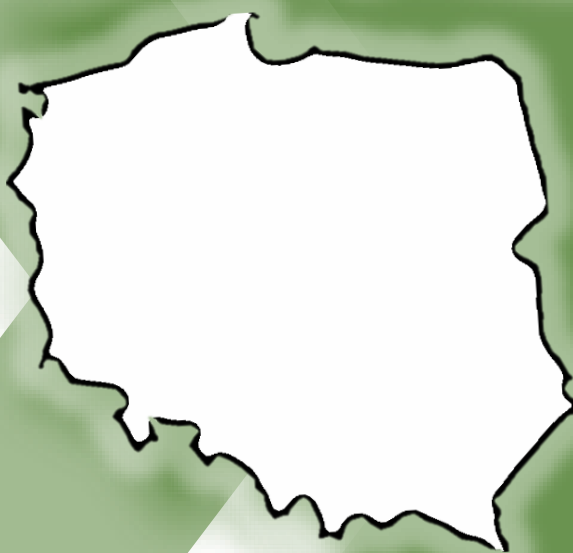




# EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME POLAND-BELARUS-UKRAINE 2014-2020 ON THE ELIGIBLE AREA

FINAL REPORT



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

Abbreviation	Explanation
CATI	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview
CAWI	Computer Assisted Web Interview
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
DK	National Road
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IOB	Business Environment Institution
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
LGU	Local Government Units
LIP	Large Infrastructure Projects
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OP EP	Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014-2020
OP IE	Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014-2020
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation Programme
PE	Population Equivalent
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TO	Thematic Objective

## SUMMARY

The main purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the activities implemented for all the TOs of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 and to analyse their effects and the Programme impact on the socioeconomic life of the population of the eligible area.

The evaluation of the Programme impact on the eligible area attempted to establish **to what extent specific Programme objectives were achieved** in particular priority axes. Unfortunately, this was not entirely possible, given the timing of the study (October-December 2023) and the resulting fact that not all projects were completed and appropriate data were not uploaded to the Programme monitoring system. However, analysis of the already achieved (and reported) output indicators show that the highest level of achievement of specific objectives was recorded for the TO Accessibility. The applicable indicators for that TO were achieved at a 70%-100% level. Moreover, the indicator values achieved for large infrastructure projects suggest a major impact of those projects on the achievement of the goals of the TO Accessibility. Considering the low values of micro-projects versus regular projects and the fact that a number of them have not been finished, it is hard to assess their impact on the attainment of the only TO in which they were pursued – the TO Heritage. However, the main Programme actors who were directly interviewed had a positive opinion on the role of micro-projects in the context of relationship establishment, partnership building and cooperation between beneficiaries. They also expressed positive opinions on the Programme concept of supporting three types of projects: large infrastructure projects, regular projects and micro-projects. The three project sizes have built an appropriate support structure in terms of scale and support possibilities for various types of beneficiaries.

The evaluation shows that the **Programme scope was defined accurately, in accordance with the diagnosed needs**. The challenges identified in the Programme were largely reflected in the projects. The need to support the ICT network and infrastructure was an exception. Projects of this type attracted little interest from applicants – only one such project was completed. Given the effectiveness of the support to date and the needs that are yet to be addressed, the support for Polish-Ukrainian cross-border projects should be continued in the area of shared cultural heritage, natural heritage, tourism, health, security, transport accessibility and border security. The evaluation shows that support is also required for activities designed to improve the condition of the environment and to compensate for negative climate change, e.g. through water and sewage management projects. More emphasis should be put on joint (educational, inclusive) activities addressed to children and teenagers. Projects implemented as a part of the Programme supported the cultural and natural heritage of local areas, improved the accessibility of and developed the transportation infrastructure and the ICT infrastructure, improved security on borders, increased border management efficiency, supported healthcare and social services, provided support to institutions in charge of security and responded to any other identified security threats to local communities. The most results were achieved in heritage support and the fewest in security support.

The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 encountered a number of problems in the course of its implementation which were caused by **crisis events** occurring one after another. The Programme underwent a huge transformation connected with the introduction of new mechanisms and procedures to permit its continuation at a time of crisis. The overall greatest

negative impact came from the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine and the Belarusian support for that conflict. Due to the conduct of those countries, which involved disrespect for the international law, the cross-border cooperation with Belarus was completely terminated and the effects of the Programme (including its previous editions) in the form of the established relations and elimination of barriers were put to a substantial test.

Analysis of the **durability of the established partnerships and further cooperation plans** between Polish and Ukrainian partners suggests that high effects were achieved in the Programme. More than 60% of the partners from Poland and 70% of the partners from Ukraine stated that the current partnership would be continued. Despite the negative circumstances in which the Programme was implemented, i.e. the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine, the positive experience gained from the cooperation is a reason to expect that the cooperation will continue and develop in the years to come. Furthermore, interviews with certain beneficiaries suggest that the positive experience from working with partners from Belarus will prompt attempts to continue the partnerships if this becomes possible (i.e. if Belarus abandons its aggressive policy and introduces pro-democratic reforms).

The majority of the projects under the Programme **had a high or average impact on the life of the local communities**. The impact included mainly: improved tourism potential of the supported facilities and spaces; population integrated around the local heritage; better accessibility of the transportation infrastructure in the borderland; improved transportation quality and security; improved access to healthcare; and better security arising from improved efficiency of rescue and border services. The evaluation also shows in most cases that it would have been impossible, or at least difficult, to achieve similar results without the support of the Programme or with less funding, especially on the Ukrainian side, mainly because of the limited financial possibilities of project authors.

The evaluation also addressed the issue of project complementarity. **60,5% of the beneficiaries pursuing projects under the Programme were (in the financial perspective 2014-2020) beneficiaries of at least one other cohesion policy programme:**<sup>1</sup> 33% of the beneficiaries implementing projects under other EU funds and under the Programme pursued projects complementary to the ones discussed hereunder. The projects were interlinked first of all through objectives and secondly through activities. Additionally, 52% beneficiaries of complementary projects implemented undertakings connected with project of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine through both objectives and activities. Coinciding objectives included mainly cultural and/or natural heritage preservation/environmental protection. The most common examples of complementary project activities are: activities to protect different parts of the same environment and to modernise cultural heritage sites followed by activities undertaken on that site as a part of a different project. Projects implemented as a part of the Programme were usually complementary to

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<sup>1</sup> That is: Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Russia, INTERREG Lithuania, Poland, INTERREG Poland-Slovakia, INTERREG Central Europe, Operational Programme Eastern Poland, Regional Operational Programme of the Podlaskie Voivodeship, Regional Operational Programme of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, Regional Operational Programme of the Lubelskie Voivodeship 2014-2020 or Regional Operational Programme of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship.

projects relying on the ROP funds. There was little connection between the projects and other territorial cooperation programmes.

The Programme projects **respected and were consistent with the horizontal policies**. The requirement to comply with the horizontal principles resulted in practical project solutions. However, it must be noted that some Programme beneficiaries were non-EU countries lacking major experience with EU projects, they may be less familiar with project solutions respecting particular horizontal policies. This leads to a conclusion that training is needed to present examples of possible solutions ensuring compliance with particular policies. It was also analysed if the designed Programme implementation system, including the applied procedures and solutions, guaranteed compliance with the horizontal principles. The analysis showed that the horizontal principles were more or less complied with. However, certain inconsistencies were identified, arising mainly from the approach to describing and subsequently implementing the horizontal principles. The information provided to beneficiaries was insufficient and allowed them to adopt different (inconsistent) approaches and different (not always optimum) ways of complying with the horizontal principles.

Analysis of information and promotional activities showed that their effectiveness and efficiency were relatively high. In the second half of the programming period, those activities were substantially affected by two crucial external factors: the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine supported by Belarus and the resulting termination of the cooperation with the Belarusian side. As a result of the restrictions introduced to contain the pandemic, all the activities were temporarily implemented on a remote basis (online). In the case of activities addressed to applicants and beneficiaries, the change in the nature and form of actions did not make the activities less useful. Wide-range activities were continued to communicate the support possibilities, training and workshops were still delivered and communication channels were maintained to answer any questions and doubts. The quality of such activities was evaluated as high. The fact that the activities addressed to this target group were transferred online increased their efficiency (as it reduced the costs while preserving the same effects). Activities addressed to a wider audience (the inhabitants) were limited by the aforementioned external factors to a greater extent, which temporarily reduced their effectiveness. The effect of promoting Programme results was adversely affected because the online formula temporarily reduced the audience of the communications. For obvious reasons, the suspension of the cooperation with the Belarusian side further reduced the range of the information and promotion activities. The efficiency of such activities remained at the same level (cost reduction arising from the online formula from the smaller territorial range but also lower effects). Still, it seems that the planned activities were successfully adjusted despite the difficulties connected with the external factors and thus the objectives defined for the Programme were achieved.



## METHODOLOGICAL PART

### INTRODUCTION

This evaluation was conducted between September and December 2023. Its main **purpose** was to assess the effectiveness of the activities implemented for all the TOs of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 and to analyse their effects and the Programme impact on the socioeconomic life of the population of the eligible area. An important part of the evaluation was to assess how the Programme and the projects responded to crisis situations, such as the COVID-19 and the Russian military aggression against Ukraine supported by Belarus, which is presented in this Report. The evaluation addressed the degree of compliance with the horizontal policies (the promotion of the equality between men and women; equal opportunities and non-discrimination; sustainable development) and the implementation of activities related to information, promotion and communication – the Evaluation Team defined the factors affecting the way they were implemented and identified the best practice for those areas.

The **objective scope** of the evaluation covered the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020.

The **subjective scope** of the evaluation covered various respondent groups:

- Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries (leaders and partners) participating in the Programme;
- Representatives of the institutions involved in Programme implementation on the Polish and Ukrainian side;
- Experts external to the Evaluation Team.

The scope of the evaluation **was limited** to the Polish and Ukrainian side of the eligible area, which is connected with the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the resulting suspension of the cooperation with Belarus. This is why the evaluation did not anticipate any contacts to be undertaken with the Belarusian side.

The evaluation made use of a wide range of methodological instruments:



The **desk research** covered a number of documents, from the legal acts regulating cross-border cooperation through Programme documents and reporting documents to other evaluations of the Programme.

The **CAWIs/CATIs** were held with Polish and Ukrainian project partners. One hundred and nineteen active surveys were completed – 84 by Polish beneficiaries and 35 by Ukrainian beneficiaries. This gave a response rate above 50% of the population for the Polish side and 30% of the population for the Ukrainian side, which – combined with the population of beneficiaries and partners – guarantees

a maximum estimation error up to 5% and a confidence level of 95% and makes it possible to extrapolate the results to the whole community and to treat them as a reliable basis for drawing conclusions about the reality.

**In-depth interviews** covered representatives of 23 institutions – 12 representatives for the Polish side and 11 representatives for the Ukrainian side: the Managing Authority, the National Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat, the Joint Monitoring Committee and the National Contact Point. The interviews were held remotely through MS Teams or on the phone.

**Case studies** – 8 case studies were prepared, two for each Programme TO (2 studies – TO Heritage, 2 studies – TO Accessibility, 2 studies – TO Security, 2 studies – TO Borders). The matrices with case study descriptions are attached hereto and the findings from the case studies are additionally incorporated herein.

**The Delphi method** encompassed 3 experts specialising in the topic of cross-border cooperation and regional development. The three-iterative study yielded reliable conclusions in the context of its objective, which were much more credible and well-rounded than ones that would have resulted from a two-iterative study.

The **network analysis** exploring the connections between the partners is also noteworthy. It was conducted in two versions – before and after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus. This approach to the issue made it possible to present the changes that took place in the eligible area as a result of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarusian partners.

The **media search** involved the local, regional and social media from the eligible area for the Polish and Ukrainian side. A total of 24 sources were identified: 10 local sources (5 Polish, 6 Ukrainian), 2 regional sources (1 Polish, 1 Ukrainian) and 12 social media sources (6 Polish, 7 Ukrainian). This diversification yielded a multitude of perspectives on the analysed issues and thus provided an even higher degree of triangulation.

**Measurement of the result indicators** was an inseparable element of the evaluation and it was carried out based on both pre-existing data and data collected from beneficiaries.

Every stage of the evaluation was accompanied by **structuring workshops**. Their role was to ensure ongoing cooperation with the Client and to keep the Client informed on the progress of the works. Another purpose of the workshops was to include the Client in every stage of the evaluation, from determination of methodology to formulation of recommendations.

This Report concludes the evaluation and presents the resulting knowledge in an organised way. The structure of the Report is divided into 3 parts: the **methodological** part, which summarises the assumptions and the methodology of the evaluation, the **analytical** part, which is the main part of the evaluation, and the **summary** part, which gathers the conclusions and recommendations for the future Programme.

## ANALYTICAL PART

### I. PROGRAMME

#### 1.1. ATTAINMENT OF SPECIFIC PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

*Research question: Were specific Programme objectives achieved in particular priority axes and to what extent? To what extent did large infrastructure projects (LIPs) contribute to the attainment of Programme objectives? To what extent did micro-projects contribute to the attainment of Programme objectives?*

Given the socioeconomic situation of the Programme eligible area, the identified strengths and weaknesses of the area and the opportunities and threats combined with the conclusions drawn from the previous cross-border cooperation period, the Programme activities revolved around four Thematic Objectives (TOs) selected from the list attached to the Programme Document for the European Neighbourhood Instrument 2014-2020 and around the corresponding priorities:

- 1. Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage (TO HERITAGE)**
  - Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history;
  - Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of national heritage.
- 2. Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and system (TO ACCESSIBILITY)**
  - Priority 2.1 Improvement and development of transport services and infrastructure;
  - Priority 2.2 Development of ICT infrastructure.
- 3. Common challenges in the field of safety and security (TO SECURITY)**
  - Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services;
  - Priority 3.2 Addressing common security challenges.
- 4. Promotion of border management and border security, mobility and migration management (TO BORDERS)**
  - Priority 4.1 Support to border efficiency and security;
  - Priority 4.2 Improvement of border management operations, customs and visas procedures.

According to the assumptions, the available Programme funding from the EU for the beneficiaries was EUR 183,078,184.00 and the minimum contribution from beneficiaries was EUR 18,307,818.40, which resulted in total funds of EUR 201,386,002.40.<sup>2</sup> Project grant amounts in particular Thematic Objectives are presented in the table below.

**Table 1. Programme funding by priority axis**

Thematic Objective	EU funding [EUR]	Beneficiaries' minimum contribution [EUR]	Total Programme funds [EUR]
Heritage	38,447,469.40	4,147,203.35	42,594,672.75
Accessibility	55,855,660.59	6,024,968.26	61,880,628.85
Security	44,270,782.82	4,775,345.21	49,046,128.03
Borders	31,152,340.79	3,360,301.58	34,512,642.37

<sup>2</sup> According to the ENI Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, Annual Report 2022 (01.07.2021 – 30.06.2022), the total value of the contracted projects at the end of June 2022 was EUR 190,261,068.91, with EU funding of EUR 168,882,366.99.

Thematic Objective	EU funding [EUR]	Beneficiaries' minimum contribution [EUR]	Total Programme funds [EUR]
Technical Assistance	13,351,930.40	0.00	13,351,930.40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183,078,184.00</b>	<b>18,307,818.40</b>	<b>201,386,002.40</b>

Source: own compilation based on the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020.

The achievement of Programme Thematic Objectives was measured based on output indicators and result indicators defined for particular Programme axes. Five output indicators (in accordance with the Programme) and two result indicators were defined for the TO Heritage, five output indicators and four result indicators were defined for the TO Accessibility, four output indicators and two result indicators were defined for the TO Security and two output indicators and two result indicators were defined for the TO Borders.

### Output indicators

Output indicators for the **TO Heritage** were implemented (by 14/12/2023) at a 63%-213% level. However, it must be noted that only one indicator – *Number of improved cultural and historical sites as direct consequence of Programme support* – substantially differed from the target values assumed in the Programme, reaching 63.3% of the assumed target value. The relatively poor performance of this indicator probably arises from the fact that many projects were not completed (or indicator levels were not reported) by 14/12/2023.<sup>3</sup> Only 13 out of the 38 projects using that indicator reported its value. So the indicator performance level can be expected to improve once those projects are completed. The other indicators were either relatively close to or substantially above the target values. The indicator where the target value was exceeded the most was *Number of promoted and/or preserved natural sites as direct consequence of Programme support* – 213.3%. However, please note that the total target indicator value assumed at the preparation stage of projects was well above the target values of certain analogical Programme indicators. This issue is discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters of this Report.

Output indicators for the **TO Accessibility** were achieved at a 86-310% level. In this TO, the highest performance level was achieved by the *Number of partnerships established in order to modernise/create the environmentally friendly transport systems or services* indicator. It was achieved in 85.7%. The indicator is unlikely to be achieved in 100% because the cooperation with Belarus has been suspended. However, its performance level is high nonetheless – 12 out of the target 14 partnerships were established. The high performance level of indicators related to roads is noteworthy. The highest performance level for the TO Accessibility was recorded for the *Total length of newly built roads* and *Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads* indicators – 310.2% and 169.7% respectively. On the one hand, this reflects the high popularity of road projects, on the other hand it must be remembered that the indicators were adjusted up at the stage of preparing project data sheets, which reduces their performance level (to be discussed later in the report). Still, we must emphasise good project management, which made it possible to add other road sections to projects after the cooperation with Belarus was suspended and thus to achieve higher performance of the target indicator values.

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<sup>3</sup> It is the date when the evaluator received the most valid data on the performance of indicators in the Programme.

The performance range of output indicators for the **TO Security** was very wide – the *Population benefiting from the newly created or improved social services* indicator was achieved in 0.61% only, whereas the *Number of security institutions cooperating across the borders* indicator was achieved in 591%. The poor performance of the former indicator probably arises from the fact that many projects were not completed (or indicator levels were not reported) by 14/12/2023. Only two out of the nine projects using that indicator reported its value. For some of the non-completed projects, the target indicator value was 220,000 to 260,000 people. So the indicator performance level can be expected to substantially improve once those projects are completed.

The performance of the output indicators for the **TO Borders** is highly diversified, even though the target values were achieved. The *Number of border crossing points with increased throughput capacity* indicator was achieved in 100%, while the other indicator for that TO, i.e. *Increased throughput capacity of persons on land border crossing points* was achieved in 2194%. Most likely, the reason for such high performance of the indicator, apart from the adoption of a too low target value at the moment of Programme preparation, were the war in Ukraine, the resulting growth in the number of migrants crossing the border and, on the other hand, the large number of people returning to Ukraine.

Detailed performance of the target values for particular output indicators is provided in the table below.

**Table 2. Performance of output indicators (specified in the Programme) for every Programme TO**

Output indicator	Thematic Objective	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Target value (assumed in the Programme)	Achieved value	Target value achievement percentage
Number of improved cultural and historical sites as direct consequence of Programme support	Heritage	item	0	30	19	63.3%
Number of cross-border cultural events organised using ENI support	Heritage	item	0	97	137	141.2%
Number of cross-border events organised using Programme support	Heritage	number	0	63	60	95.2%
Number of promoted and/or preserved natural sites as direct consequence of Programme support	Heritage	number	0	15	32	213.3%
Number of persons participating in actions and awareness raising activities promoting preservation of natural heritage	Heritage	number of people	0	5,993	11,191	186.7%
Total length of newly built roads	Accessibility	km	0	5.6	17.37	310.2%
Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	Accessibility	km	0	102.9	174.66	169.7%

Output indicator	Thematic Objective	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Target value (assumed in the Programme)	Achieved value	Target value achievement percentage
Number of districts benefiting from modernised/created transport services and infrastructure	Accessibility	number	0	28	35	125.0%
Number of partnerships established in order to modernise/create the environmentally friendly transport systems or services	Accessibility	number	0	14	12	85.7%
Number of partnerships established in order to develop the ICT	Accessibility	number	0	1	1	100.0%
Population covered by improved health services as direct consequence of the support	Security	number of people	0	7,890,573	9,930,848	125.9%
Population benefiting from the newly created or improved social services	Security	number of people	0	27,960	171	0.61%
Population benefiting from fire protection measures services as direct consequence of the support	Security	number of people	0	3,689,232	9,636 294	261.2%
Number of security institutions cooperating across the borders	Security	number	0	22	130	590.9%
Number of border crossing points with increased throughput capacity	Borders	number	0	7	7	100.0%
Increased throughput capacity of persons on land border crossing points	Borders	number of people/day	0	10,200	223,799	2194.1%

Source: own compilation based on data provided by the Client (as at 14/12/2023).

