

FACT SHEET 1_Priority axis PA1_Joint protection and efficient use of common values and resources (Cooperating on common values and resources)

**Investment priority 6/c: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing
natural and cultural heritage**



Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support

The area is rich in natural, built, historic and cultural values that represent the joint heritage of the eligible area. The interventions envisaged will result in improved conditions of the most important values – including physical facilities but also the intangible elements of the joint heritage. These improvements – including better accessibility where necessary - will make these facilities more attractive to visitors. The combination of these values and their joint promotion – together with the physical improvements made, can contribute to the formulation of a joint and **integrated tourism destination**, attracting visitors both internally, and also from outside the eligible area. The increased number of visitors will result in an increase of visitor nights and thus contribute indirectly to the strengthening of the area's tourist industry.

The protection and rehabilitation of the natural and cultural heritage is also important from the perspective of sustainable development.



Focus of interventions:

Taking into account the differentiating elements of the eligible area's touristic offer – natural historic and cultural heritage and values, as well as the focus of the corresponding investment priority (hereinafter: Ip), the focus of tourism development should be the development of thematic routes built around natural, historic and cultural values, including gastronomy and folk traditions, with complementary health and active tourism elements.

In order to use the joint touristic potential offered by the area better and in a more sustainable manner, concerted actions are necessary to protect and rehabilitate the key natural, historic and cultural heritages values on both sides of the border, their accessibility needs to be improved, attractive and internationally competitive thematic routes need to be developed, joint tourism destinations have to be established, managed and promoted. There are some similar initiatives funded from the previous programme, aimed at the creation attractive cross-border thematic routes; interventions can build on these initiatives.

This, however, requires a truly integrated approach: instead of standalone investments, complex developments that are parts of a wider concept need to be implemented: buildings, natural, historic and cultural values to be rehabilitated that together are able to attract a critical mass of visitors and operate sustainably (major increase in visitors number is an expectation), and there needs to be closely cooperating institutional structures in place that ensure destination management and promotions.

It is necessary to note that any intervention affecting NATURA 2000 sites needs to be in line with Article 6, paragraphs 2-4 of the Habitats Directive, stipulating how NATURA 2000 sites¹ are managed and protected.



Indicative actions:

The indicative actions will be related to rehabilitation, conservation and promotion of natural, as well as cultural and built heritage that can be promoted and sustainably exploited. Support can be provided to complex interventions, including the rehabilitation of various natural, cultural and historic values, as well as of facilities contributing to the protection of the joint natural, cultural and historical heritage on both sides of the border. Support can also be provided to creating competitive thematic routes for the rehabilitated values and facilities, as well as to the promotion of these routes and to improving their accessibility.

In line with Article 3 of the ERDF regulation (Regulation No. 1301/2013) support for investments in cultural and tourism infrastructure is limited to *small-scale* type only.

The Commission considers an infrastructure investment as being *small-scale* if its total cost is below or equal to EUR 5,000,000.00; this ceiling is raised to EUR 10,000,000.00 in the case of infrastructure considered as world cultural heritage in the sense of Article 1 of the 1972 Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage listed by UNESCO. These ceilings refer to the *built infrastructure*.



Types of activities:

- ✓ Preparation of studies, strategies, plans etc. in the field of preservation, development and utilization of cultural/natural heritage
- ✓ Training, exchange of good practices and awareness-raising campaigns regarding the protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage

¹ For details see Figure 46 – Natura 2000 areas – in the Strategic Territorial Analysis.

