH project that is 2020 and 2021 with the aim of contribute to the capitalization process of the current period 2014-2020.

Task 1	Creation of a working group to define the main guidelines and objectives of the Capitalization Event.	January-February 2020
Task 2	Define the working lines of the Capitalization Event.	February - March 2020
Task 3	Implementation of the Capitalization Event.	June 2020
Task 4	Conclusions/recommendations and its transmission to the Managing Authority of the POCTEP.	Second half 2020

Costs and Finance Resources

The estimated cost of developing this action is estimated in 5.000 €

It could be financed by the proposing entities (Eixo Atlantico and AIMRD).

Risk assessment

Nº	Risk	Probability of occurrence	Impact on the Action Plan	Mitigation measures
1	Failure to constitute a suitable team of experts	Low	High	This risk is low as partners involved by themselves can guarantee the creation of this group.
2	Not agreement in the definition of the working guidelines of the Capitalization Event.	Low	High	Partners involved have common views and during the implementation of this project have created also a strong link with other relevant stakeholders in the border area. In the eventuality of a lack of understanding, partners will ask for the advice of external experts and the stakeholders group opinion.
3	Timeframe not realistic	Medium	Medium	If something unexpected occurs, the unique risk is not being able to implement the action in the first semester 2020. In this case, it would be done in the second one.
4	Not enough stakeholders interested in the event	Low	High	Partners involved have a really big network at the border region to guarantee the representativeness of the main stakeholders.

				<p>In addition, during the phase 1 of EPICAH project the stakeholders involved shown a great interest and willing to participate in the activities proposed.</p> <p>In the eventuality of a lack of participation, partners will contact personally with the identified stakeholders to explain them the importance of their participation and the opportunity that this event represents.</p>
5	Negative decision of the Monitoring Committee of the programme of taking the results into account	Medium	High	<p>In spite of the initial support and openness of the Managing Authority. Decisions within the POCTEP are not unilateral. Partners will explain to the Committee the background of the event and its aim but their decision is not under our control.</p> <p>In case of a negative, we will propose to the experts in charge to consider the event results as an input to the framework document to be developed in action 2.</p>

Monitoring the Implementation of the Action A

Monitoring is an important part of the implementation process as it can alert on eventual deviations, risks and need of corrective actions.

Monitoring process will be under the responsibility of the EPICAH partners involved in this Action Plan². To develop this task, there are some indicators to follow-up:

Task	Title	Set of Indicators	
1	Establishment of a working group	Group of experts	1
		Program for the event	1
		Number of speakers invited	8
2	Define the working lines of the Capitalization Event.	Number of areas of interest identified	3
		Number of coordination meetings	2
3		Number of events	1

² Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (PT), Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (ES), Iberian Association of Riverside Municipalities of Duero River (ES).

	Implementation of the Capitalization Event	Press appearances	15
		Number of participants in the event	60
4	Conclusions/recommendations and its transmission to the Managing Authority of the POCTEP.	Exchanges with MA to be informed about the results of the event	1

B) Support to the Managing Authority of the programme to improve the strategic framework for cross-border tourism projects.

More in particular, the partners concerned by this action plan³ will support the POCTEP Managing Authority in the following ways:

1. **Establishment of a cross-border working group** responsible for developing the draft cross-border tourism framework document. This document will include a SWOT analysis (weaknesses, threats, strengths, opportunities) of tourism and cultural and natural heritage; specific objectives in preserving, protecting and promoting these 3 domains; indicative actions on how to implement these specific objectives; and management guidance for implementation, financing and monitoring.
2. **Coordination with the main stakeholders** of the cross-border region.
 - a. Create focus groups of border stakeholders (in search of consensus on the vision, principles and priority interventions)
 - b. Make a public consultation (involving as many border actors as possible in the definition of the final contents of the framework)
3. **Offer the final result** – the document for a cross-border tourism framework of the Interreg VI A Spain-Portugal - to the working group on the preparation of the new POCTEP. for the next programming period (2021-2027)
4. **Monitor the results** of the analysis of the document made by the Monitoring Committee of the programme when preparing the next programming period

Players Involved

Partners of the EPICAH project promoters of the present Action Plan

The partners (Eixo and AIMRD) will create the cross-border working group mentioned in Task 1 and will be part of it. This group will be integrated by experts in cross-border cooperation and tourism.

³ Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (PT), Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (ES), Iberian Association of Riverside Municipalities of Duero River (ES).

Partners will also be in charge in the follow-up of each step of the process and in monitoring the process and its results.

Local Stakeholders of the POCTEP cross-border region

They will be invited to take part in the work of the cross-border working group and in any case will be informed about the results of the work done.

Their role will be especially important in the validation of the experts' work during the consultation phase (Task 2).

Joint Secretariat of the POCTEP

As the executive body of the programme it will be continuously and direct informed about each step of the action plan and each of the results (even if intermediate).

The Joint Secretariat will be invited to make contributions/amendments to the document to be elaborated by the cross-border group as it has the most accurate picture of the programme selection, evaluation and implementation process as a consequence of its **daily contact with the beneficiaries and its involvement in the managing procedures of the programme.**

Managing Authority of the POCTEP

it will be continuously and direct informed about each step of the action plan and each of the results (even if intermediate). In addition, the Managing Authority will be invited to make contributions/amendments to the document to be elaborated by the cross-border group.