The 'Number of improved cultural and historical sites as direct consequence of programme support' indicator – Project PLBU.01.01.00-UA-0461/17-05 Cross-border pilgrimage route as an instrument of promotion common cultural and historical heritage on the Ukrainian-Polish border areas – the target performance indicator was 3.00; the data provided by the Client include the value 0.3, which is most likely a mistake; for the purpose of this Report, the value was adjusted to 3.

As can be noticed in the table above, the targets of particular Programme TOs were achieved, except for a few underperforming indicators. The target values of certain indicators were not achieved because: many projects were not completed (or indicator performance was not reported) by 14/12/2023 (for the TOs Heritage and Security) and the cooperation with Belarus was suspended (for the TO Accessibility).

## Result indicators

The value of result indicators cannot be accurately determined at the moment of this evaluation because projects were not completed or too little time had passed since their completion. So in line with the result measurement report developed as a part of this evaluation, the next table analyses the performance of Programme result indicators only for completed projects which reported the levels of the indicators (these were usually projects completed at least a year before).

According to this analysis, the result indicators (based on data for completed projects) were achieved or even substantially exceeded (by 64–150 percentage points). The target result values were not achieved for two indicators only. Those are the *Increased number of visitors of the historical heritage and cultural sites* indicator and the *Increased efficiency of border clearance* indicator. The non-performance level for those indicators was 339 and 274 percentage points respectively.

The failure to achieve the target value of the *Increased number of visitors of the historical heritage and cultural sites* indicator and the decrease in the number of visitors can be explained by the major limitation of tourist traffic caused by the war in Ukraine and by the border with Belarus being closed. The suspension of the cooperation with Belarus additionally caused absence of information on the number of historical heritage and cultural site visitors in that country. It must be remembered that the performance of that indicator was analysed only based on 21 completed projects out of the 86 projects where the indicator was used. An analysis for all 86 projects can bring certain adjustments to the performance of that indicator.

However, it is hard to explain the drop in the *Increased efficiency of border clearance* indicator. It is especially incomprehensible given the fact that another similar result indicator, i.e. *Acceleration of passengers and cars border clearance*, increased its value by as much as 172.6% versus the 22.9% assumed in the Programme (i.e. 150 percentage points more). The Evaluation Team recommends that this indicator be re-analysed once all the projects that use it are completed. So far, out of the total seven projects where the indicator was used, the indicator was reported for one project only.

Detailed performance of the target values for particular result indicators is provided in the table.

**Table 3. Performance of result indicators (specified in the Programme) for completed projects of every Programme TO**

Result indicator	Thematic Objective	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Target (assumed) value	Achieved (actual) value	Planned (assumed) change	Achieved (actual) change	Target (assumed) value	Target value achievement percentage
Increased number of visitors of the historical heritage and cultural sites	Heritage	number of people	4,608,946.00	4,927,275.00	3,583,994.90	318,329.00	-1,024,951.10	16.6%	-321.98%
Increased number of visitors of the natural heritage sites	Heritage	number of people	1,838,391.00	1,948,906.00	1,993,797.00	110,515.00	155,406.00	13.1%	140.62%
Decrease of travel/transportation time in the regions	Accessibility	minutes	277.00	182.00	180.34	-95.00	-96.66	7.5%	101.75%
Increase in usage of ICT	Accessibility	number**						2	0
Enhanced access to healthcare and social services	Security	number of people	0.00	1,488,823.00	1,488,551.00	1,488,823.00	1,488,551.00	36.2%	99.98%
Reduction of waiting time for safety and security services response	Security	minutes	45.00	33.00	34.90	-12.00	-10.10	14.2%	84.17%
Acceleration of passengers and cars border clearance	Borders	minutes	150.00	140.00	175.00	-10.00	25.00	22.9%	172.58%
Increased efficiency of border clearance	Borders	minutes	210.00	179.00	156.50	-31.00	-53.50	24.35%	-250.00%

Source: own compilation based on data provided by the Client (as at 19/10/2023).

\* No completed projects

\*\* The number of districts was used as the indicator measure for the Programme.



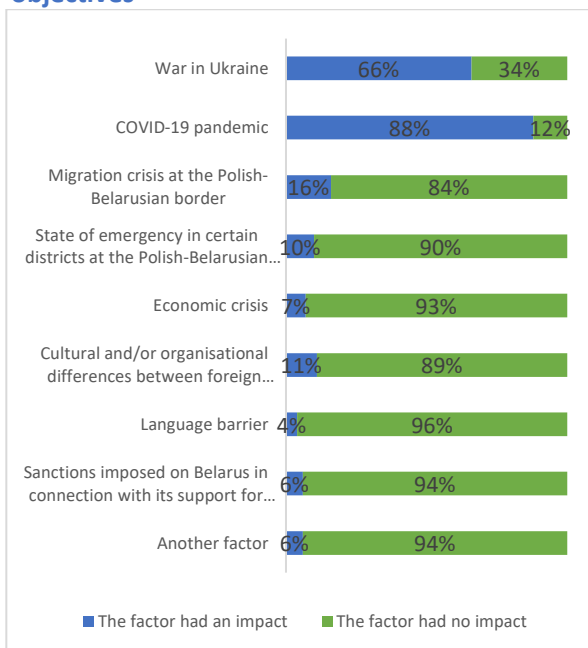
To sum up the analysis of the attainment of Programme objectives based on the performance of result indicators, it can be concluded that Programme objectives have been achieved, especially for the TOs Accessibility and Security. Concurrently, the Evaluation Team recommends that result indicators be re-analysed at least one year after the completion of the projects and in the next years for a period of five years. This will make it possible to confirm the degree of achievement of the Programme objectives for the TOs Heritage and Borders. According to the interviewees of in-depth interviews:

*(...) Programme objectives were achieved to a satisfactory extent, given the circumstances that took place (...). Of course, we cannot say that they were achieved the way we had expected them to but we did all we could to protect the interests, especially the financial interests, of the beneficiaries from Poland and the beneficiaries from Ukraine.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

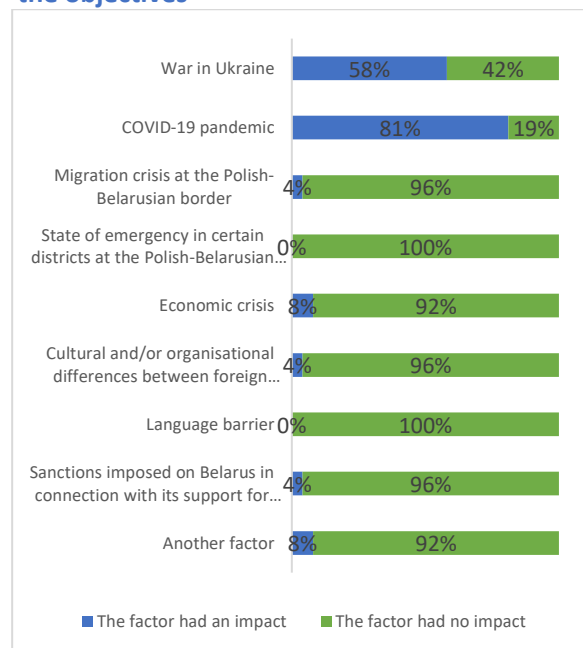
Generally speaking, the Polish beneficiaries of the Programme who participated in the CAWI surveys gave the achievement of their project objectives an 8.7 rating on a ten-point scale, where 1 meant “complete failure to achieve the assumed objectives” and 10 meant “full achievement of the assumed objectives.” Ukrainian beneficiaries gave the attainment of objectives a 9.4 rating on the same scale. As the reasons for underperformance of indicators, the beneficiaries (both Polish and Ukrainian) mentioned primarily the war in Ukraine and to the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions. Details of the responses regarding particular factors which hindered the attainment of the objectives are provided on the charts below.

**Chart 1. Factors identified by the Polish beneficiaries as hindering the attainment of the objectives**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

**Chart 2. Factors identified by the Ukrainian beneficiaries as hindering the attainment of the objectives**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35).

Ten large infrastructure projects (LIPs) were implemented under the Programme. Four of them were implemented for the TO Availability, four for the TO Security and two for the TO Borders. The share of the LIP funding value in the total funding value for each of the above-mentioned axes is 45.5%, 53.0% and 38.3% respectively. Details are presented in the table below.

**Table 4. LIP value and funding [EUR]**

Thematic Objective	Total project value	EU funding amount	Contracted EU funds	Share of the co-financing in the whole co-financing of the axis
Accessibility	24,246,079.64	21,456,542.70	47,167,781.01	45.5%
Security	23,421,670.00	20,896,179.03	39,451,335.63	53.0%
Borders	10,400,000.00	9,142,665.99	23,880,853.13	38.3%

Source: own compilation of the ENI Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, Annual Report 2022 (01/07/2021-30/06/2022).

According to one of the interviewees:

*Large infrastructure projects (...) which made it possible to implement crucial investments for regions and played an important part in the attainment of Programme objectives.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

Out of the ten pursued LIPs, four were completed and settled by 30/06/2022. All the completed LIPs were implemented for the TO Accessibility. This makes it possible to compare the performance of (output) indicators for the LIPs completed under that TO to the overall values of the (output) indicators achieved under that axis.

**Table 5. Output indicators achieved for the TO ACCESSIBILITY versus output indicators for the LIPs.**

Output indicator	Measurement unit	Value achieved for the TO	Value achieved for the LIPs	Share of the LIP indicators in the value of the TO indicators
Total length of newly built roads	km	17.37	9.46	54.5%
Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km	174.66	26.35	15.1%
Number of districts benefiting from modernised/created transport services and infrastructure	item	35	7	20%
Number of partnerships established in order to modernise/create the environmentally friendly transport systems or services	item	12	2	16.7%
Number of partnerships established in order to develop the ICT	item	1	0	0

Source: own compilation based on data provided by the Client (as at 19/10/2023).

The LIP values achieved for the indicators (*Total length of newly built roads* and *Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads*) suggest a major contribution of the LIPs described with those indicators to the attainment of the TO Accessibility objectives.

81 micro-projects were implemented under the Programme (out of the 96 for which contracts were signed). All the projects were implemented for the TO Heritage. 40 micro-projects were completed

but only eight of them were settled by the end of June 2022.<sup>4</sup> Because of that and because of their small sizes (and low financial value) versus the regular projects implemented for that axis, their impact on the attainment of the TOs Heritage can be expected to be inconsequential. Despite that, the following positive opinions regarding the impact of the micro-projects on the attainment of the axis objectives were expressed during in-depth interviews with the main Programme beneficiaries:

*Ten micro-projects were completed in the Lubelskie Voivodeship (...) and despite their small scale, they have a special significance (...) in the context of establishing relations and building partnerships and furthering the cooperation between beneficiaries in the cross-border area but they have a lesser impact on the attainment of specific objectives. The nature of those projects included building relations to bring the local borderland communities closer together.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

The role of large infrastructure projects and micro-projects in the attainment of the Programme objectives was accurately summed up by one of the interviewees. In that person's opinion:

*The most positive thing is that we receive support at three levels, i.e. we have large infrastructure projects which are selected in a direct award procedure and are strategic for the eligible area (...), we have regular projects (...) and then there is the third level – micro-projects. In my opinion, it is positive that there are three levels as they build the architecture of the support, depending on the scale of the projects and the scale of the applicants' possibilities.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

#### **Chapter summary:**

It is hard to assess to what extent specific objectives in particular priority axes were achieved. This is because not all projects were completed and not all data were uploaded to the Programme monitoring system. However, analysis of the achieved output indicators and result indicators for completed projects and project for which such indicators were reported suggests that the Programme objectives were achieved, especially for the TOs Accessibility and Security. Concurrently, we recommends that result indicators be re-analysed a year after the completion of the projects and in the next years for a period of five years. This will make it possible to definitively confirm the degree of achievement of the Programme objectives for the TO Heritage and the TO Borders.

The indicator values achieved for large infrastructure projects [LIPs] suggest a major impact of the LIPs on the achievement of the goals of the TO Accessibility.

Considering the small sizes of micro-projects versus regular projects and the fact that a number of them have not been finished, it is hard to assess their impact on the attainment of the goals of the Heritage. However, the main Programme actors have a positive opinion on their role in the context of establishing relations, building partnerships and developing the cooperation between beneficiaries.

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<sup>4</sup> The ENI Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 Annual Report 2022 (01/07/2021-30/06/2022).

## 1.2. PROGRAMME RESULTS

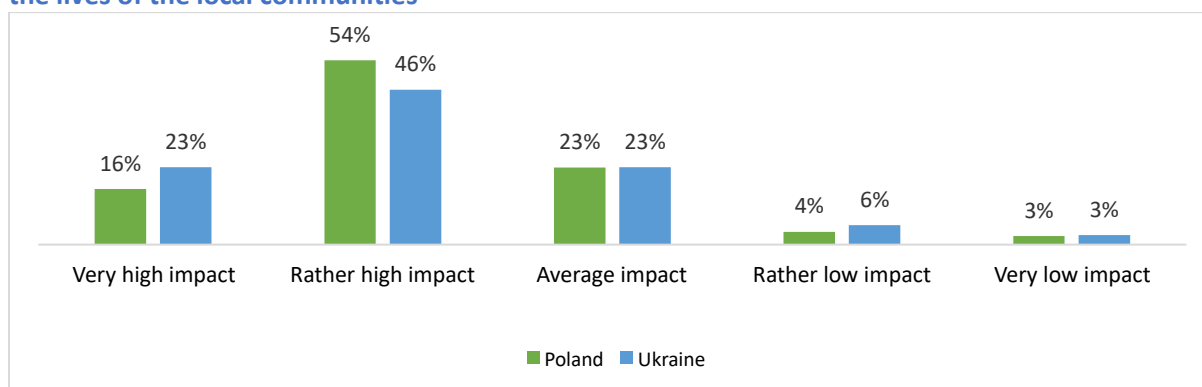
*Research question: How do Programme results influence the life of the local communities? Would it be possible to achieve the attained results without the intervention of the Programme or with less funding?*

In addition to the overall development of the cooperation between partners on the opposite sides of the border, the impact of the projects implemented under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 should also be analysed in the context of improved quality of life of the people inhabiting the eligible areas. After all, the projects are expected to develop the growth potential of the local communities – both specific municipalities and whole areas covered by a particular partnership.

The local community was asked about the impact of the results of projects in the CAWI. Most Polish beneficiaries and partners (64%) declared that their **project had an impact on both the immediate surroundings (i.e. the local community) and the neighbouring areas**, which means that the project was supralocal. 21% of respondents stated that their project had a major impact on the local community whereas 8% answered that it had an impact but only slightly. Fewer than 6% of the respondents claimed that their project had an impact on the project executors only. Those results are confirmed by beneficiaries of the projects covered by case studies, who claimed that their projects had an impact on the life of the local communities.

The respondents, whether Polish and Ukraine, were also requested to specify to what extent the achieved results had an impact on the local community. A total of 70% of Polish respondents and 69% of Ukrainian respondents stated that the impact **was high or very high** (a higher percentage of Ukrainian respondents considered this impact as very high). A low or very low impact was declared by a total of 7% Polish respondents and 9% Ukrainian respondents. More than 1/5 of all respondents considered this impact as average. The results clearly show that the inhabitants of a given area were the main target group of the majority of the completed projects.

**Chart 3. What impact, according to project beneficiaries and partners, the project results had on the lives of the local communities**



*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=79) and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35). The aggregate value of the responses is above 100% due to the roundings.*

The respondents in the quantitative study also described how the project results influenced the lives of the local communities. The Thematic Objective Heritage, Priority 1.1. *Promotion of local culture*

*and history* involved projects designed to support the local tourism potential and cultural potential. The most often mentioned project result was an increased number of visitors in the supported facilities and spaces, both tourists and local inhabitants. The projects promoted places, traditions, customs and local products that unique for a given area in order to give the inhabitants and the visitors an opportunity to revisit/explore the local heritage, culture and art. A major role in the promotion of the local heritage was played by events which integrated the inhabitants and the visitors, such as the celebrations of the **200th anniversary of the Augustów Canal or the Tyzenhauz Fest in the Sokółka Municipality**. The respondents also mentioned that an increased appeal of the borderland for tourists helped create and maintain jobs and to increase the income of the inhabitants in the long run. At this point it must be emphasised that after the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the tourism potential in the eligible area on the Ukrainian side collapsed and on the Polish side it was temporarily limited. The respondents also mentioned organisation of spaces and sites which had been neglected so far and their adaptation to the needs of people with disabilities. The respondents emphasised the importance of creating meeting places and integrating the inhabitants, exploring the local heritage (e.g. the cuisine specific for a given area, folk art, such as straw weaving or patchworking) and invoking the need to care for it and preserve it for future generations. Other results included the growing cross-cultural tolerance and understanding, the identification of cultural differences but also similarities, the fostering of an atmosphere of mutual respect and the tolerant co-existence of borderland nations. **Getting to know and understanding each other is especially important in the present situation where many refugees from Ukraine are still staying in Poland.**

As regards Priority 1.2 *Promotion and preservation of national heritage*, the results mentioned by the respondents included mainly increasing of the tourism potential based on natural values and taking care to preserve those values in the most natural condition possible. The creation and upgrade of infrastructure such as tourist educational nature paths, bicycle trails or cyclist service places helped increase the number of tourists visiting the eligible areas, which helps improve the financial situation of the people running tourism-related businesses. Natural values are also promoted by various kinds of publications, guides, tourism e-products and services, tours, workshops, exhibitions and other events that communicate the tourism potential of the borderland. Raising the ecological awareness as a part of dedicated educational campaigns was an important result of the projects for the local inhabitants, especially children and teenagers. Actions of this type were undertaken e.g. in the project entitled **Nature Treasury Above Borders**, which included creating an Education Centre in the school in Hajnówka, equipping the biology lab, providing educational activities (including peer education) for students from the whole Hajnowski District on the flora present in the region of the Białowieża Forest and preparing a photo exhibition to draw attention to rare protected plant species in the region and the measures to be taken by the inhabitants to prevent the population of such plants from decreasing. Another project that also helped improve the knowledge regarding conscious use of natural resources was **Young Local Guardians of Bug Valley Nature**. The project delivered workshops, created nature paths, built a bird watching platform on the Western Bug river bank in the village Saryi Dobrotvir and prepared educational materials about the birds and plants from the Bug Valley.

The projects completed as a part of Priority 2.1. *Improvement and development of transport services and infrastructure* for the TO Accessibility contributed primarily to the improvement of the quality of road connections in the borderland and to the accessibility of the border crossings (existing and

planned). The respondents stated that the reconstruction and construction of roads helped to increase the safety of road traffic in the eligible area and to improve the access to public utility places, historical sites or areas attractive for tourists. The results regarding the improved safety and shorter travel time are used by the local community as well as the transit traffic participants. The activities connected with the construction and reconstruction of roads also reduced the noise level. The projects also involved additional works in the roadway to enhance travel safety, such as reinforcement of the shoulders, the construction of a bicycle lane, the installation of lamps or the marking of pedestrian crossings. There were also projects addressing municipal road infrastructure (e.g. building bicycle parking places, lowering the curbs, raising pedestrian crossings or purchasing bicycle racks) to assist the inhabitants in their day-to-day commuting. Actions were taken to raise the social awareness of bicycle traffic safety, draw attention to the issue of mutual respect among all road users and enhance the knowledge about bicycle traffic through educational campaigns. Actions of this type were undertaken e.g. in the **project entitled *SUMCITYNET: cities towards increasing accessibility and sustainable climate-proof urban mobility***. The result achieved in the only project implemented for Priority 2.2. *Development of ICT infrastructure (Creation of information and communication technologies and education centres in Ostrołęka and Mosty)* was the improvement of the competencies of the inhabitants through the creation of two ICT Competence Development Centres designed to prepare young people to enter the labour market.

The results for the local communities mentioned for the Thematic Objective Security (Priority 3.1 *Support to the development of health protection and social services*) were linked mainly to better access to healthcare for the inhabitants, including access to state-of-the-art diagnostics of lung diseases, contagious diseases, cardiovascular diseases or screening tests. The procurement of specialist medical equipment also improved the quality of the services, which in turn increased the health security of the inhabitants. The ***Improvement of trans border health services in cardiovascular diseases and intensive medical care in Białystok region and Minsk Oblast*** project is an example of an undertaking enhancing access to healthcare as it involved the purchase of intensive care equipment (hospital beds, patient monitoring stations), post-surgery equipment for various hospital departments (surgery, oncology, otorhinolaryngology, ophthalmology, neurology, orthopaedics, cardiology, anaesthesiology), a CT scanner and an angiography imaging system for hybrid cardiovascular surgeries.<sup>5</sup>

The results achieved for Priority 3.2 *Addressing common security challenges* included increased security of the inhabitants due to improved functioning of rescue services, for instance because of the purchase of new equipment and specialist vehicles, the creation or upgrade of the training base or joint workshops and seminars.