- ✓ Setting up new cross-border platforms, groupings and networks focusing on safeguarding and developing the joint natural and cultural heritage
- ✓ Improving the state of conservation of monuments, buildings and territories that are part of the area's natural, historical or cultural heritage (e.g. churches, castles, museums, theatres, natural parks, nature protection areas²)
- ✓ Preservation, promotion and development of intangible cultural heritage
- ✓ Digitization and bringing online cultural heritage, reusing the digitised cultural heritage for educational content, documentaries, tourism applications, games, etc. to foster creative industries
- ✓ Preservation of natural values
- ✓ Development, reconstruction and promotion of cultural facilities protecting the cultural heritage of the eligible area
- ✓ Conservation and safeguarding of natural and national parks, nature reserves and other protected areas
- ✓ Creation of thematic routes
- ✓ Improving the accessibility of natural and cultural heritages (construction, upgrading / modernization of roads and ensuring accessibility by bicycle)
- ✓ The promotion and utilization of cultural/natural heritage potential by investments in sustainable touristic infrastructure

When designing your project, please keep in mind that any investment in the cultural and/or natural infrastructure will have to be part of a wider, more complex intervention, including among others:

- ✓ **the promotion of the area,**
- ✓ **raising the number of visiting tourists,**
- ✓ **creating job opportunities at local level,**
- ✓ **creating/participating to thematic routes,**
- ✓ **involving the local relevant stakeholders and thus creating/developing new opportunities of sustainable growth of the eligible area**

NO SUPPORT will be provided to projects envisaging exclusively:

- ✓ **investments in cultural and/or natural heritage infrastructure/endowment OR**
- ✓ **marketing activities & promotional activities, including digital infrastructure**

Investment in roads cannot be supported as standalone operations; such investments need to be ancillary to investment in natural and cultural heritage and shall contribute

² See Map 4 of the SEA Report - Protected areas of the eligible counties

directly to reaching the selected thematic objective and investment priority under this specific objective. This means that total cost of such investments in roads cannot exceed 30% of the total budget of an operation (project).

The scope of the project and the related activities will have to ensure the fulfilment of the programme's specific objective related to the *Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage*, in a way that will raise the number of visitors following the investments made and contribute to the overall growth of the targeted area.



List of potential beneficiaries:

- ✓ Local and county governments / administrations and their institutions
- ✓ National ministries and their specialized institutions, regional offices
- ✓ National/Natural Parks administrations
- ✓ Environmental protection institutions
- ✓ Public higher education institutions / research institutions
- ✓ Microregional associations
- ✓ Regional and county development agencies
- ✓ Management organisations of Euroregions
- ✓ Public museums, libraries, theatres
- ✓ Offices of Cultural Heritage
- ✓ Chambers of commerce
- ✓ Churches
- ✓ Public offices of Cultural Heritage
- ✓ Non-profit NGOs
- ✓ Chambers of commerce
- ✓ National organizations responsible for transport infrastructure development
- ✓ EGTCs



Target groups:

People living in the eligible area and tourists visiting the area from outside.



Methodology for defining and calculating the OUTPUT indicators:

Summary of key information

<i>ERDF funds allocated</i>	EUR 30,477,417
<i>Total available budget</i>	EUR 35,855,785
Indicators	Assumed proportion of allocation
<i>ERDF funds allocated under this Call</i>	EUR 22,977,417.00
<i>Total available budget under this Call</i>	EUR 27,032,255.30

Categories of intervention:

Code	Amount (€)
085. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	22,977,417.00
086. Protection, restoration and sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites	
091. Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	
094. Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	
095. Development and promotion of public cultural and heritage services	

For measuring the outputs under this Ip, 2 output indicators have been identified; one is measuring the expected number of visits to supported sites, the other one reflecting the surface area of habitats supported to attain better conservation status. Both are common output indicators.

ID Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)
6/c 1 Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Number	53,000

Considering the 60% financial allocation for the indicator 6/c1, the total estimated cost per additional visit should be up to EUR 406. *This means that, no matter what your project involves in terms of activities or investments, each 406 euro spent will have to ensure at least 1 additional visitor.*

Definition

This indicator reflects the increase in number of visits to a site in the year following project completion. The indicator is relevant for any site improvements that aim to attract and accept visitors for sustainable tourism (cultural and natural heritage sites alike). The indicator includes sites with or without previous tourism activity (e.g. nature parks or buildings converted to museum).