This body will transmit all the information to the working group on the preparation of the new POCTEP for the next programming period 2021-2027.

Program Monitoring Committee

As the MC is involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Cooperation Programme, it has crucial role in identifying and approving the documents to be taken into account.

Timeframe

The temporal horizon for the implementation of the measure proposed cover the second phase of the EPICAH project that is 2020 and 2021 with the aim of produce results on time to be used in the preparation of the strategic documents for the next programming period 2021-2027.

Task 1	<u>Establishment of a cross-border working group</u>	January-September 2020
Task 2	Coordination with the main stakeholders	September 2020 – February 2021
Task 3	Offer the final result to the Programme Authorities	February 2021
Task 4	Monitor the results	Until December 2021

Costs and Finance Resources

The estimated cost of developing the cross-border tourism framework is 2.500 €

The proposing entities (Eixo Atlantico and AIMRD) will finance the cross-border tourism framework.

Risk Assessment

Nº	Risk	Probability of occurrence	Impact on the Action Plan	Mitigation measures
1	Failure to constitute a suitable cross-border team of experts	Low	High	This risk is really low as partners involved, as well as the programme authorities have great knowledge about possible experts for this group.
2	Not enough stakeholders interested in the consultation process	Low	High	Partners involved have a really big network at the border region to guarantee the representativeness of the main stakeholders. In addition, during the phase 1 of EPICAH project the stakeholders involved shown a great interest and willing to participate in the activities proposed. In the eventuality of a lack of participation, partners will contact personally with the identified stakeholders to explain them the importance of their participation and the opportunity that this process represents.
3	Timeframe not realistic	Medium	Medium	If some unexpected deadline occurs, the risk is not have the document ready for the initial phase of the preparation work of the next programming period but, in any case, the results will be ready by the end of the EPICAH second phase and before the end of the preparation of the strategic documents for the POCTEP 2021-2027.
4	Negative decision of the Monitoring Committee of the programme of taking the results into account	Medium	High	In spite of the initial support and openness of the Managing Authority. Decisions within the POCTEP are not unilateral. Partners will explain to the Committee the background of the document and its aim but their decision is not under our control. In case of a negative, we will propose them to consider offer the framework document as a non-binding document complementary to the programme documents, which could be offered as an annex and a courtesy of the programme to guide potential beneficiaries.

Monitoring the Implementation of the Action B

Monitoring is an important part of the implementation process as it can alert on eventual deviations, risks and need of corrective actions.

Monitoring process will be under the responsibility of the EPICAH partners involved in this Action Plan⁴. To develop this task, there are some indicators to follow-up:

Task	Title	Set of Indicators	
1	Establishment of a cross-border working group	Group of experts	1
		Number of stakeholders participating in the focus group	15
2	Coordination with the main stakeholders	Number of direct consultation to selected stakeholders	10
		Number of public consultations	1
		Number of coordination meetings with MA/JS	2
3	Offer the final result	Number of documents elaborated	1
4	Monitor results	Exchanges with MA to be informed about the results of the Monitoring Committee analysis.	1

Contribution of the Managing Authority to the Action Plan

So far, the contribution of the POCTEP Managing Authority to the definition of the present action plan has been high. The Managing Authority has followed the whole process since the very beginning, cooperating and exchanging views with partners in order to find the action most convenient.

Once on the implementation phase of the action plan, the contribution of the Managing Authority will be of medium level until the finalization of the main document. During the drafting process of this main document the MA could contribute to the content and will be consulted by the group of experts but the main responsibility will be on the partners' side. Regarding the capitalization event, the role of the Managing Authority and related structures will be to take part on this event as an active speaker.

⁴ Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (PT), Atlantic Axis of Peninsular Northwest (ES), Iberian Association of Riverside Municipalities of Duero River (ES).

On the other hand, the role of the POCTEP Managing Authority will be central when presenting the event results and the final document to the working group on the preparation of the POCTEP Programme for the next programming period for its analysis and eventual approval to include it within the set of strategic documents to take into account when preparing the final reports of the current period and the strategic documents for the next programming period.

Date: 10 de Febrero de 2020,

Signature EIXO: _____

Signature AIMRD: _____



Stamp of the organisations (if available): _____

FIRMADO



MINISTERIO
DE HACIENDA

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO DE
PRESUPUESTOS Y GASTOS

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL
DE FONDOS EUROPEOS

SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE
COOPERACIÓN TERRITORIAL EUROPEA

M^a del Carmen Hernández Martín
Subdirectora General

D. Xoan Vázquez Mao
Eixo Atlántico do Noroeste Peninsular
C/ Bolivia 4, bajo
36203 Vigo (Pontevedra)

Estimado Xoan.

Acusamos recibo del envío del Plan de Acción para la frontera entre España y Portugal a desarrollar por EIXO ATLANTICO y AIMRD, elaborado en el marco del proyecto EPICAH. Como Autoridad de Gestión del POCTEP, daremos conocimiento de sus resultados al Grupo de Trabajo que se ha creado para el próximo período 2021-2027, al objeto de que puedan tenerse en cuenta en el próximo programa.

Atentamente.

M^a del Carmen Hernández Martín
Subdirectora General

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