Projects related to the Thematic Objective Borders that were pursued for Priority 4.1 *Support to border efficiency and security* and Priority 4.2 *Improvement of border management operations, customs and visas procedures* helped enhance the security of the inhabitants of the borderland areas. The activities help to streamline border checks and clearance and increase the throughput capacity of border crossings (e.g. in Zosin). Actions were also taken to limit the illegal trafficking of drugs, psychoactive substances and cigarettes and to prevent illegal migration.

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<sup>5</sup> *Improvement of trans border health services in cardio-vascular diseases and intensive medical care in Białystok region and Minsk Oblast*, (access: 27 November 2023).

The impact of the projects on the lives of the local communities was also analysed by experts in the Delphi study. The participating respondents defined the impact as quite high (average rating: 7.33 on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is the lowest rating and 10 is the highest rating). The final result is similar to the assessment of the project authors participating in the CAWI, who mostly rated the impact as high or very high. The experts also identified the aspects of the lives of the local communities which were influenced by the projects the most. They usually mentioned cultural heritage and transport accessibility, as well as environmental protection, labour market and healthcare. One expert also mentioned the impact of the projects on the establishment of contacts among the inhabitants and on the functioning of the Euroregions.

Information on the results of the Programme, also in terms of the potential impact on the lives of the inhabitants, was also obtained from the media search. Activities undertaken as a part of the projects were described in articles and stories on local news websites and in the social media. Examples of such communications include articles about the **creation of the Nadburzański Kayak Tourism Centre in Drohiczyn and the kayak trails** under the project entitled *Bug Unites Us – creation of two cross-border tourist kayak trails*, as well as the **purchase of fire suppression equipment for the fire service units** in the Siemiatycze, Milejczyce, Perlejewo, Nurzec-Stacja and Dziadkowice municipalities (*Shared initiatives for increasing security of the cross-border area in the event of ecological and chemical disasters*) and in Siedlce, Korczew and Łuck (*Effective coordination of rescue operation in the Ostrołęka-Siedlce subregion and Volyn Oblast*), which improved the potential for effective response in the case of an emergency. The **effects of the development of the road border crossing in Kuźnica** were also mentioned multiple times (improved throughput capacity of the crossing, more efficient border clearance and better working conditions for the border service staff).

The significance of the Programme results for the inhabitants of the eligible areas was also emphasised by respondents in in-depth interviews (representatives of the institutions implementing the Programme and beneficiaries). In the case of the Thematic Objective Heritage, the results pertain primarily to the mutual discovery of the local identity, history, culture and valuable natural resources and to their promotion outside in order to invite potential tourists.

*As a far as heritage-related projects are concerned, they combine both integration, i.e. mutual cooperation among the local communities, as well as the presentation of the region, the creation of a tourism product. We show our shared traditions, rituals, cultural roots but all this also serves the purpose of presenting the borderland or the region as a unique area that is attractive for tourists.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

**The interviewees emphasised the role of the micro-projects pursued for Thematic Objective as they made it possible to implement many undertakings which were relatively small but substantially contributed to building the partnerships designed to protect the heritage and to use it for joint undertakings and for building local brands.** The *Polish-Ukrainian cooperation for the development of tourism and preservation of cultural heritage in the area covered by "The Picturesque East" brand* project is a good example as it involved a number of activities promoting the Bug river catchment area, which used to be inhabited by three cultures (Orthodox, Jewish and Catholic), such as workshops, tradition nights, cooking and craft courses, festivals (Folk Culture Festival, Multicultural Borderland Festival) and tournaments. Moreover, an 18-km section of the bicycle trail was built in the

Kamień municipality as a part of the project, which increased the tourism and recreation potential of the eligible area.

The **4 seasons – cross-border tourism routes** project, implemented by the Volyn Regional Entrepreneurship Support Fund and the Cieszanów Municipality, is an interesting example of an undertaking relying on the local tourism potential and on the involvement of the local community which used an unusual solution – an open competition for local tourism routes which was addressed to the inhabitants. Out of the submitted entries, the following routes were selected on the Polish side: the trail of the old State Agricultural Farms, the ornithological trail, the mushroom picking trail and the running trail. The routes selected on the Ukrainian side included kayak trails, boat trips in national parks, a winter forest hike and an expedition having honey as the main theme.<sup>6</sup>

Projects implemented for the TO Accessibility helped create new road connections, enhance the quality of the transportation routes and improve travel safety. An example is the **development of the Regional Road No. 885 Przemyśl – Hermanowice – State Border**, where a 6.6-kilometre section of the road running from Przemyśl directly to the newly built border crossing in Malhowice was commissioned. The project also included modifying the exits to properties, building pavements, bus pullouts, a route for pedestrians and cyclists and installing lamps. The project shortened the time of travel from Przemyśl to Malhowice. According to a case study interview, the comfort of travel improved as well and the route gained an aesthetic value. The project made the area more attractive for the inhabitants and for potential investors. This is also supported by the construction of a new border crossing, which stimulates the development of entrepreneurship among the local community on both sides of the border.

In the case of the **project of creating the ICT and education centres in Ostrołęka and Mosty**, the inhabitants of the eligible areas gained access to modern facilities (Multicentres) with integrating, educational, cultural and entertainment functions. The newly built infrastructure is used to deliver classes for children, adults and people at a risk of social exclusion. The classes address various topics, i.e. information technology, robotics, power engineering, pneumatics, art and music. The classes are delivered in modern, fully equipped classrooms conducive to creative education. According to the case study, a stage was built near the facility in Ostrołęka for special events which additionally integrate the local community.

Security-related projects resulted primarily in better access to healthcare for the inhabitants (new equipment for hospital departments, new diagnostic and treatment possibilities). For projects supporting the rescue services (mountain rescue, fire service), the results for the local communities included improved safety as a result of an increased potential of those services to provide an efficient response in emergency situations. An example of a project of this type covered by a case study was **Effective coordination of rescue operation in the Ostrołęka-Siedlce subregion and Volyn Oblast**, which involved the purchase of vehicles and specialist equipment, the creation of a training complex for fire fighters and the delivery of a number of theoretical and practical training sessions to develop the skills of the rescuers. The actions help reduce the risk of consequences of emergency events, such as threats to human life or health, damage to property, air pollution and groundwater or soil

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<sup>6</sup> *The “Four Seasons” project, (access: 27 November 2023).*



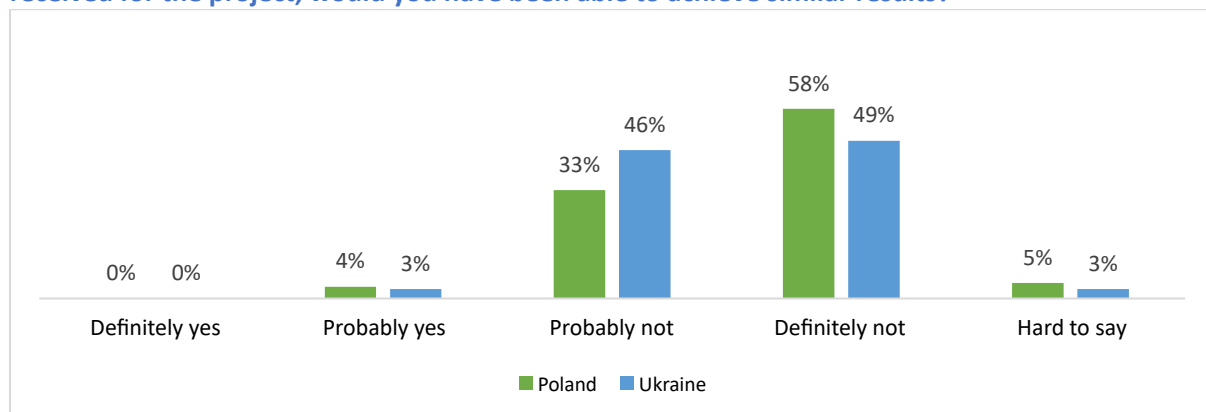
contamination. **Another project result was reduced waiting time for the response of services (from 5 to 4 minutes).**

For projects oriented towards strengthening the efficiency of the border infrastructure and procedures, the activities contribute to the general safety of the inhabitants in the borderland (prevent illegal migration, smuggling, increase the effectiveness of detecting hazardous substances and objects). The increased throughput capacity of the border crossings also helps streamline and reduce the time of border clearance, which facilitates cross-border contacts. Results of this type were achieved for instance for the **project entitled *Increasing the openness of the Polish-Ukrainian border and its security through the development of road border crossing point in Zosin***, where a new exit platform was built to create new clearance lines. Additionally, specialist equipment (e.g. passport readers) was bought to ensure smooth and secure border traffic.

The respondents also drew attention to the results of the very establishment of cooperation on cross-border projects. The projects are good opportunities to build friendly contacts, gain experience in the implementation of joint undertakings, broaden the horizons of the local inhabitants by increasing their openness to contacts with people from another country and engage in activities supporting local development, in a broad sense of the term.

During the CAWI, project beneficiaries and partners were asked it would have been possible to achieve similar project results without the support of the Programme. A total of 91% of respondents on the Polish side and 95% of respondents on the Ukrainian side stated that this would not have been possible, with 58% of Polish respondents and 49% of Ukrainian respondents claiming that this would have been definitely impossible. Only 4% of Polish respondents and 3% of Ukrainian beneficiaries and partners involved in the study believed it would have been possible to achieve the project results with the support of other funds (funds from other programmes financed by the European Union, State budget funds).

**Chart 4. Answers of the respondents to the question: “If it were not for the financial support you received for the project, would you have been able to achieve similar results?”**

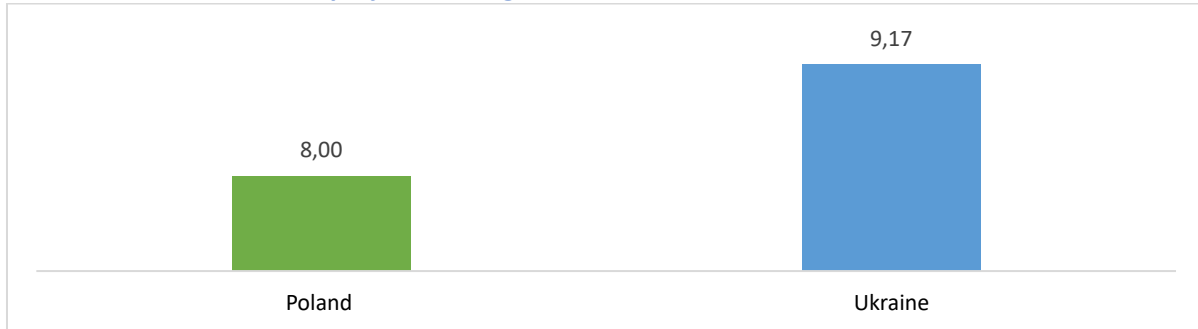


Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84) and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35). The aggregate value of the responses is above 100% due to the roundings.

The beneficiaries and partners participating in the quantitative study also assessed to what extent the funding dedicated to the projects was sufficient for the attainment of the desired objectives. The used a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 meant “not sufficient at all” and 10 meant “completely sufficient.”

The average rating of the respondents was quite high. It was 8.00 on the Polish side and 9.17 on the Ukrainian side, which means that the **level of funding available in the Programme was successful in answering the needs of entities from Ukraine but the sufficiency level for Polish entities remained high as well.**

**Chart 5. Assessment if the project funding was sufficient**



*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84) and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35).*

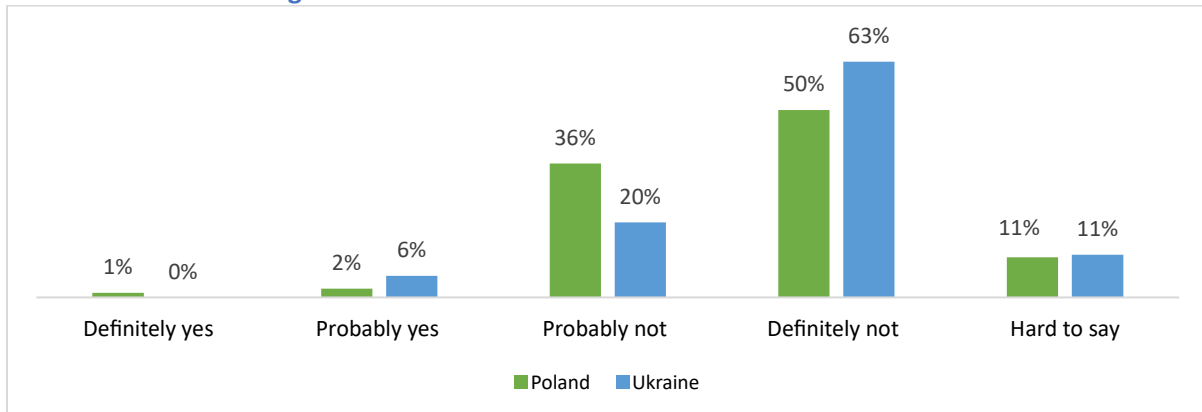
The respondents who stated that the dedicated funding was insufficient when compared to the needs were requested to explain why. Objections of the respondents were related mainly to the problem of price increases. They mentioned that project planning and subsequent project implementation covered a long period of time, which resulted in major differences between the costs assumed in the grant application and the actual costs of the project. Since infrastructural projects financed from the EU funds overlapped all across the country, the level of prices, especially of construction materials and services, was in many cases higher than anticipated in the budget. Additionally, the pandemic period entailed limited access to certain goods, which caused price increases in global markets and, consequently, in domestic markets. This forced the beneficiaries to incur additional costs from their own funds.<sup>7</sup>

The respondents were also asked if they would have been able to achieve similar project results with lower funding. A vast majority claimed this was not possible – a total of 86% of project authors from Poland and 83% of project authors from Ukraine rejected such a possibility, with a half of Polish respondents and 63% of Ukrainian respondents rejecting it “definitely.” Only 3% of Polish and 6% of Ukrainian respondents saw this as possible – they saw a possibility of reducing the costs of business trips and travel, the costs of employee pays and the costs of information and promotion activities. Every tenth respondent was unable to answer the question.

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<sup>7</sup> Details regarding the impact of emergency situations on the implementation of projects are discussed in chapter 2.5.

**Chart 6. Answers of the respondents to the question: “Would you have been able to achieve similar results with less funding?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84) and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35).

Beneficiaries of the projects selected for case studies also confirmed that the projects could not have been completed or would have been substantially hindered without the Programme support. Some of the respondents stated that they would be unable to cover the project expenses on their own. There were also voices that the project most likely could have been completed without the Programme funding but its scope would have been much smaller given the limited funds.

*I don't think it could [have been completed without the Programme support – annotation] because the building had been standing there for so many years, deteriorating, the City had no money to refurbish it, it would have gone into decline. But this way it was given a new look and life and the inhabitants have a fun place to gather, meet, participate in activities.*

Source: An individual in-depth interview as a part of the case study.

The opinions expressed by the project authors were confirmed in in-depth interviews with representatives of the institutions responsible for implementing the Programme. According to the respondents, **it would have been impossible to complete a majority of cross-border projects without the Programme support, mainly because of the limited budgetary possibilities of the local governments (most of the project authors were local governments), as result of the crisis caused by the pandemic and the inflation.** It was also emphasised that the possibility of receiving the support was the impulse for establishing the cross-border partnership. Without that impulse, many partnerships most likely would not have been created and, consequently, the joint projects would not have been possible.

*Without those cross-border projects, I'm afraid there would be nothing to replace them with so most certainly many projects which were completed would not have been implemented, in my opinion.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

Respondents representing the Ukrainian side additionally emphasised the significance of the Programme support in the context of the possible knowledge and experience exchange with Polish partners, which is important to them in the context of their desire to join the European Union.

*I believe that it would have been very difficult to achieve such results without the Programme support. Due to that support, we were able to benefit from the European – and especially Polish – experience in many areas and not only. This is important not only from the perspective of financial aid but also from the perspective of training, considering that our country has chosen the path of European integration and this matters a lot to us.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

**The significant role of the Programme in joint promotion of the historical, cultural and natural heritage was also emphasised and opinions were expressed that needs of this type were usually less prioritised by local governments than infrastructural undertakings.**

It is also noteworthy that the Programme funds are an important funding source for projects, primarily for Ukraine, whose current access to the EU funds is limited. The issue of lack of funds for cross-border projects at a national or local level is expected to continue to get worse, given the consequences of the war.

**Chapter summary:**

The majority of the projects under the Programme had a high or average impact on the life of the local communities. The impact included mainly: improved tourism potential of the supported facilities and spaces; population integrated around the local heritage; better accessibility of the transportation infrastructure in the borderland; improved travel quality and security; improved access to medical services; and better security arising from improved efficiency of rescue and border services. The evaluation shows in most cases that it would have been impossible, or at least difficult, to achieve similar results without the support of the Programme or with less funding, especially on the Ukrainian side.

### **1.3. HOW THE SUPPORT ANSWERED THE NEEDS OF THE BORDERLAND**

*Research question: Did the scope of the Programme intervention answer the challenges faced by the borderland? Were there any challenges/project ideas that could not be addressed in the Programme?*

The process of identifying the challenges and needs of the Polish-Ukrainian-Belarusian borderland commenced in 2013 in the process of developing a socioeconomic analysis. The challenges identified at that point were then discussed and agreed between members of the Joint Programming Committee, which consisted of representatives of central and regional authorities of the three countries and, based on that and on the available Programme funds, four Thematic Objectives were identified: Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage (Heritage), Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and systems (Accessibility), Common challenges in the field of safety and security (Security) and Promotion of border management and border security, mobility and migration

management (Borders).<sup>8</sup> Table **Błąd! Nie można odnaleźć źródła odwołania.** presents the challenges recorded in the Programme and identified in the borderland, the corresponding Thematic Objectives and Priorities and the intervention scope of the projects pursued under the Programme.