With regard to quantification, one visitor can make multiple visits; a group of visitors count as many visits as many members the group has.

The actual number of visitors for the year following project completion has to be measured by the beneficiaries, based on the reliable records provided by the given beneficiary (that may also include the number and record of tickets issued). Each beneficiary is required to report the actual value of the indicator at least once – for the year following project completion.

The specific objective for this Ip is *“Sustainable use of natural, historic, and cultural heritage within the eligible area”*, and one of the aspects of the sustainable use is the sustainable touristic use of these sites. The improvement of sites through the types of actions foreseen – together with the accompanying measures helping their promotion – make them more attractive for visitors and lead to increase in the number of visitors.

Methodology for estimating the target value

Depending on the size, nature and current status of the given cultural and natural heritage sites the financial size and nature of interventions may vary. Nevertheless, each project is expected to produce a minimum level of increase in the number of visitors, proportionate to the level of investment made.

The number of additional visits is calculated by deducting the baseline number of visits to the given site (presented in the application) from the actual number of visits in the year following project completion.

It is important to take into account:

- ✓ That only interventions may be supported which contribute to sustainable forms of tourism
- ✓ The minimum number of *additional* visits depending on the project size (based on the expectation presented above)
- ✓ That in order to be able to calculate the number of additional visits, the baseline value – the number of visits to the site in the preceding year needs to be presented as part of the application; if it is a site that previously did not receive visitors, the value may be 0.
- ✓ That the increase in the number is expected to be sustainable – in other words, it is expected that the number of visitors to the given attraction is sustained at least on the increased level (measured for the year following project completion) over time
- ✓ That the number of visits will be required to be reported (and properly proved) for the year immediately after the completion of the project. This requires registering the number of visitors, which may be done through different forms of registration (including also issuing tickets) that contains at least the date and the number of visitors, or other forms that enable the provision of information on the number of visitors. Setting a standard methodology for recording to be used by all beneficiaries is proposed

Key elements of recording visitor number

- ✓ The indicator “number of visitors” is relevant for any site improvements that aim to attract and accept visitors for sustainable tourism (cultural and natural heritage sites alike). The indicator covers sites with or without previous tourism activity (e.g. nature parks or buildings converted to museum). With regard to quantification, one visitor can make multiple visits; a group of visitors count as many visits as many members the group has.
- ✓ The number of visitors needs to be measured on annual level, for the year immediately following project completion. The total number of visits is the sum of all visits made to the site during that year.
- ✓ The number of visitors needs to be recorded at the time of the visits.
- ✓ If a beneficiary receives non-reimbursable support under this Ip, it agrees to record the number of visitors in a credible way, report the number of visitors for the year following project completion and provides the detailed records for control purposes, when requested.
- ✓ Location of recording the visits:
 - If the attraction is a specific building, the visits need to be recorded at the entrance, when the visitor enters the building.
 - If the attraction is a group of buildings, or combination of buildings and outdoor areas, one entrance point need to be identified, where the visits are recorded;

- If the attraction is an outdoor area (for instance a nature park), an entrance point (one building – visitor centre or similar) needs to be identified and used as an entrance point to record the visits.
 - If the attraction is an event, visitors need to be recorded at the moment of entering the site (indoor or outdoor) of the event.
- ✓ Possible methods of recording:
- If paid tickets are issued, the number of tickets sold can be used to identify and report the number of visitors; proper records of tickets sold – including the date of selling – need to be in place.
 - The other option is that unpaid – free – tickets are issued. The number of tickets issued can be used to identify and report the number of visitors; similarly to paid tickets, proper records of tickets issued – including the date of issuing – need to be in place.
 - We propose to use one of the options above. However, if neither of them is feasible, recording the visitors at the time of entering the site is still necessary. An alternative to tickets can be a book of visitors, kept by a representative of the beneficiary – a person recording the number of visitors in the book, at the time of entering the site. The book of visitors should contain the date of visit and the number of visitors at least in a daily breakdown.