**Table 6. The challenges identified in the Polish-Ukrainian-Belarusian borderland, the corresponding Thematic Objectives and Priorities and the intervention scope of the projects pursued under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020**

Challenge	Thematic Objective	Intervention scope of the projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservations and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage of the cross-border regions;</li> <li>• Strengthening of cultural ties and cooperation;</li> <li>• Improvement of the image and appeal of the region and increase of the potential of the local communities;</li> <li>• Development of cross-border tourism (tourism was identified as the sector with the highest potential for becoming one of the main revenue-generating sectors and a growing source of employment and investment);</li> <li>• Improvement of the condition of sites with a cultural and natural potential and further development of the tourism infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Heritage</b></p> <p>Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history</p> <p>Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of national heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection, development and promotion of public assets in the area of culture and heritage;</li> <li>• Development and promotion of public services in the area of culture and heritage;</li> <li>• Development and promotion of public tourism services;</li> <li>• Preservation, development and promotion of public tourism assets;</li> <li>• Development and promotion of the tourism potential of nature areas;</li> <li>• Sewage treatment.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> *Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, Warsaw 2014, p. 5, 10-11.*

Challenge	Thematic Objective	Intervention scope of the projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better transport connections for the borderland;</li> <li>Improved transportation accessibility;</li> <li>Development of environmentally-friendly transport;</li> <li>Construction and modernisation of communication networks and systems and improvement of the ICT infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<b>Accessibility</b> Priority 2.1 Improvement and development of transport services and infrastructure Priority 2.2 Development of ICT infrastructure;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstructed or modernised TEN-T roads;</li> <li>Local access roads (newly built);</li> <li>Other national and regional roads (newly built);</li> <li>Other reconstructed or upgraded roads (motorways, national roads, regional roads or local roads);</li> <li>ICT: Other types of ICT infrastructure/resources or large-scale computer infrastructure (including e-infrastructure, data centres and sensors, also embedded in other infrastructure, e.g. research facilities, social infrastructure or environmental protection infrastructure).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better access to the healthcare system;</li> <li>Prevention of cross-border disease spreading;</li> <li>Development of social services and the labour market with reduction of unemployment;</li> <li>Effective response in emergency situations.</li> </ul>	<b>Security</b> Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services Priority 3.2 Addressing common security challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthcare infrastructure;</li> <li>Easier access to affordable, lasting and high-quality services, including healthcare and social services provided in general interest;</li> <li>Other social infrastructure contributing to regional and local development;</li> <li>Sewage treatment;</li> <li>Prevention of natural disasters not related to climate (e.g. to earthquakes) and caused by human activity, i.e. industrial accidents, as well as risk management in this respect, including awareness raising, population protection and the systems and infrastructure for disaster and catastrophe management purposes;</li> <li>Funds to adapt to climate change and protection against climate-related threats, e.g. erosion, fire, flood, storm, drought and risk management in this respect, including awareness raising, population protection and the systems and infrastructure for disaster and catastrophe management purposes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement of the efficiency of border infrastructure and procedures;</li> <li>Improvement of border security;</li> <li>Increase of the throughput capacity of border crossings;</li> <li>Improvement of the security of border crossings.</li> </ul>	<b>Borders</b> Priority 4.1 Support to border efficiency and security Priority 4.2 Improvement of border management operations, customs and visas procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other social infrastructure contributing to regional and local development;</li> <li>Smart transportation systems (including demand management, toll collection systems, IT-based monitoring, check and information systems);</li> <li>Other national and regional roads (newly built);</li> <li>ICT: Other types of ICT infrastructure/resources or large-scale computer infrastructure (including e-infrastructure, data centres and sensors, also embedded in other infrastructure, e.g. research facilities, social infrastructure or environmental protection infrastructure);</li> <li>Building the potential of all the interested parties shaping the policy regarding education, lifelong learning, training, employment and social policy, also through sectoral and territorial pacts to further reforms at a national, regional and local level;</li> </ul>

Challenge	Thematic Objective	Intervention scope of the projects
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other reconstructed or upgraded roads (motorways, national roads, regional roads or local roads);</li> <li>Multimodal transport.<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>

*Source: own compilation based on the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 and the project database provided by the Client.*

The above list shows that the challenges identified in the Programme were reflected in the projects. The needs related to the preservation and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage and the cooperation in this respect, the development of cross-border tourism and the improvement of the appeal of cross-border areas, for both the visitors and the inhabitants, were addressed as under the Thematic Objective Heritage. Projects supported the infrastructure through the construction and modernisation of spaces (e.g. parks, boulevards, tourism trails, bicycle lanes) and facilities (e.g. dialogue centres, culture centres, museums, amphitheatres, historical buildings), which helped preserve valuable natural and cultural assets of the borderland, increase the appeal of the eligible area for tourists and develop the service sector. Furthermore, the protection of places with special natural and historical values was supported by various campaigns, education, workshops, exhibitions and publications designed to promote the ecological awareness and the sense of local identity among the inhabitants and make them more open to cooperation. The function of the projects was also to integrate the inhabitants around the local heritage (before a full-scale war in Ukraine broke out, the integration events were of cross-border nature). The objective of improving the condition of areas with a high natural potential was also furthered by **waterworks and sewage infrastructure projects which increased access to public services and improved the condition of the environment.**

In response to the challenges linked to insufficient transport connections in the borderland, improvement of transport accessibility and development of environmentally-friendly transport, the projects implemented for the TO Accessibility were oriented towards the construction and upgrade of local, regional and national road sections, bridges, crossings, roundabouts and intersections for more efficient traffic and better safety. The projects also added some missing pieces to the network of bicycle lanes and pavements and built and modernised public transport stops, pedestrian crossings and car parks. The challenges related to strengthening the quality of the ICT infrastructure were addressed by one project, which involved **creating an innovative training infrastructure, i.e. two ICT competence development centres in Ostrołęka and Mosty.**

The challenges related to increasing the access to healthcare, preventing the spreading of diseases, supporting the quality of social services and successfully responding in the emergency situations identified as a part of the TO Security were addressed by projects focusing on the construction and upgrade of the healthcare infrastructure, for instance through the purchase of equipment and vehicles, construction and upgrade of buildings and support for the functioning of hospital departments. Furthermore, projects included activities for joint upskilling of the medical staff and exchange of experience. Projects also addressed the issues of supporting people with disabilities or

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<sup>9</sup> *The intervention scope assigned to projects implemented for the Thematic Objective BORDERS does not fully correspond to their actual theme, most likely due to absence of the applicable intervention scopes for this type of activities in the catalogue. The actual scope of the projects covered supporting the infrastructure of border crossings, increasing the efficiency of customs check, supporting security solutions and crisis management, streamlining the border protection system.*

autism. In response to the challenges regarding joint responses to emergency situations, **actions were taken to support the rescue missions of the fire service, the mountain rescue service or the chemical and environmental rescue service.**

Finally, the challenges related to the efficiency and security of border procedures and to the increase of the throughput capacity of border crossings were addressed by the Thematic Objective Borders, which included projects designed to **support the infrastructure of border crossings, improve the border security system and increase the efficiency of the verification and check mechanisms.**

The issue whether the Programme scope matched the challenges and needs of the borderland was addressed in the quantitative study with Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries and partners of the projects implemented under the Programme. The respondents were asked to assess how far the financial support which they received for the project met their needs.

**Chart 7. How far the financial support received for a project met the needs of the project authors**



*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84) and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35).*

The answers of the respondents are confirmed by the desk research results. The average rating given by Polish project authors is 8.99 and by Ukrainian project authors is 9.63 (on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 meant “did not meet at all” and 10 meant “met fully,” which shows that the **Programme scope substantially met the needs of the project authors.**

The respondents who gave the support a suitability rating below 10 were asked to identify the needs for which the support was inadequate. The answers included the needs to allocate more funds to selected project activities, such as the printing of publications, cooking workshops, study visits and conferences, educational videos or project management costs and administrative costs. A need to cover the costs of equipping the infrastructure built as a part of the Social Housing Complex project was also mentioned. Except for the answers regarding specific tasks to which additional/more funds should be dedicated, the respondents drew attention to the problem of incurring higher costs than assumed in the project budget because of the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, inflation and unstable euro exchange rate.

Experts were also asked to assess the suitability of the Programme scope in the Delphi study. The respondents had no major objections to the designated thematic areas. They just recommended enhancement of the activities to facilitate transport and improve the throughput capacity of the border crossings but such activities are supported and will continue to be supported under the Programme.



Beneficiaries of the projects selected for case studies had no objections to the possible scope of the activities. Their projects answered the identified needs, primarily because of the relatively broad scope of possible operations.

*It seems to me that the Programme themes are broad enough for everyone to find what they are looking for.*

*Source: An individual in-depth interview as a part of the case study.*

**However, the respondents had objections to the maximum grant amount. They noted that it was quite low, especially in the case of micro-projects.**

A high suitability of the scope of the intervention to the challenges of the borderland was also confirmed by representatives of the institutions responsible for Programme implementation in in-depth interviews. In the case of projects promoting heritage, attention was drawn to the significance of joint initiatives oriented towards integration, exploration of cultural similarities and differences and improvement of the tourism potential of the borderland. This was especially important in the context of the quite limited possibilities of supporting this type of activities under other EU programmes.

*Important elements included the support for the development of heritage and of tourism related to the preservation of cultural values. We did not have substantial funds in our regional programmes to support such undertakings while here we have culture, heritage, tourism... This was a major cash injection for cultivation of our shared heritage. And we of course emphasised that shared heritage in the cross-border programmes. We were trying to find the common elements that allowed us to learn from each other through this Programme and present our culture to partners on the other side of the border. So the projects were highly interesting.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

**According to the study, more emphasis should be put in the 2021-2027 perspective on joint actions to make it easier for the tourists (from Poland, Ukraine and other countries) to visit both countries during one trip.** It is crucial to develop comprehensive communications on the possibility of spending one's free time on both sides of the border, e.g. in the form of an app, information on websites, guides, information provided by tourist information desks, specifying how to plan a visit to interesting places in both Poland and Ukraine. Such integration of activities would be conducive to building cross-border tourism brands.

Another area considered as suitable in the context of the needs of the borderland encompassed road projects, involving both the missing pieces in the network of local connections in smaller locations and the national sections leading to border crossings. Projects seen as particularly necessary included the **reconstruction of the section of the Regional Road No. 885 Przemyśl–Hermanowice–State Border running to the new border crossing with Ukraine (Malhowice-Nizankowice)**. In the case of the Priority regarding the ICT infrastructure, the opinions of the respondents confirmed the desk research results, which have shown that the challenge related to the development of that area was not addressed by the projects (only one project of this type was implemented). According to the

respondents, the little interest in projects of this type was the outcome of too high requirement regarding project advancement.<sup>10</sup>

The Thematic Objective Security was considered as well adapted to the needs. In the context of the war that is being fought, the outcomes of the completed healthcare projects and joint rescue service projects become even more significant and must be continued in the next financial perspective. During the interviews, attention was drawn to the effectiveness of activities to increase the potential for responding to emergency situations, purchase medical equipment, subsidise hospital departments, diagnose and treat specific diseases, exchange experience and mutually improve the knowledge between the partners. This area should be supported in the next financial perspective, with the inclusion of such issues as support for mental health and rehabilitation. However, it was emphasised that projects in that thematic area should be required to include joint activities rather than just coming down to the purchase of equipment or the refurbishment of particular facilities.

*Looking at the priorities, I believe that security, health and cooperation between various services were the right choices.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

Intervention supporting efficient operation of the border services and improved check and security at border crossings was considered the right choice as well. The activities additionally strengthened the protection mechanisms at the external borders of the European Union.

*Since there was a pre-defined pool of funds, I think that the right priorities and activities were chosen. And the things to be supported were right too.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

The interview revealed substantial interest of the potential applicants in activities related to the waterworks and sewage infrastructure and water management; such investments were especially desired in Ukraine. The Programme assumptions did not directly provide for projects of this type. Only one supported project implemented under the Priority related to the preservation of the natural heritage assumed reconstruction of a city sewage treatment plant. Given the substantial needs in this area and the necessity to implement pilot projects related to the introduction of the EU water and sewage management standards in Ukraine as well as the needs connected with nature conservation and rational management of natural resources, the new INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 provides for a possibility of supporting such activities as a part of the TO Environment.

**Furthermore, the interviews show that the projects should put more emphasis on joint activities (educational, integration) addressed to children and teenagers** because this is the social group which has the greatest capacity to build positive relations which are free of historical bias and are based on mutual respect and openness. Such activities should be a part of projects implemented

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<sup>10</sup> *The following activities were eligible for the grant: Joint initiatives for the development and improvement of the quality of the existing ICT infrastructure; Joint projects that involved preparing feasibility studies connected with the creation of broadband networks; Joint creation of broadband networks; Joint initiatives for the development of digital resources and data sharing; Joint initiatives for the interoperability of the ICT infrastructure.*

under Priorities related to the environment, tourism, health and accessibility. It is recommended that projects assuming such activities be rewarded at the project evaluation stage.

Interviewees also emphasised the **need to implement joint projects in the area of entrepreneurship and innovativeness** (creation of clusters, technology transfer, development of new production methods). Analysis of challenges carried out for the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 covered the area of the economy but no challenges were identified which would need to be addressed under the six Priorities determined for the Programme. Support for businesses (entities operating in the tourism industry) was anticipated only under Priority 3 TOURISM. Given the nature of cross-border programmes, which are oriented towards establishing the cooperation to solve shared problems of the borderland, such as environmental pollution, tourist trails, transportation routes or the creation of joint solutions in the area of management and administration, it seems that activities related to creating clusters or supporting innovations extend beyond this type of cooperation and should be supported under transnational or interregional programmes where wider partnerships can be established. Furthermore, considering the Programme implementation stage, there is no reason to extend the scope of the support by including a new Priority. However, the needs in terms of supporting the economy sector should be explored, primarily among entrepreneurs and Business Environment Institutions for potential implementation of such activities in the 2027+ perspective.

The interviewees also emphasised that the substantial interest of the applicants proved that the scope of the support was well suited to the needs. They stated that due to the growing popularity of the funds provided under cross-border programmes and the considerably limited allocation, it was impossible to fulfil a great number of needs of the borderland. This is evidenced by the number of applications which was several times above the financial possibilities of the Programme. So the postulates for increasing the planned pool of funds under the Programme must be deemed justified, especially in the context of the need to rebuild Ukraine and of its potential accession to the European Union. After all, implementation of projects in partnership with Polish entities not only satisfies specific developmental needs but also makes it possible to gain experience with projects financed from Community funds, which are governed by specific project implementation and settlement standards.<sup>11</sup>

**Chapter summary:**

The evaluation shows that the Programme scope was defined accurately, in accordance with the existing needs. The challenges identified in the Programme were reflected in the projects. The need to support the ICT network and infrastructure was an exception. Projects of this type did not attract major interest of the applicants. Given and the needs that are yet to be addressed and the effectiveness of the support, the support for Polish-Ukrainian cross-border projects should be continued in the area of shared cultural heritage, natural heritage, tourism, health, security, transport accessibility and border security. Activities to improve the condition of the environment as well as educational and integration activities addressed to children and teenagers must also be supported.

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<sup>11</sup> *The need to create the conditions to deepen the cooperation with a view to the future integration of Ukraine with the European Union was also noted by the experts in the Delphi study.*

## 1.4. THE IMPACT OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS ON PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

*Research question: How did the 2019-2020 economic crisis, the coronavirus pandemic, the migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border and the war in Ukraine affect the Programme implementation and the execution of projects?*

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The financial perspective 2014-2020 entailed a number of extraordinary factors which could not have been foreseen at the stage of intervention planning and which substantially affected Programme implementation.

Chronologically speaking, the factor that led to major changes in the implementation of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. **The COVID-19 pandemic**, which started in Poland in March 2020, made it necessary to introduce new rules and regulations to continue the Programme activities given the new sanitary regime and the restrictions imposed on the socioeconomic life. In connection with the above, the Managing Authority, in collaboration with the institutions in charge of executing and implementing the Programme (on the side of both Poland and the partners), developed appropriate procedures and mechanisms to continue the Programme and the commenced project activities. In March 2022, the Joint Monitoring Committee approved a Supplement to Programme Manuals and to the Guidelines on expenditure verification in connection with the situation caused by COVID-19, containing the guidelines on how to implement projects during the pandemic.

Once the pandemic was declared in Poland, the movement of people was temporarily restricted and borders were temporarily closed. As a result, Programme face-to-face meetings and training sessions were abandoned and procedures for remote working and electronic communication were developed. Mechanisms were introduced to permit flexible and efficient implementation of the planned project activities and they included for instance extension of the project implementation time, change of submission deadlines for payment applications, a flexible approach to onsite inspection dates, assessment of the eligibility of expenses, exclusion of the application of the principle of competitiveness for purchase orders necessary to prevent the consequences of COVID-19 where immediate order processing was needed, or possibility of extending the scope of the planned activities and/or undertaking additional supplementary activities from the savings identified in the project budget. Furthermore, additional funds were secured in the Programme to prevent the consequences of the pandemic and the JMC approved the allocation of an extra EUR 3 million for cross-border cooperation projects in the area of healthcare. Twelve projects were involved in that cooperation (7 Polish and Belarusian partnerships, 4 Polish and Ukrainian partnerships, 1 Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian partnership), including hospitals and welfare centres, which were able to buy additional equipment or introduce new measures to effectively respond to the crisis (concurrently with regular project activities).

The interviews held with representatives of institutions in charge of Programme implementation suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic was a factor that caused a lot of turbulence and problems connected with the implementation of the Programme in its every aspect. It changed primarily the scope of the projects and substantially delayed their completion, forced changes to project budgets, impeded and limited the implementation of “soft” projects, i.e training sessions, conferences, study

visits, which were partially cancelled or were held remotely. The pandemic made it necessary to perform additional administrative works for the Programme in terms of developing and verifying new guidelines and manuals and supporting the projects (the need to sign addenda to contracts and modify the implementation of projects).

The negative impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** was also emphasised by Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries and partners in the CAWIs conducted for this evaluation. 76.19% of the Polish partners and 60% of the Ukrainian partners (the most answers among the analysed factors) of the projects covered by the evaluation stated that the pandemic was a factor that hindered the furtherance of project objectives. The impact of the pandemic and of the remaining factors on the implementation of projects is described in more detail in chapter 0 of this Report.

It must also be emphasised that the pandemic had a definitely negative impact on the cooperation between entities and on the establishment and preservation of interpersonal relations. According to the majority of the representatives of institutions participating in the in-depth interviews, face-to-face meetings yielded much better results in terms of establishing cooperation and exchanging experience. Even though the pandemic status has been lifted, the Programme still suffers the consequences at the current implementation stage. Projects will be completed by the end of December 2023 due to the extended time limits.

*The pandemic mostly caused substantial problems for “soft” activities, student exchange, meetings, events or visits regarding certain ideas for shared tourist trails.*

*Source: individual in-depth interview.*

The pandemic led to an **economic crisis** and to inflation, which intensified as a result of disruptions in the supply chain of raw materials and goods, staffing problems and the abrupt increase in the prices of construction materials and services. The economic crisis affected all the regions of Europe and it created new changes in many areas of the economy. According to the interviews with representatives of the institutions implementing the Programme, the consequences of the economic crisis could be felt primarily at the project level because beneficiaries were forced to temporarily suspend the project works, postpone the deadlines (given the difficulties in purchasing materials and selecting contractors in bids) and limit the scopes of projects, especially infrastructure projects, due to the growing prices. Despite the difficulties encountered by beneficiaries, the Programme assumptions did not permit changes to the project funding level, which forced beneficiaries to search for additional sources of funding.

Another factor that adversely affected the implementation of the Programme was the **migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border** which started in 2021, when the Belarusian authorities opened the channels to transport migrants across the EU border in Lithuania, Poland and Latvia. In-depth interviews with representatives of the institutions responsible for implementing the Programme drew attention to the fact that the political situation in Belarus and the provoked migration situation at the border was a factor that resulted in distrust to the Belarusian partners and raised concerns about the further developments.<sup>12</sup> Some representatives of the Polish institutions implementing the

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<sup>12</sup> It must also be noted that before the migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border, the Managing Authority followed the guidelines of the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 on monitoring the

Programme emphasised that the atmosphere clearly was not conducive to cooperation with Belarusian beneficiaries due to the political situation in Belarus, the inability to freely exchange views and opinions, the signals about arrests, the disappearance of one of the Belarusian project partners. At the same time, the projects pursued together with partners from Belarus which were practically completed at the moment the migration crisis escalated started to lose their relevance, especially in terms of the infrastructure and the improvement of the throughput capacity of the border crossings.

*(...) the projects related to financing the infrastructure of the Polish-Belarusian border crossings became pointless, irrelevant, so we are now at the stage of recovering money from the Belarusian side. The biggest problem is that (...) we invested for example in the Bruzgi crossing, expensive scanners were bought to prevent illegal immigration and all of the sudden (...) the whole point of those projects was in a way thrown to the dustbin. The contacts were broken. The turbulence was a problem for the Programme and at project level as well, of course (...).*

*Source: individual in-depth interview.*

However, the most important fact that completely changed the policy regarding the cross-border cooperation at Poland's eastern border and caused the Programme to transform from a trilateral formula to a bilateral formula was the Russia invasion on Ukraine. As a result of the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine in 2022, the EC decided to definitively suspend the cooperation with Russia and Belarus on cross-border cooperation programmes and not to continue those programmes in the financial perspective 2021-2027. The EC issued a communication to exclude Belarus from the cooperation as a part of cross-border cooperation initiative, whereas Poland and Ukraine approved the Programme content in a bilateral Polish-Ukrainian formula – INTERREG NEXT Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027. In the Programme annual implementation report and during talks with the institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme it was confirmed that the war caused irreversible changes to the Programme. Since the cross-border cooperation with Belarus was suspended, it was necessary to develop new procedures to enable the partners from Poland and Ukraine to continue the projects without institutions from Belarus. On 13 May 2022, the Programme Joint Monitoring Committee approved the Supplement to the Programme Manuals related to suspension of the Financing Agreement and the introduction of Regulation (EU) 2022/2192<sup>13</sup> and new document templates excluding partners from Belarus. The JMC also decided to treat all expenses incurred and paid by Belarusian beneficiaries starting from 24/02/2022 as ineligible and the cost recovery procedure was launched. Additionally, the EC commenced actions to impose sanctions on Russia and Belarus. As a part of the procedures, changes were made in Poland to the process of verifying contracts performed under the Polish Public Procurement Law to verify if the beneficiary has contracted with a blacklisted entity/contractor, i.e. a party that cooperated with the Russian or Belarusian side, as published on the website of the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration.

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*cooperation with Belarus and verifying the partners for cooperation with the central authorities of that country, due to the political situation in Belarus (disrespect for the principles of democracy).*

<sup>13</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/2192 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 November 2022 laying down specific provisions for the 2014-2020 cooperation programmes supported by the European Neighbourhood Instrument and under the European territorial cooperation goal, following programme implementation disruption (Regulation 2022/2192).

*Regulations were introduced that required the auditors and subsequently the CCPs after the conflict started to verify if the beneficiary has contracted with a blacklisted entity/contractor, i.e. a party that cooperated with the Russian [or Belarusian – editorial note] side. If a party had any ties to Russia or the Russian [or Belarusian – editorial note] market, it could not be contracted.*

Source: individual in-depth interview.

The savings generated during Programme implementation, including the savings arising from the remote formula of project implementation resulting from the pandemic, were donated to help and support the Ukrainian refugees in Poland. In order to support the Ukrainians and generally support the system of aid for Ukraine, additional funding was disbursed under the Programme to be spent by project beneficiaries on aid measures. The additional Programme funding available for that purpose was EUR 2.5 million (the funding was 100% of the total costs of such additional measures). A direct award procedure was launched as a part of the Programme and it was backed by appropriate documents laying down the rules of the aid in the form of a manual, an application and annexes. On 30 January 2023, the Joint Monitoring Committee selected 7 projects for the funding in the direct award procedure, their total value being EUR 4,675,085.40.

The above-mentioned events, especially the geopolitical ones, had a highly adverse impact on the implementation of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 Programme, causing the Programme to transform from a trilateral formula to a bilateral one and to cut the ties which had taken many years to develop. Nonetheless, there are positive conclusions to be drawn in such negative circumstances: as a result of Programme implementation and the lasting relations established as a result of the cross-border cooperation between Poland and Ukraine, the Ukrainian partners received the indispensable support from the Polish partners in the time of need.

*(...) the partnerships which were nurtured for years and mostly entailed positive Polish-Ukrainian experience bore the fruit that support was quickly provided by Polish beneficiaries and partners to their counterparts in Ukraine at the moment of crisis. So what the Programme created, i.e. a multilevel structure of those diverse partnerships, brought about a very positive and quick response from the Polish partners and the Programme when it came to supporting the Ukrainians and we can say that this is a bright side and that there is some hope. Moreover, the foundations of the good relations, the partnership foundations, are a lasting value to be nurtured and highlighted as positive consequences.*

Source: individual in-depth interview.

#### **Chapter summary:**

The Programme encountered many difficulties caused by crisis events following one after another. The Programme underwent a huge transformation connected with the introduction of new mechanisms and procedures to permit its continuation at a time of crisis. The overall greatest negative impact came from the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine and the Belarusian involvement in that conflict. Due to the conduct of those countries, which involved disrespect for the international law, the cross-border cooperation with Belarus was completely suspended and the

effects of the Programme in the form of the established relations and elimination of barriers were put to a substantial test.

## 1.5. DELIMITATION OF THE ELIGIBLE AREA

*Research question: What is the actual delimitation of the cooperation areas based on results of the projects pursued until the cooperation with Belarus was suspended? Did any cross-border functional areas emerge? In what sectors/disciplines? How should the Programme area be delimited after the cooperation with Belarus was suspended? What is the effective distance from the border for cross-border cooperation if the Programme no longer has partners in Belarus?*

The scope of support under the Programme covers the following area:

- **in Poland:**
  - **the core subregions:** the Krosno and Przemyśl subregions (in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship), the Białystok, Łomża and Suwałki subregions (in the Podlaskie Voivodeship), the Biała Podlaska and the Chełm–Zamość subregions (in the Lubelskie Voivodeship), the Ostrołęka-Siedlce subregions (in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship);
  - **the adjoining subregions:** the Rzeszów and Tarnobrzeg subregions (in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship); the Puławy and Lublin subregions (in the Lubelskie Voivodeship);
- **in Ukraine:**
  - **the core oblasts:** the Lviv Oblast, the Volyn Oblast, the Zakarpattia Oblast;
  - **the adjoining oblasts:** the Rivne Oblast, the Ternopil Oblast, the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast.

The eligible area consists in total of 79 districts in Poland (in a total of 4 voivodeships) and 42 districts in Ukraine (in 4 oblasts).

A total of 434 entities (both leaders and partners) participated in the Programme and completed together a total of 158 projects. The total number of beneficiaries (including project leaders and partners) was dominated by entities from Poland. The number of beneficiaries and partners in particular countries is presented in the table below.

**Table 7. The number of project leaders and partners in the Programme by country of origin**

Country of origin of the entity	Number of leaders	Number of partners	Number of individual projects (without partners)	Total number of entities
Poland	91	107	7	205
Belarus	17	60	-	77
Ukraine	42	109	1	152
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>434</b>

Source: own compilation based on the project database.

To establish the actual (effective) delimitation of the support, the planned Programme eligible area was compared to the area where the projects were actually implemented (see Map 1. Number of beneficiaries by location of the main office).



Analysis linking the beneficiaries and partners to project implementation sites shows that the projects were implemented in only 44 out of the 79 Polish districts (which is 56% of the eligible districts) and 22 out of the 42 districts in Ukraine (which is 52% of the all the eligible districts). There is also a noticeable disproportion when it comes to the number of projects implemented in particular districts. Out of the 205 beneficiaries and partners on the Polish side, 96 are located within 9 districts (of which 8 are towns or cities with district rights) – Rzeszów, Białystok, Lublin, Przemyśl, Chełm, Warszawa, the Sanocki district. In the case of Ukraine, 97 out of 147 entities are located within 3 districts (the Lviv District, the Lutsk District, the Uzhhorod District). This shows that the support is highly concentrated, mainly in highly urbanised areas.<sup>14</sup>

The results of the Delphi method conducted for this study should be presented here. The experts participating in the Delphi method were moderately in agreement that the Programme helped create cross-border functional areas (an average rating of 6.0 on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the lowest rating and 10 is the highest rating). They stated that the formation of such areas at a micro scale was influenced by political decisions and the international position of the countries. They mentioned that at the central level Belarus was never willing to integrate with the broadly understood West, which is a factor hindering the formation of such areas. In the case of Ukraine, the experts concluded that it was willing to integrate with the European Union, which entailed a greater enthusiasm towards joint projects. However, the war in Ukraine was listed as a factor adversely affecting the cooperation.

*The borderland is diversified by the current status of the bilateral relations. In the case of the Polish-Belarusian borderland, there are little chances given the fact that Belarus is isolating itself from cross-border cooperation. Belarus has never signed the small-scale border traffic agreement, (...), the Belarusian society is not interested in integrating with the West. In the case of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, there are much better chances at project implementation due to the pro-European attitudes of a major part of the society and the national policy. However, the current war and its consequences, which are hard to foresee, are currently a threat (...).*

Source: Delphi method.

The unwillingness of the entities from Belarus to implement joint undertakings is also confirmed by their relatively low – when compared to the entities from Poland and Ukraine – participation in projects. Out of the 434 entities, the Belarusian side was represented by just 17 leaders and 60 partners.

Furthermore, the experts in the Delphi method stated that in the case of Ukraine functional areas can emerge in a number of spheres, such as tourism, security, the environment, cultural heritage and heritage. However, they were unable to identify specific geographical areas.

Furthermore, a reference should be made to the quantitative studies involving project beneficiaries and partners. The results in the CAWIs/CATIs with project beneficiaries and partners may serve as

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<sup>14</sup> For more on the differentiation of beneficiaries and partners, see

evidence that the Programme eligible area was properly delimited – the study shows that there were no entities that were desired as cooperants but could not be partnered with. Beneficiaries and partners also stated that they intended to use European funds in the financial perspective 2021-2027 – mainly from the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine, INTERREG Lithuania-Poland and INTERREG NEXT Poland-Slovakia. The answers show that on the one hand the eligible area was properly delimited but on the other hand alternatives for the lost cooperation with Belarus are sought in other Programmes, e.g. INTERREG Lithuania-Poland.

A confirmation that the area was properly delimited was obtained in the in-depth interviews conducted for this evaluation. The interviews revealed that the Programme eligible area was established properly, in a way guaranteeing that all the local entities, if assisted with the intervention under the Programme, would be able to tackle their main challenges.

*In my opinion this geography may not be optimum but I also think that it is a good compromise, given especially the interests of our regional partners which were expressed much earlier, and this is why we include all the subregions that are directly adjacent to or are located directly on the border or lie within the area of interests of those cross-border interactions.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

Please note the discrepancies between the observed activity of the beneficiaries (see Map 2. Number of beneficiaries by location of the main office) and their declarations. The evaluation shows that the entities active in the Programme as beneficiaries were satisfied with the programmed intervention. This evaluation did not focus on inactive entities in the Programme but **it seems reasonable to conduct an analysis in the future which would address those entities**. Perhaps the reason for their inactivity in the Programme is their inability to find a partner or they desire to partner with an entity outside the delimited area.

#### **Chapter summary:**

It can be observed that the support concentrates mainly in the biggest cities of the eligible area. Still, a great number of entities participate in the projects, both on the Polish side and on the Ukrainian side. The results of the initial studies (in-depth interviews with the institutions responsible for the Programme, surveys involving project beneficiaries and partners, the Delphi method) show that the area was delimited properly, although the desk research did not confirm this. Efforts should be made for future support to reach smaller locations as well, not only the biggest cities. It is also recommended that the subsequent evaluations cover the entities that did not apply for support under the Programme in order to better explore the reasons for their inactivity.

## 1.6. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FURTHER SUPPORT

*Research question: What thematic support directions must be maintained in the 2027+ perspective? Are there any scenarios to be adopted if the cooperation with Belarus is not continued? Please specify.*

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### **Thematic scope of the support**

The analysed Programme Thematic Objectives suggest lead to the conclusion that all the pursued objectives turned out highly important to the borderland. The most desired axes among them are the TOs Accessibility and Borders. A positive thing is that the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 is one of the few currently implemented INTERREG programmes that contain the Accessibility Priority.

It must also be emphasised that beneficiaries report the need to continue to implement large infrastructure projects. Given their sizes, their impact area is relatively large so they can address many social needs.

The scope of the support provided for in the Programme met the needs of the project authors. Given the still unsatisfied needs and the effectiveness of the intervention to date, Polish-Ukrainian cross-border projects regarding cultural and natural heritage, tourism, health and security, transport accessibility and border protection should be continued as a part of the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027. Considering the current international situation, including the plans regarding Ukraine's accession to the European Union, it must be stressed that the Programme should be continued in the subsequent programming periods within a limited territorial range, covering Poland and Ukraine.

Furthermore, activities oriented towards improving the condition of the environment must be supported as they were implemented in the financial perspective 2014-2020 to a little degree, mainly because of the substantial deficits in this area on the Ukrainian side. This is why it seems reasonable to establish Priority 1. Environment in the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 to support the adaptation to climate changes, prevent the risks related to natural disasters and catastrophes, support resilience, access to water and sustainable water management, strengthen nature protection and preservation, biological diversity and green infrastructure and limit pollution. Given the substantial needs in this area and the necessity to implement pilot projects related to the introduction of the EU water and sewage management standards in Ukraine as well as the needs connected with nature conservation and rational management of natural resources, this type of support should be continued in the next financial perspectives.

It is also a good idea to increase the efforts to address education and integration activities to children and teenagers to enable the youngest generations to develop positive relations built on mutual respect and openness. Such activities should be a part of projects implemented under Priorities related to the environment, tourism, health and accessibility. It is recommended that projects assuming such activities be rewarded at the project evaluation stage.

### **Programme indicators**

The recommended solution is to prepare indicator metrics at the start of Programme implementation and to subsequently verify how the indicators and their measures are reported to make sure they are consistent with the metrics.

### **Delimitation of the scope of support**

It must be emphasised that as a result of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus, some of the present entities which implemented projects in partnership with Belarusian entities will lose their partners. This is why it must be seen as positive that the present cooperation area also falls within the scope of support provided under other cross-border and inter-regional programmes. A less optimistic matter must also be stressed, which is the high concentration of the support in major urban centres and the focus of the support in an area that is relatively limited when compared to the eligible area. So it should be pondered if there are any mechanisms that could be introduced to ensure that at least one entity (partner or lead beneficiary) has its main office in a direct vicinity of the border, e.g. in a district directly adjacent to the border.

The desk research has also shown that there are blank spots within the eligible area, which means that there are municipalities within that area where not a single project partner is based. The study involving beneficiaries did not reveal any cases where they would want to partner with an entity from outside the eligible area. Also nothing in the study involving representatives of the institutions responsible for implementing the Programme suggested that the area was defined improperly. Nonetheless, the observed diversity leads to a recommendation that a future evaluation should encompass entities from areas (municipalities, districts) inactive in the Programme to better explore the reasons for their inactivity.

## II. PARTNERSHIP AND PROJECTS

### 2.1. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS

*Research question: What results (also by administrative and functional area and by cooperation theme) did the project implementation bring?*

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Four core thematic areas were defined for the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme to support particular projects, i.e. heritage, accessibility, security and borders. The desk research conducted as a part of the evaluation made it possible to identify the results of particular projects from the specified thematic areas.

First of all, the projects **supported the cultural and natural heritage of the local areas** where they were implemented. The projects implemented within that area supported the local culture for example through **infrastructural activities**, i.e. improving and renovating historical and cultural facilities important to the region, **soft activities**, i.e. organising various (also cross-border) events, and **promotional activities**, i.e. creating information brochures, promotional videos. The activity of beneficiaries in that area could have positive effects on local tourism, especially cross-border tourism. One of the Ukrainian Lead Beneficiaries (Volyn Regional Initiatives Centre) and its partners (one from Poland: the Ruda Huta Municipality) decided to pursue a project with the main objective of increasing cross-border tourism. The project focused on reconstruction of historically important rural regions, e.g. the borderland village Opalin, which a small and highly neglected place that can act as a symbol of the unity of the Ukrainians and Poles to this day. Its culture, i.e. the craft unique for the area, is vanishing. Additionally, its infrastructure is still below the level from before World War II because it was completely destroyed during the war. The place has a high tourism potential and there was a desire to restore that potential with Programme funding. The project also included soft activities to promote the cultural heritage and remind people about the existence of historical rural areas important for the borderland. The project was planned to include a bicycle tour around areas historically and culturally important to the Polish and Ukrainian partners, i.e. around the Opalin village but not only.

Projects from this thematic area also included various **education and science centres**, e.g. museums. Museums play an important role of the platforms that build the historical memory and the national identity and help explore the culture and history of other countries. Unfortunately, as years go by we can observe a declining interest in museums, especially ones in smaller towns or in the countryside. This is why projects in the heritage support were also intended to boost the interest in various education and science centres, including museums. There were both infrastructural activities, to modernise or build educational and science centres, and promotional activities, to promote and encourage visits to the newly created places, such as upgrade of websites and creation of promotional brochures and promotional videos. To provide a comprehensive solution to the identified problems, the projects also included soft activities, i.e. staff training, cultural events, entertainment for the inhabitants and tourists.

The projects pursued in that thematic area could serve as a unique platform for exchange of knowledge between project partners. Polish-Ukrainian territories are rich in shared cultural heritage, of which both the local community and some administrative authorities are often unaware.

Implementation of heritage projects enables entities with shared historical heritage to form partnerships. A Ukrainian Lead Beneficiary: Volyn Regional Charitable Fund “Polissya” and one of its Polish partners: J. I. Kraszewski Museum in Romanów decided to pursue a project designed to promote their shared regional historical heritage (**the Volyn Oblast and the Lubelskie Voivodeship were the home of a famous writer J.I. Kraszewski**). The project assumed holding cultural events, i.e. theatre performances for young people, exhibitions, trips following the footsteps of J.I. Kraszewski and study workshops for the staff of culture centres to allow them to exchange knowledge. The project also included information activities to raise the awareness of the shared cultural heritage.

Additionally, **heritage micro-projects were project opportunities for the third sector organisation, i.e. foundations and associations**. Such organisations often have interesting, innovative ideas consistent with the objectives defined in their articles of association and they produce interesting results. For example, one of the projects of the Ukrainian Lead Beneficiary (Mountain Guides Association “Rovin”) and its Polish partner (Local Tourist Organisation in Przemyśl) was about **creating a camp for volunteers where the participants would renovate historical and cultural sites (synagogues, cemeteries, Orthodox and Catholic churches)**. In addition to the renovation of culturally and historically important sites, the project also integrated a group of people with similar interests.

*Micro-projects, as the name suggests. The local communities, local NGOs or small institutions obviously do not have the budgets of hundreds of thousand or millions of euros so I believe that some smaller initiatives worth a few dozen thousand euros are within their reach and at the same time they allow them to implement some really good ideas (...).*

*Source: In-depth interview with a representative of the Monitoring Committee.*

The beneficiaries established cooperation not only in the area of cultural heritage but also in the area of natural heritage so their projects result in the conservation of the local nature. **The beneficiaries were involved in activities to preserve the local flora and the local water bodies, which are often located in areas at a special risk of degradation**. A project pursued by the Zamość Municipality is a good example. The Roztocze region has special nature values because it is characterised by high biodiversity. The project included infrastructural activities, i.e. building a bicycle lane and the accompanying infrastructure, as well as promotional activities and soft activities addressed to tourists and the inhabitants, such as cross-border events or development of a strategic document regarding the preservation and promotion of the natural heritage. The newly built infrastructure made it possible for tourists and the inhabitants to spend time in designated places, whereas the soft activities and the promotional activities made them aware of the importance of the Roztocze region and why it should be nurtured.

As far as the next identified project thematic area is concerned, i.e. accessibility, the related projects **improved and developed the infrastructure and the transportation services and developed the ICT infrastructure**.

One of the transportation infrastructure development projects was selected for a case study due to its high-quality implementation. The project involved **altering and developing the Regional Road 885**. The project was implemented by a Lead Beneficiary from Poland: the Podkarpackie Regional Road Administration and one Ukrainian partner. The condition of the infrastructure before the project was

completed hindered cross-border contacts and transport, thus decreasing the appeal of the region to investors. So the planned development of the transportation infrastructure not only helped improve the infrastructure for the local inhabitants or the natural persons driving by but also accelerated the economic development of the area as it shortened the travel time in the region.

During individual interviews, the respondents mentioned that projects increasing the accessibility of road infrastructure should also include building border crossings and the related road infrastructure as this improves the comfort of travelling across state borders. Such projects help develop the borderland as they make the cooperation between foreign partners much more convenient.

*This should go more towards soft projects, cooperation between communities etc. It's nice and all but to be able to cooperate, you have to get to the other side of the border. And, obviously, not using the main expressway or motorways but a local border crossing and I think that such local projects should be implemented as they substantially contribute to the development of the borderland.*

*Source: In-depth interview with a representative of the Monitoring Committee.*

There were also projects that improved access to the ICT infrastructure. A project of this type was implemented by the city of Ostrołęka and it was also selected for a case study. In order to create the **ICT Centre**, the city of Ostrołęka converted an old railway station building and gave it a new function. The new building has not only educational functions but also inclusive, cultural and entertainment functions. Importantly, the newly built Centre also offered classes for people with disabilities and thus it had a positive impact on reducing their social exclusion.

The next thematic area supported under the Programme is security. Projects implemented within that area assumed **e.g. supporting the development of healthcare and social services and supporting the institutions in charge of safety, such as the fire service. They also addressed any other identified threats to the safety of the local communities e.g. climate disasters, contagious diseases.**

The effects of the implemented projects included better access to quality healthcare. The projects improved the access to medical infrastructure for the local inhabitants or patients, assumed renovation of the interiors of healthcare facilities and thus improved the comfort of using them. The projects made it possible to create new hospital departments, not available at healthcare facilities before, and to modernise the departments that failed to meet their functions. A good example is a project implemented by the **Mazowieckie Voivodeship Hospital in Siedlce** and its partner. The purpose of the project was to **improve the quality of the gynaecological, maternity and neonatal services**. For this purpose, the hospital was provided with new medical equipment and computer hardware. Medical rooms were also renovated as a part of the project, which made it possible to create the following units on the premises of the hospital: Antenatal Classes, Gynaecology, Maternity and Neonatal Clinic, Early Postpartum and Urological Rehabilitation Clinic, Postural Deformities Clinic and Hip Defects Clinic.

The projects improved the safety of people who were in need of immediate medical assistance for instance by **reducing the waiting time for the response of medical rescue service**. One of the projects, having the Tomaszowski District as its Lead Beneficiary, oriented its activities towards improving the effectiveness of the cooperation with the medical rescue service. The identified

barriers the project wanted to reduce were related to: poor awareness of the local community, which could result in delayed medical assistance for casualties of dangerous situations; problems with the communication between the facilities and the medical rescue service; and inadequate qualifications of the rescue service team members. The project included soft activities and infrastructural activities which were mutually complementary. The soft activities encompassed for example developing the cooperation procedures for medical rescue and delivering training to enhance the first aid skills, whereas the infrastructural activities comprised for instance buying modern equipment and medical vehicles for the medical service organisation.