ID Indicator	Measurement unit (Hectares)	Target value (2023)
6/c 2 Surface of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status (Common output indicator)	At programme level	4,000
	Under this call	1,540

The financial allocation per 6/c2 indicator is up to 40% of the total ERDF budget for this Ip. Therefore, **4,000 hectares of *Surface of habitats will have to be supported in order to attain a better conservation status*, with a total cost of EUR 14,342,314.00. The calculations show that the maximum costs per hectare ranges between EUR 3,500.00 – EUR 3,600.00. Thus, no matter what activities or investments your project involves, in the end, the spent budget will have to be proportional with the number of hectares of surface affected.**

Definition

This indicator measures the surface of restored or preserved areas aimed to improve the conservation status of threatened species. The operations may be carried out both in or

outside of Natura 2000 areas, capable of improving the conservation status of targeted species, habitats or ecosystems for biodiversity and the provisioning of ecosystem-services. The development of the natural heritage sites - aimed at improving their conservation status – must clearly make a contribution towards the specific objective of this Ip, while in line with the intervention logic.

Methodology for estimating the target value

In order to provide an estimation of the unit costs, information about LIFE projects with similar content has been collected. In addition, nature protection organizations both in Romania and Hungary have been asked to provide information about their recent projects in the field of habitat protection. Although this is not a representative review, it still provides a good overview and data to support the estimation of the unit cost. Areas that receive support repeatedly should be counted only once.

It is important to take into account that:

- ✓ the focus of interventions needs to be the improvement of conservation status.
- ✓ each project is required to demonstrate its contribution to the target value of the output indicator.
- ✓ in case a project *also* results in the increase of the number of visits, it needs to be reported as well.
- ✓ areas that may receive repeated support should be counted only once.



Methodology for defining and calculating the RESULT indicators:

It is mandatory to be mentioned in your application form, how the output indicators will contribute to the achievement of the result indicators of the programme. The result indicator for this Ip is:

Specific objective	SO6/c - Sustainable use of natural, historic, and cultural heritage within the eligible area					
Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Tourist overnight stays in the eligible programme area	visitor nights	4,885,294.00	2013	5,485,294.00	National Statistical Offices: KSH, INS	2019, 2021, 2023

Definition of the indicator:

The **number of overnight stays** covers the nights that tourists spent at registered tourist accommodations in the reference year. The county level data are summarized to produce data for the eligible area.

Relation to the specific objective and actions:

The specific objective is the sustainable use of joint natural, historic and cultural heritage within the eligible area. If joint historic, cultural and natural heritage elements are improved, they become more attractive for tourists, resulting in increase in the number of tourists visiting.

In order to ensure all aspects of sustainability, it is important that the supported natural/cultural heritage sites and facilities need to be used for touristic purposes on long-term.

The sustainable touristic use may be best measured using the number of overnight stays – this is a widely accepted statistical indicator measuring the results of tourism-related activities. The indicator has a close link to the activities and to the output indicator. If the number of visitors to specific sites is increasing, as well as the number of sites worth visiting, tourists spend a longer time in the area and are motivated to stay for more than one day. This expectation certainly highlights the importance of the integrated development of tourist destinations instead of the development of individual sites not linked to each other.

! Special attention to horizontal principles

Special attention is needed under Ip 6/c, regarding the sustainable development (please see chapter 8 of Interreg V-A RO-HU CP and Chapter 1.2.3 Horizontal Principles of the Guide for Applicants).

The proposed projects should make specific contributions to climate change mitigation through interventions regarding safeguarding natural values.

Projects with a direct negative impact on the environment and sustainable development will not be selected for financing.

It will also be ensured that projects affecting NATURA 2000 sites are in line with Article 6, paragraphs 2-4 of the Habitats Directive, stipulating how NATURA 2000 sites are managed and protected.