The projects implemented in this respect were to answer all the security-threatening crisis situations. We are currently facing the consequences of the climate crises, i.e. floods, large-area fires or contagious diseases, for example avian flu. Some communities must also face the threats related to the nature of the area where they live, e.g. non-regulated local rivers, local summer droughts. Due to the support received under the Programme, the **city of Siedlce** as the Lead Beneficiary on one of the projects was able to implement the activities within its area which made it better equipped to respond to situations threatening the security of the local inhabitants. As a part of the project, the city completed both infrastructural activities (purchased vehicles, specialist equipment and protective clothing and created appropriate infrastructure, a training complex, an equipment preparation base and a regional stock of fire suppression agents, modernised the command centre) and soft activities (delivered training, exercise for local fire fighters). The projects implemented in that area also included undertakings addressed to institutions responsible for safety – the fire service. The city of Siedlce pursued a project in this area and its project was selected during the evaluation for a case study. Project partners were two entities from Poland (City Command of the State Fire Brigade in Siedlce, the Korczew Municipality) and one Ukrainian entity (Department of State Emergency Service of Ukraine in the Wolyn Oblast). The initial project stage involved buying vehicles, specialist equipment and protective clothing, creating an appropriate infrastructure (a training complex, an equipment preparation base and a regional stock of fire suppression agents) and modernising the command centre. Those undertakings were the starting point for the integration activities addressed to rescuers from Poland and Ukraine. They included specialist training for fire fighters, exercises, sports fire fighting competitions and a series of preventive meetings, held as during local events.

It should be emphasised that a **cross-border functional area** was created as a part of the project. The project helped strengthen the ties between the entities on both sides of the border and increased the potential of the rescue services. Both entities were able to exchange the best practices they had developed and participate in joint training sessions, which additionally consolidated the bonds developed in the course of the Programme.

However, the formation of cross-border areas was identified in single cases only. This was because of various factors influencing the Programme, such as the suspension of the cooperation with Belarusian partners, which completely precluded the creation of such areas between partners from Poland and Belarus, despite there being a potential for that.

One of the last thematic areas of the cooperation undertaken by beneficiaries is the issue of **enhancing the security on the border and improving the efficiency of border management**.

This area included but was not limited to infrastructural activities (e.g. building border crossings, buying equipment for the border guard service). The importance of the construction of border



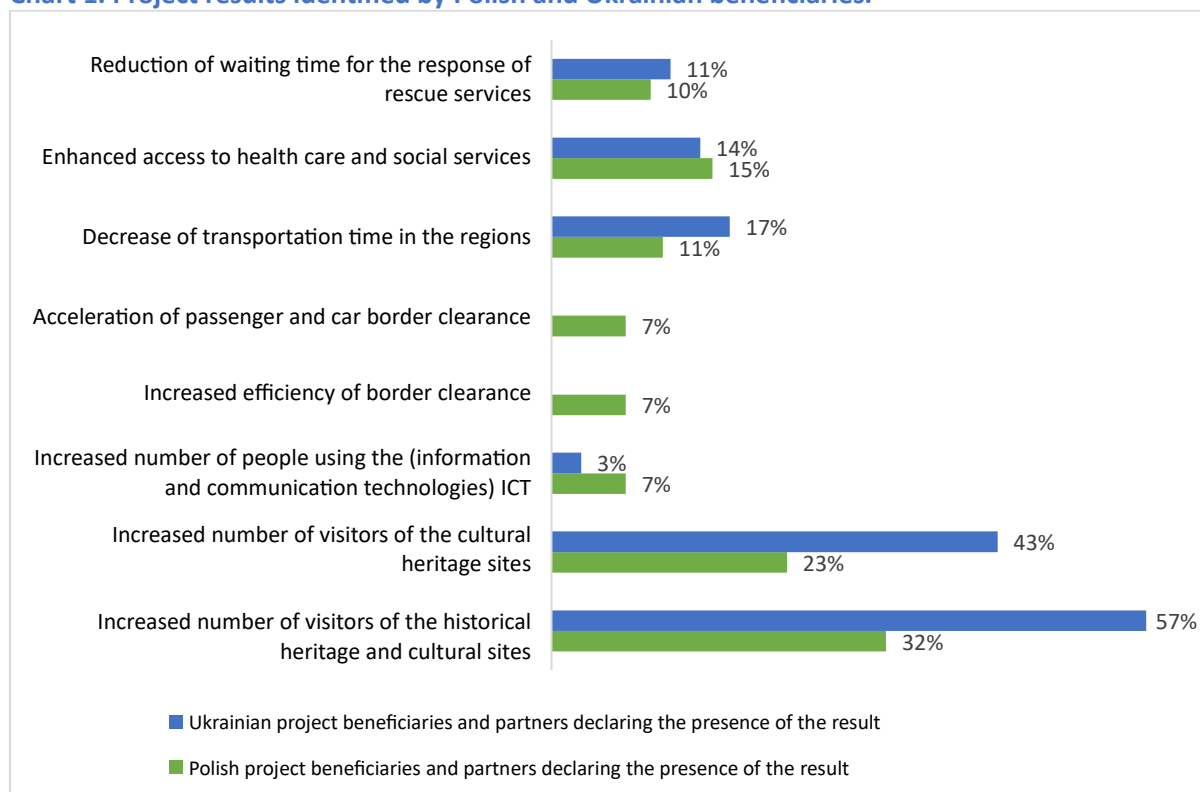
crossings was also mentioned by respondents in individual interviews or with regard to accessibility projects – the respondents mentioned that the construction of border crossings and the accompanying road infrastructure had positive effects on the cooperation between foreign entities. So keeping the border open and easy to cross can be regarded as priority factors in building efficient and lasting cross-border cooperation.

Projects in this respect also enabled Polish and Ukrainian partners to exchange the best practices regarding border management. The Lead Beneficiary – Lublin Executive Board for Maintenance of Border Crossings – emphasised in its project description that the projects that were being implemented had very broad target groups, both on the side of the Polish partner and on the side of the Ukrainian partner, and as such they had the capacity to build powerful cross-border ties in the future.

The completed interviews suggested that **ensuring special security at the border with Belarus** was an important matter in this respect. The 2021 migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border, which prompted some Polish districts to declare a state of emergency, could affect the sense of security of the local inhabitants. It is not possible to determine beyond doubt whether security was successfully improved at the Belarusian borders under this Priority due to various factors, especially the crisis situations that led to the closing of some border crossings with Belarus; nonetheless this should remain a priority task for the future financial perspective.

Respondents in the quantitative study were also asked the question about the results achieved by particular Ukrainian and Polish beneficiaries and project partners.

**Chart 1. Project results identified by Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries.**



*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) and Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.*

The fewest beneficiaries, both Polish and Russian, declared **the presence of results related to projects connected with management and improvement of border security** (improved efficiency, faster border clearance). Not a single respondent declared this result on the Ukrainian side. This may be because the war in Ukraine led to restrictions connected with crossing Ukrainian borders, which may have disrupted the emergence of results for the related projects. On the Polish side, the crisis situations (the war and the migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border) also could have affected the achievement of high-quality results in the aspect of improved border security and border management.

According to beneficiaries, the most results, both on the Polish side and on the Ukrainian side, emerged for heritage projects ('Increased number of visitors of the historical heritage and cultural sites' and 'Increased number of visitors of the cultural heritage sites'). As shown above, this Priority gave many non-governmental organisations an opportunity to implement micro-projects. Third sector organisations, i.e. organisations promoting cultural and historical heritage, implemented projects that were consistent with the objectives defined in their articles of association. This may be one of the factors that contributed to the high declaration of results for this Thematic Objective. Additionally, the most projects were implemented under this Thematic Objective.

The moderate number of beneficiaries suggests that their projects yielded results related to the implementation of other undertakings – from the two remaining Thematic Objectives (Accessibility and Security). The reduction of transportation time in the regions is identified by 17% of Ukrainian and 11% of Polish beneficiaries. Problems connected with the accessibility of high-quality road infrastructure are complex and despite all the projects under the Programme, achievement of long-term and relevant effects in this respect may be identified to a smaller extent. Besides, a moderate number of projects were implemented as a part of that area, while the works on certain undertakings are still in progress.

The situation is similar when it comes to results linked to access to healthcare and to social services and to reduction of the waiting time for the response of rescue services. Problems connected with access to quality healthcare and quality medical rescue are complex and their achievement of substantial results may be a long-term process.

A small percentage of beneficiaries also declared the presence of results related to the number of people using the ICT. Just as in the case of transportation projects, the number of projects was moderate and some undertakings were not completed.

When it comes to the scale of project effects, the effects of particular projects are in most cases identified at a local level only. One of the respondents in individual interviews pointed out that the Programme covered a wide area and so the effects of projects were rather dispersed and they were usually identified at local levels and not across the whole eligible area:

*Our area is so big that the effect is dispersed, in my opinion because the area is so big that even if we leave out Belarus, it is hard to specify how the Programme actually changes the quality of the socioeconomic life. In my opinion, the effects are more local.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

At this point, we must also address the extent to which the beneficiaries achieved their indicator target values. The achieved values differ from the target ones. As we compare the target value assumed in the Programme (cf. chapter 1.1. Attainment of specific Programme objectives - Output indicators) to the value assumed by the beneficiaries, our attention is drawn to their ambitious Programme performance assumptions, higher than the assumptions adopted at the intervention programming stage. So the relatively poor achievement of some indicators does not necessarily mean that the Programme assumptions were not successfully attained. In fact, 9 out of 16 indicators at the project level exceeded 70%.

**Table 8. Achievement of output indicators by beneficiaries versus their assumed target values**

Output indicator	Priority axis	Measurement unit	Target value (assumed in the projects)	Achieved value	Percentage achievement of the target value assumed in the projects
Number of improved cultural and historical sites as direct consequence of Programme support	Heritage	number	62	16.3	26.29%
Number of cross-border cultural events organised using ENI support	Heritage	number	392	137	34.95%
Number of cross-border cultural events organised using Programmes support	Heritage	number	125	60	48.00%
Number of promoted and/or preserved natural sites as direct consequence of Programme support	Heritage	number	69	32	46.38%
Number of people participating in campaigns and activities to raise the awareness and promote the preservation of natural heritage	Heritage	number of people	22723	11,191	49.25%
Total length of newly built roads	Accessibility	km	9.46	17.37	183.62%
Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	Accessibility	km	215.39	174.66	81.09%
Number of districts benefiting from modernised/created transport services and infrastructure	Accessibility	number	50	35	70.00%
Number of partnerships established in order to modernise/create the environmentally friendly transport systems or services	Accessibility	number	14	12	85.71%

Output indicator	Priority axis	Measure ment unit	Target value (assumed in the projects)	Achieved value	Percentage achievement of the target value assumed in the projects
Number of partnerships established in order to develop the ICT	Accessibility	number	1	1	100.00%
Population covered by improved health services as direct consequence of the support	Security	number of people	16,507,725	9,930,848	60.16%
Population benefiting from the newly created or improved social services	Security	number of people	160	171	106.88%
Population benefiting from fire protection measures services as direct consequence of the support	Security	number of people	11,393,094	9,636,294	84.58%
Number of security institutions cooperating across the borders	Security	number	85	130	152.94%
Number of border crossing points with increased throughput capacity	Borders	number	16	7	43.75%
Increased throughput capacity of persons on land border crossing points	Borders	number of people/day	110,115	223,799	203.24%

Source: own compilation based on data provided by the Client (as at 14/12/2023).

#### Chapter summary:

The projects implemented under the Programme supported the cultural and natural heritage of local areas, improved the accessibility of and developed the transportation infrastructure and the ICT infrastructure, improved security on borders, increased border management efficiency, supported healthcare and social services, provided support to institutions in charge of security and responded to any other identified security threats to local communities.

Beneficiaries identified the most results for heritage projects and the fewest results for projects designed to improve border security and border management.

Project effects were in most cases identified at the local level only.

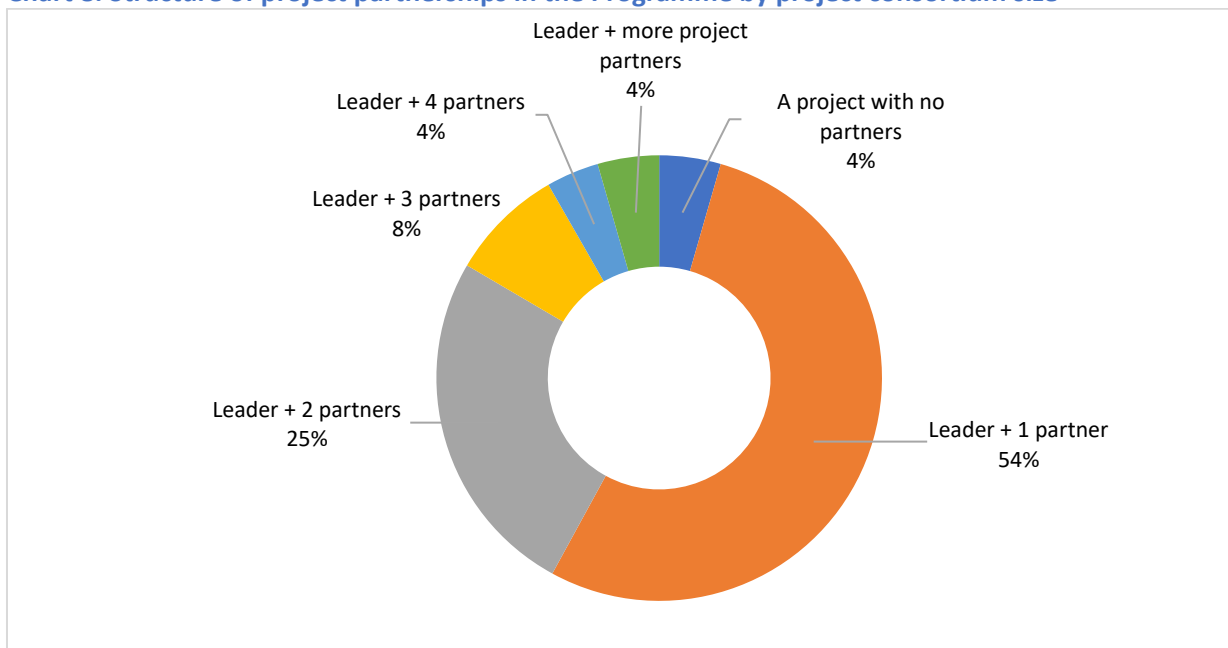
## 2.2. ACTIVITY OF BENEFICIARIES

*Research question: What is the activity of beneficiaries in the Programme? (analysis based on location, beneficiary type etc., e.g. LGU, NGO)? Was there any beneficiary type missing? Was the participation of any beneficiary type too low? What were the correlations between the activity/inactivity of applicants and for example the distance between their main office and the border, the GDP of the region, the population, were there any other correlations?*

As has been already stated in chapter 1.5., **158 projects were implemented under the Programme with the involvement of 374 entities**. The highest percentage of entities, i.e. 57% of all leaders and partners, came from Poland. The most project leaders came from Poland too. About 1/3 of all the entities involved in the projects came from Ukraine. The Belarusian side was the least active, representing only 17 projects as the leader and having partners on 20 projects.

Analysis of the structure of partnerships for countries of origin shows that the most common partnerships were ones composed of the leader and one partner – this was more than a half of all the partnerships. Every fourth project was implemented by a consortium consisting of the leader and 2 partners and just above 8% by a consortium consisting of a leader and 3 partners. Bigger project consortia were rare although there were projects implemented with the involvement of even 7-10 partners, in addition to the leader.

**Chart 8. Structure of project partnerships in the Programme by project consortium size**



*Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.*

Entities with the highest activity as leaders in the Programme:

- **local government communities** – 18% of all project leaders;
- **associations** – 18% of all project leaders;
- **municipality-level local government organisational units** –17% of all project leaders;
- **state organisational units** –13% of all project leaders.

For project partners, these are:

- **local government communities** – 18% of all project partners;
- **state organisational units** – 16% of all project partners;
- **associations** – 14% of all project partners;
- **municipality-level local government organisational units** – 13% of all project partners;
- **authorities, government administration bodies** – 5% of all project partners;
- **universities** – 5% of all project partners;
- **foundations** – 4% of all project partners.

There were also other types of beneficiaries (both leaders and partners), for example state schools, Catholic Church, government-owned companies and other. But they represented only a small percentage of all the entities.

Given the diversification by **country of origin**, there is a certain diversification in the participation of entities, both leaders and project partners. In all the countries, the structure was dominated by local government communities but in the case of Ukraine associations were also of significance. In the case of Belarus, state administration units played a major part.

**Diagram 1. Dominant beneficiary types by participating country**

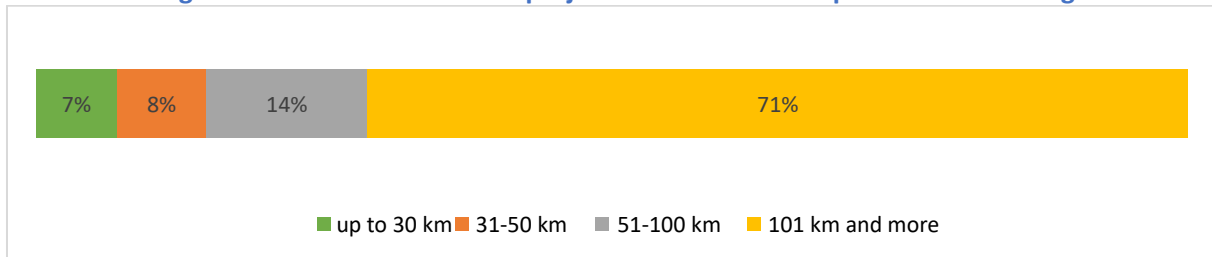


*Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.*

Another element to be brought up in deliberations on the activity of beneficiaries is the **region's GDP**. In the case of Poland, no correlation was observed between the region's GDP and the activity of the beneficiaries. It was observed for Ukraine – the higher the GDP, the higher activity. However, it must be noted that the differences apply to project leaders only. No differences were observed for project partners – in their case, the activity remains at a similar level, notwithstanding the region's GDP.

In the case of a distance between partners, no correlation was observed between the **distance (measured in kilometres) between the partners and their cooperation**. In the group with the most partners, the distance between partners is more than 100 km. This arises from the important role of the border – the cooperating entities are not located only on the border but also away from the border. Analysis of entities from particular countries reveals that Poland and Belarus have a similar correlation between the distance between partners and the activity of beneficiaries. What can be noticed about Ukraine is the greater average distance between partners. This means that entities from Ukraine are usually farther from their partners (and thus from the border) than entities from Poland and Belarus.

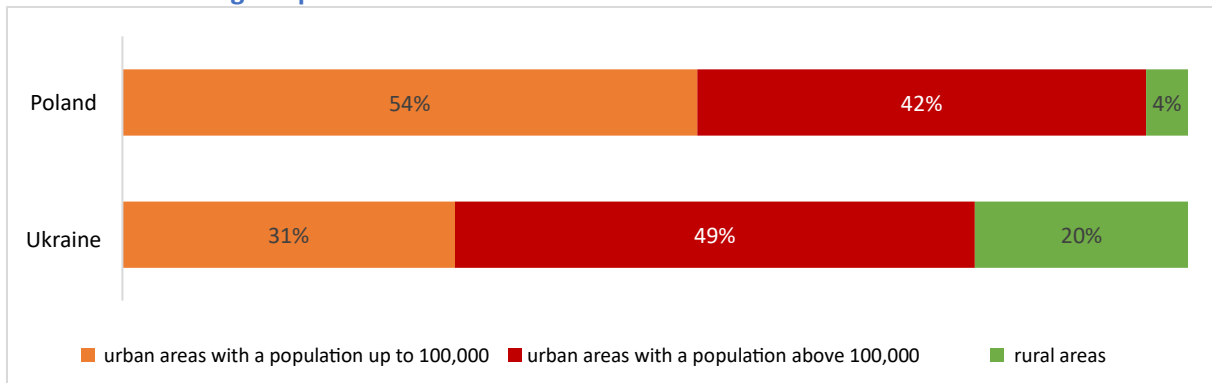
**Chart 9. Average overall distance between project beneficiaries and partners in the Programme**



*Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.*

In the geographical context, it must be noted that the Polish side **is dominated by entities from big cities**, including university cities, such as Lublin, Białystok or Rzeszów (54 partners). Similar correlations are observed on the Ukrainian side: a total of 88 partners come from such locations as Lutsk, Ivano-Frankivsk and Uzhhorod. So beneficiaries come from urbanised areas dominated by medium-sized and big cities. This is confirmed by the desk research. It shows that as many as 64 out of the 152 Polish partners (which is 42% of all the partners on the Polish side) come from cities with a population above 100,000. Only 6 partners (4%) are entities from rural areas. In the case of Ukraine, 49% of all the entities are entities from cities with a population above 100,000. Every fifth entity represents rural areas. Regardless of that, the structure of partners is visibly dominated by big cities, for both Poland and Ukraine.

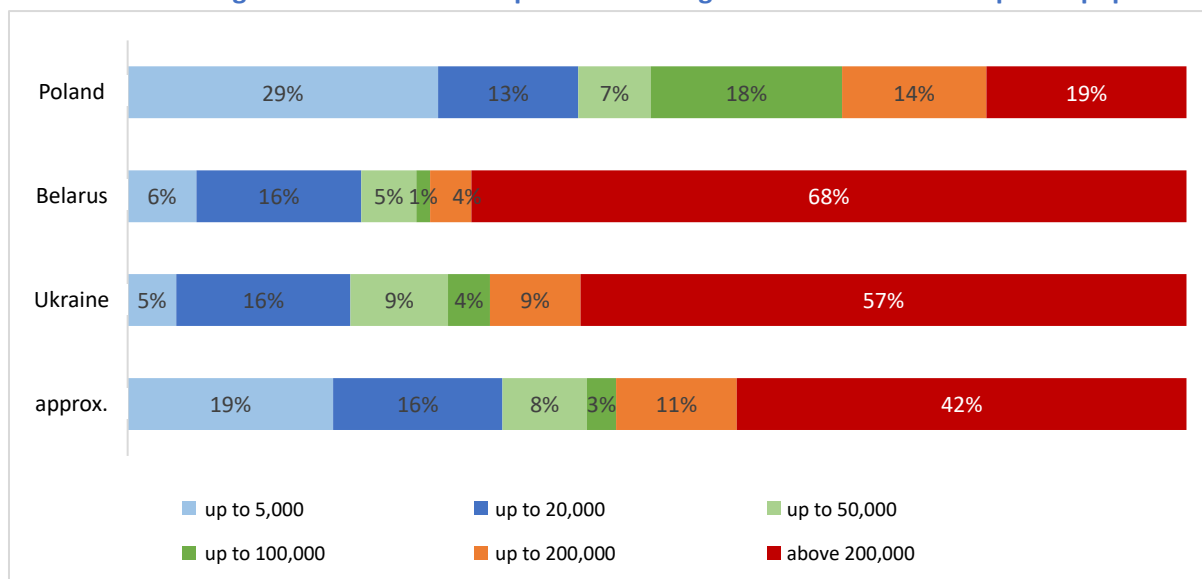
**Chart 10. Percentage of partners from urban and rural areas**



*Source: own compilation based on data provided by the Client.*

Visible diversification can be noticed between the **population of the area** and the activity of beneficiaries. The most probable reason is that more populated areas have more entities that can apply for the support. Projects implemented in partnership with entities from highly populated areas were not observed to substantially differ in terms of themes from projects pursued in less populated locations.

**Chart 11. Percentage of beneficiaries and partners coming from locations with a specific population**



Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

However, there are differences between the countries participating in the Programme. In the case of Poland, almost every third beneficiary/partner (29%) comes from an area with a population up to 5,000 and almost a half of them (49%) come from areas with a population up to 50,000. Entities from areas with a population above 200,000 represent 1/5 of all beneficiaries and partners (19%). For Belarus and Ukraine, the proportions are reversed. As many as 68% of Belarusian beneficiaries and partners and 57% of Ukrainian beneficiaries and partners come from cities with a population above 200,000. Entities from small locations, with a population up to 5,000, represent an insignificant percentage of all the beneficiaries and partners from those countries.

The next part of this chapter presents the results of the network analysis.

#### ACTIVITY OF BENEFICIARIES BASED ON THE NETWORK ANALYSIS

The cooperation network of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme is very dense. There are 325 nodes acting as the cooperation sources and the cooperation between them takes place based on 1089 links (edges). The density of the network makes it almost illegible so the Evaluation Team has decided to present particular networks by Programme Priority Axis. This improves the transparency of the presented networks. For transparency purposes, a decision was made not to provide the full names of the cooperating entities but to mark them with numbers instead – the list of those entities with the assigned numbers is attached hereto as Appendix 1 (the appendix is available at the end of the document).

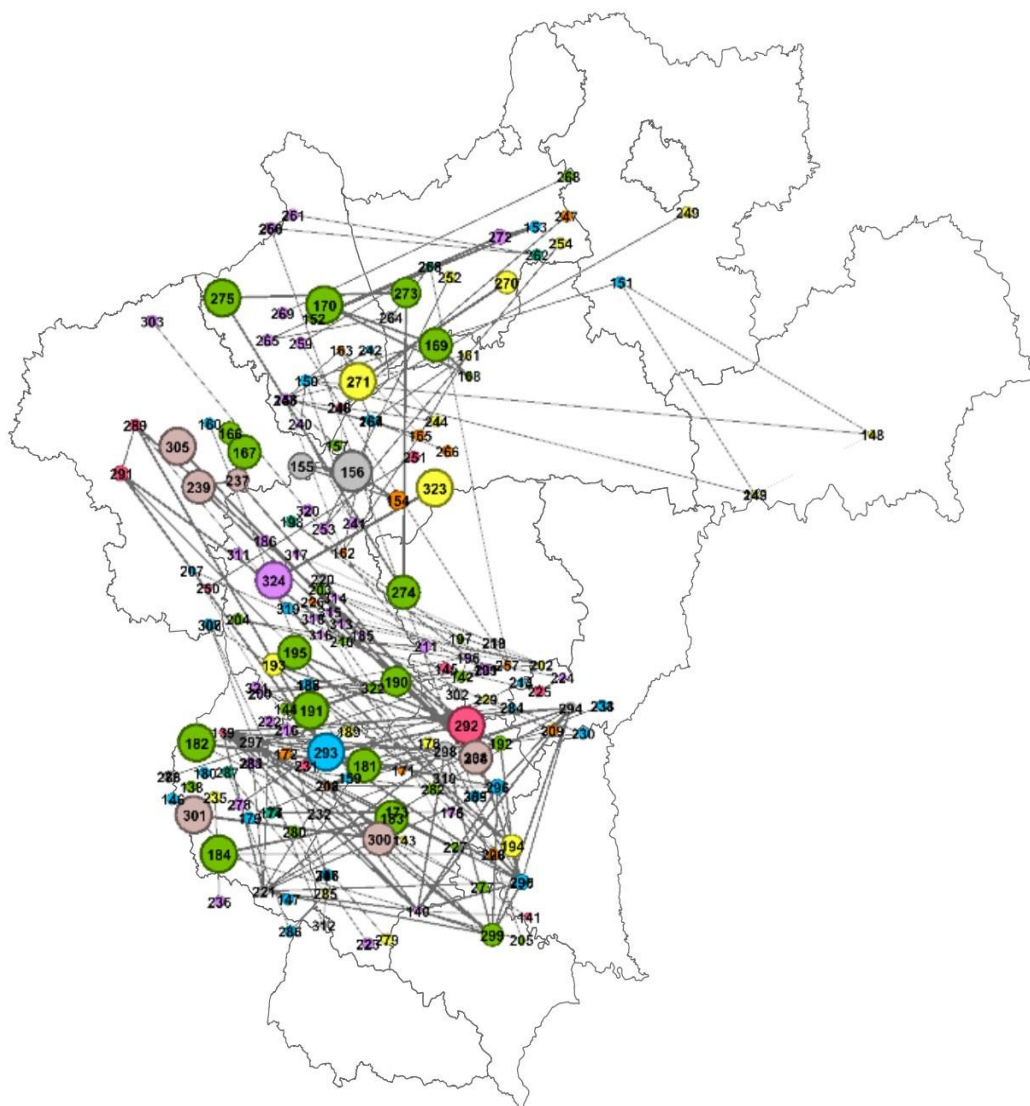
#### Heritage

The largest network characterises the Heritage Priority (heritage), where we can identify **187 cooperation nodes** and the cooperation takes place based on **493 links**.



Before the war in Ukraine broke out and the cooperation with Belarus was suspended, the cooperation was dominated by local government communities (green), local government organisational units (pink) and associations (blue).

**Map 3. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by legal form of partners for the TO Heritage.**



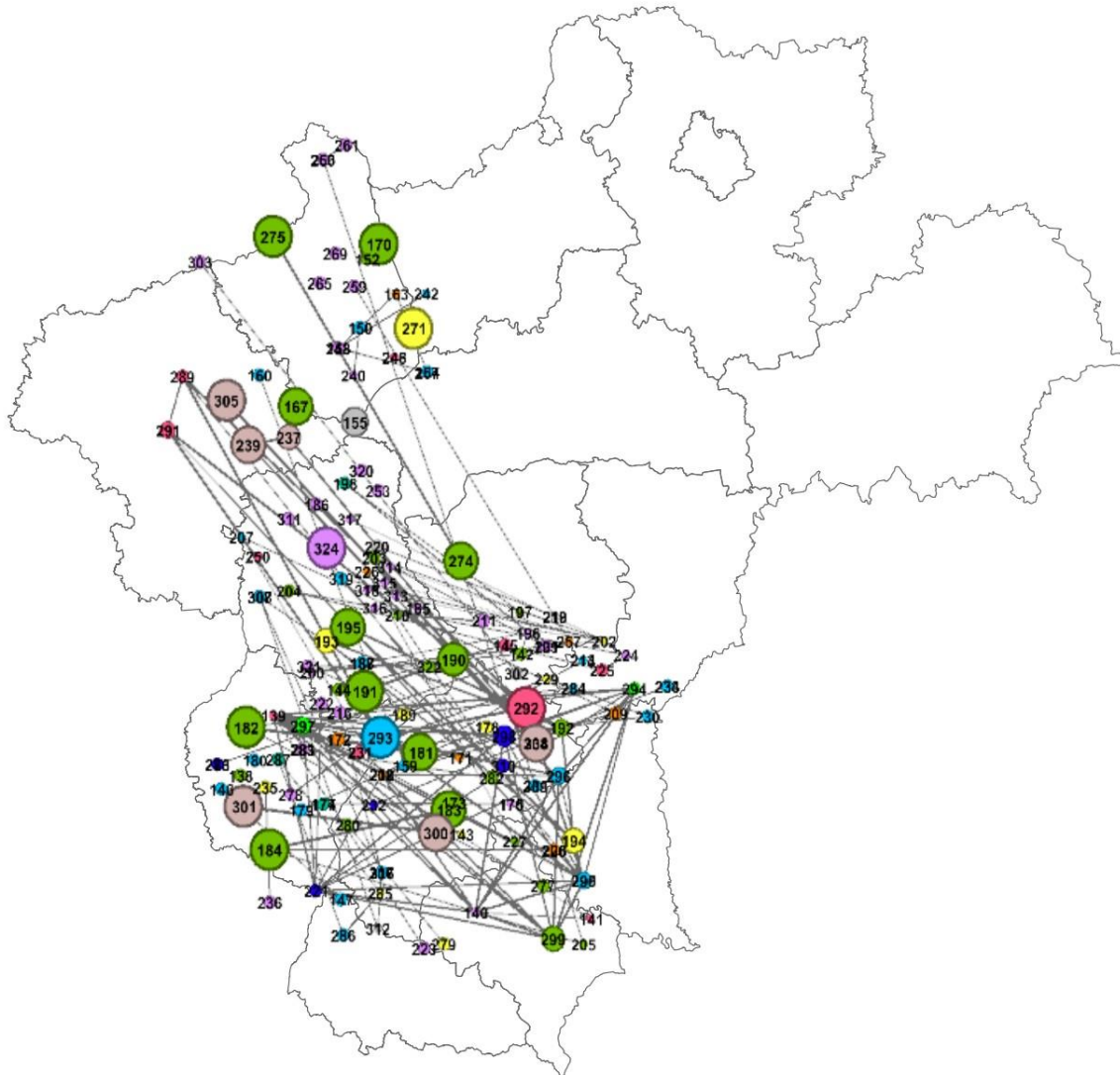
Key:

local government communities	associations	foundations	municipality- level local government organisational units	state organisational units	enterprises	universities	churches and religious associations
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

After the cooperation with Belarus was suspended, projects that used to be implemented together with partners were implemented (completed) unilaterally. The suspension of the cooperation with Belarus caused the number of cooperation nodes to drop to 156 and the number of the network edges (links) to 387.

**Map 4. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by legal form of partners for the TO Heritage.**



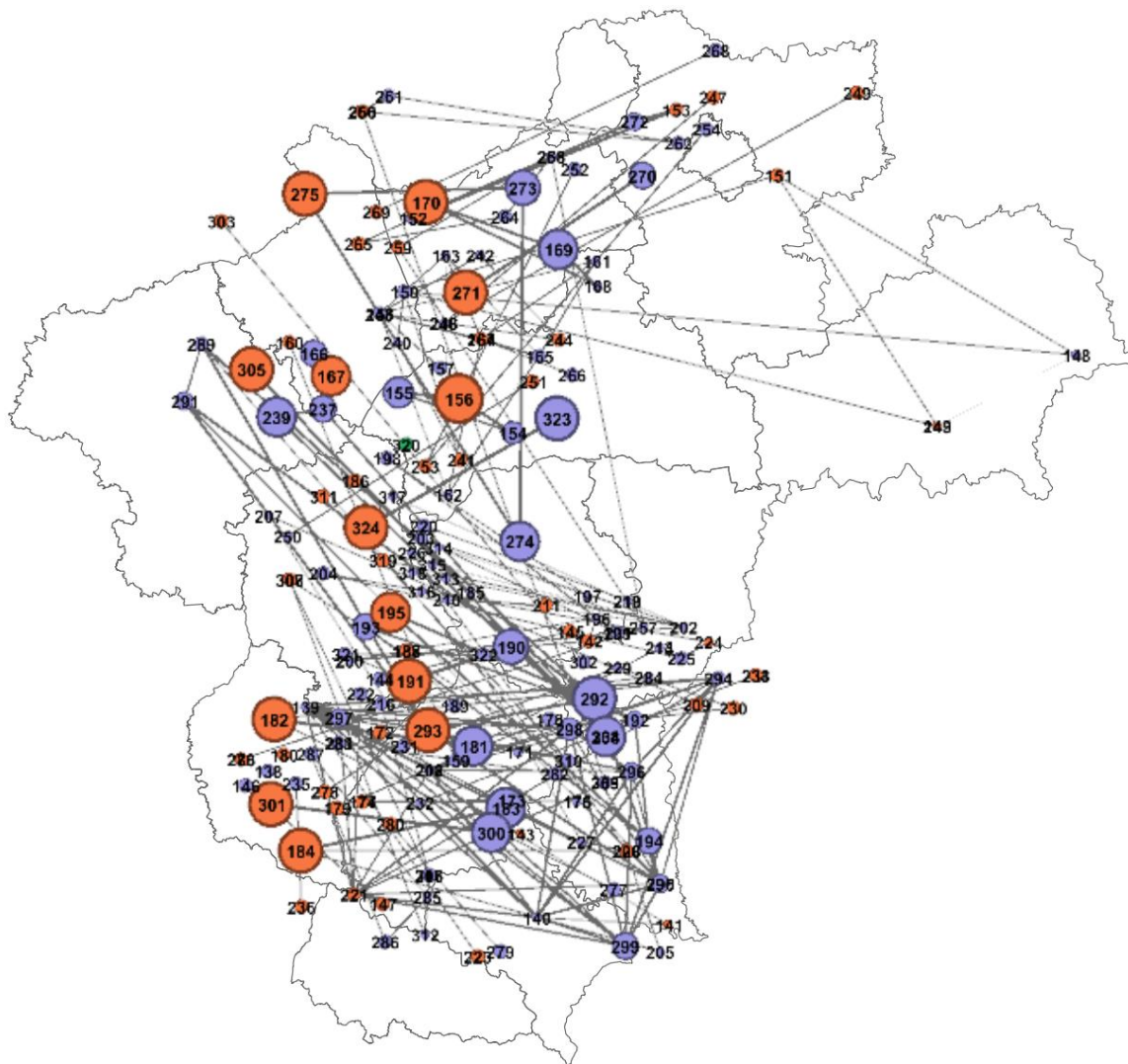
Key:

<i>local government communities</i>	<i>associations</i>	<i>foundations</i>	<i>municipality- level local government organisational units</i>	<i>state organisational units</i>	<i>businesses</i>	<i>universities</i>	<i>churches and religious associations</i>
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

The next chart presents the cooperation network by entity role on the project. No major differences are observed in the distribution of project leaders and partners other than the much lower concentration of entities in Belarus.

**Map 5. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by role on the project for the TO Heritage.**



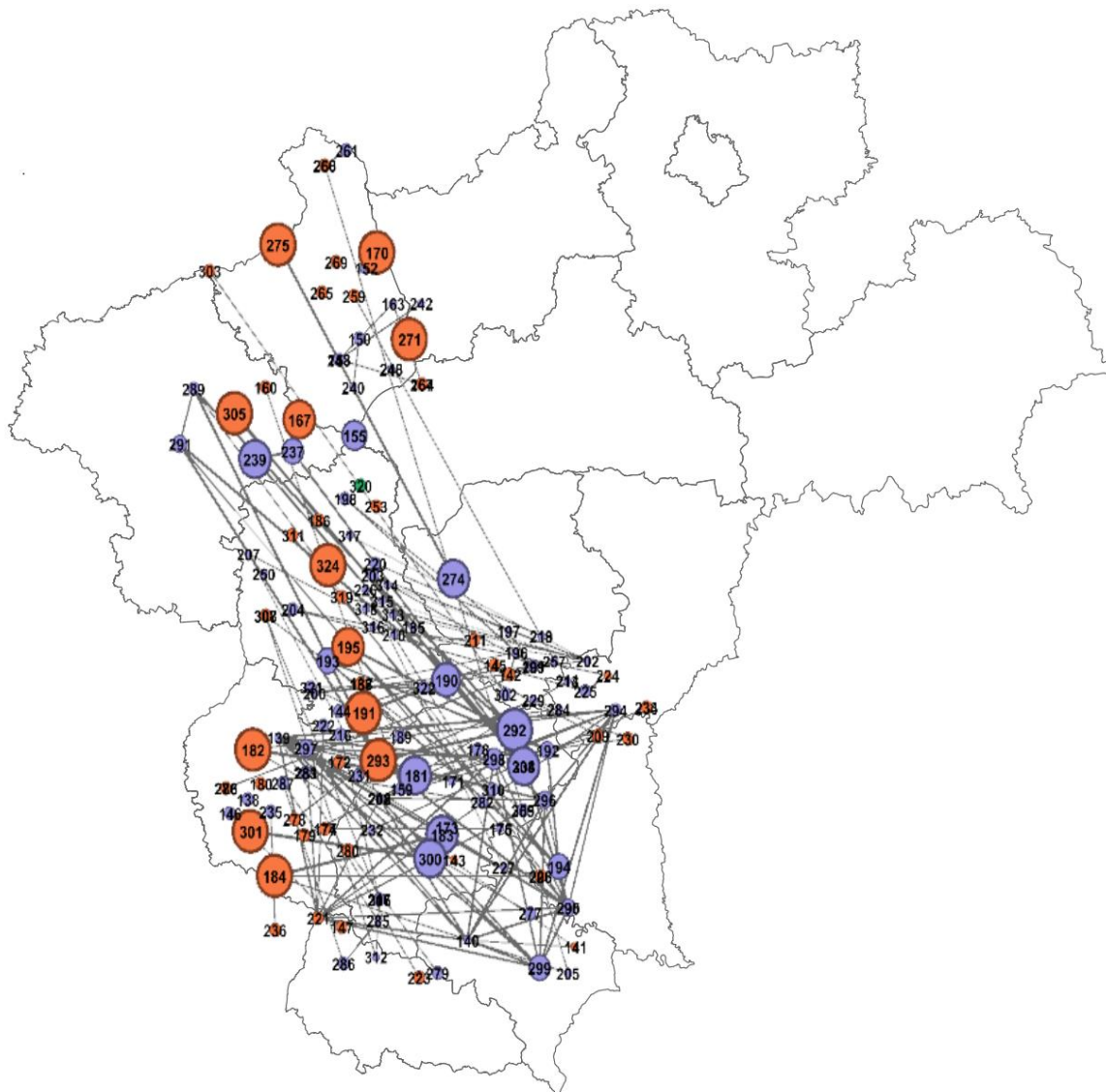
Key:



Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

The suspension of the cooperation with Belarus reduced the size of the cooperation network and increased the scale of occurrence of isolated nodes with a single entity only.

**Map 6. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus Price after role on the project for the TO Heritage.**



Key:

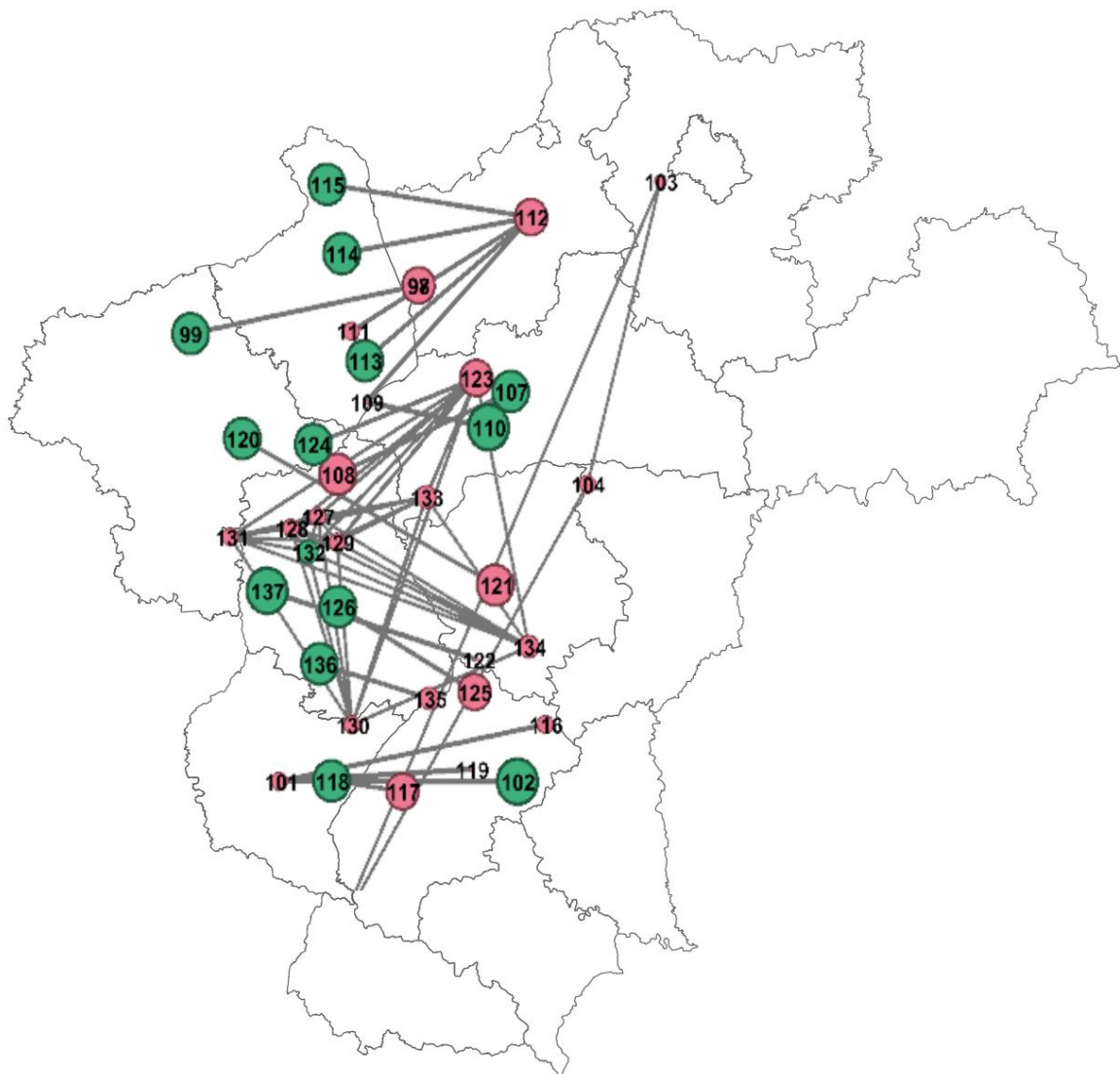


Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

## Accessibility

Also for the Accessibility Priority the number of links is observed to have dropped as a result of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus. This is illustrated in the charts below. The chart Map 7. depicts the network for the cooperation between entities from Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. There are 41 cooperation nodes and 125 links between the nodes. In contrast, shows only the number of entities from Poland and Ukraine involved in the cooperation (after the cooperation with entities from Belarus was suspended).

**Map 7. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by role on the project for the TO Accessibility**



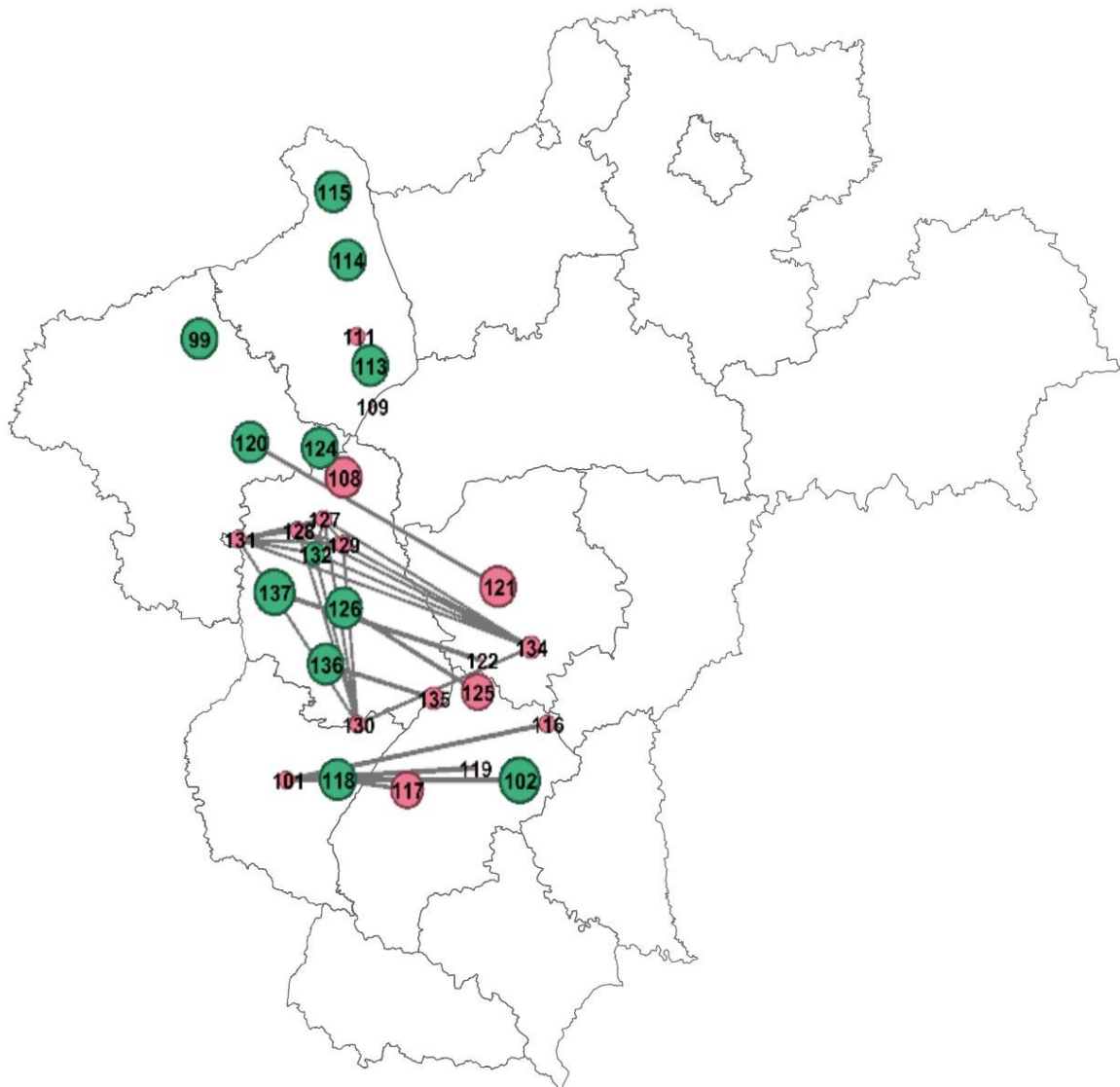
Key:



Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

The number of nodes dropped to 32 and the number of the network edges (links) dropped to 63. After the cooperation with the Belarusian side was suspected, the network density dropped. The leaders (marked in the charts in orange) and partners (blue) are distributed proportionately on both sides of the border.

**Map 8. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by role on the project for the TO Accessibility**



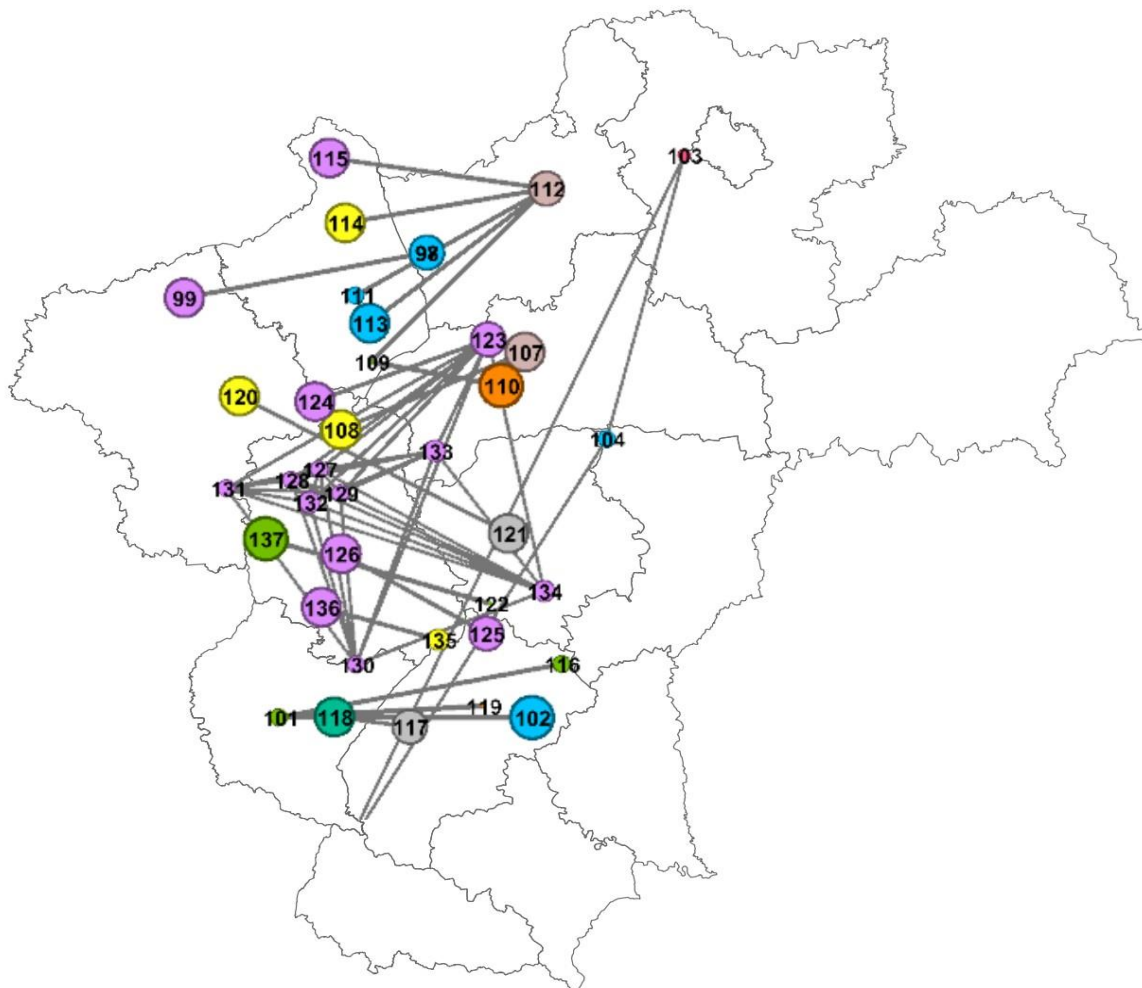
Key:



Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

In the case of the legal forms of the entities participating in the support, it must be noted, just as for the previous Priorities, that the most entities are local government communities.

**Map 9. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by legal form of beneficiaries for the TO Accessibility.**



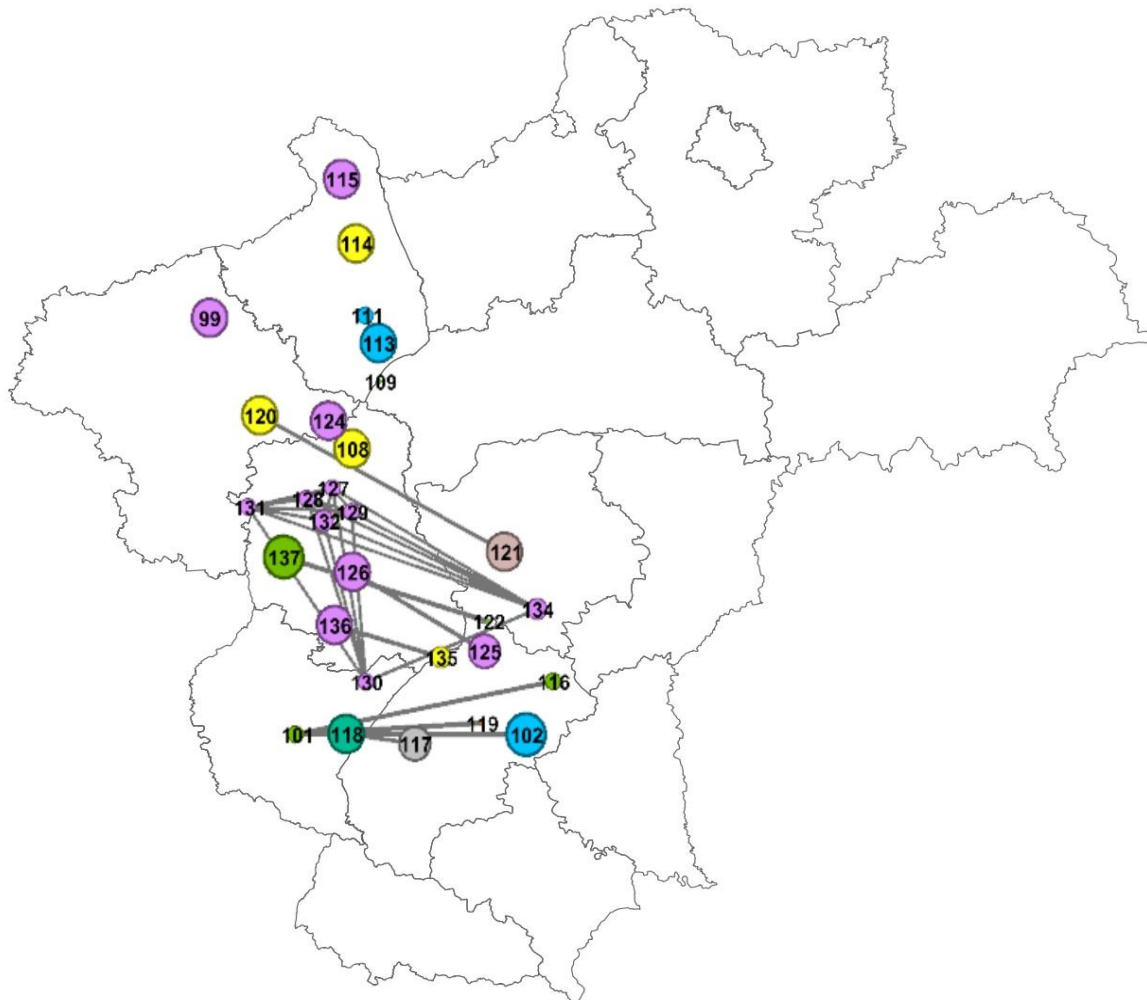
Key:

local government communities	municipality-level local government organisational units	state organisational units	State Treasury	industry and professional organisations not registered in the National Court Register	Businesses	regional local government organisational units	district-level local government organisational units
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

In the case of this Priority, the partnerships were broad so even the loss of the partners from Belarus did not result in a situation where the local governments would have to complete projects unilaterally, on their own.

**Map 10. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus Price after legal form of beneficiaries for the TO Accessibility.**



Key:

local government communities	municipality-level local government organisational units	state organisational units	State Treasury	industry and professional organisations not registered in the National Court Register	Businesses	regional local government organisational units	district-level local government organisational units
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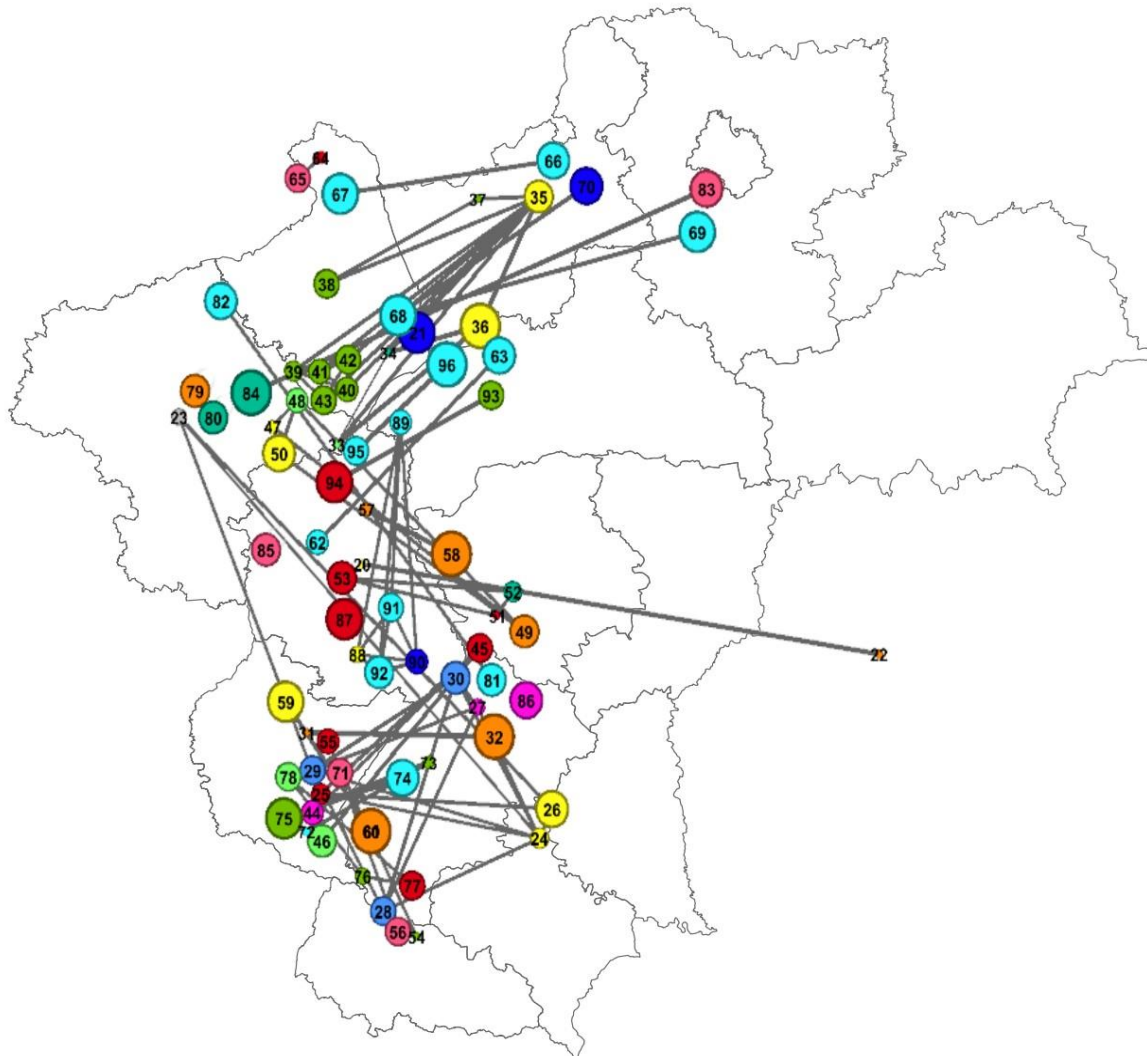
Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.



## Security

For the Security Priority, the security network had (before the cooperation with the partners from Belarus was suspended) 77 nodes and 190 links between the beneficiaries. The suspension of the cooperation with Belarus caused a drop in the number of links – the network was left with 66 nodes and 190 links between those entities.

**Map 11. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by legal form of beneficiaries for the TO Security**



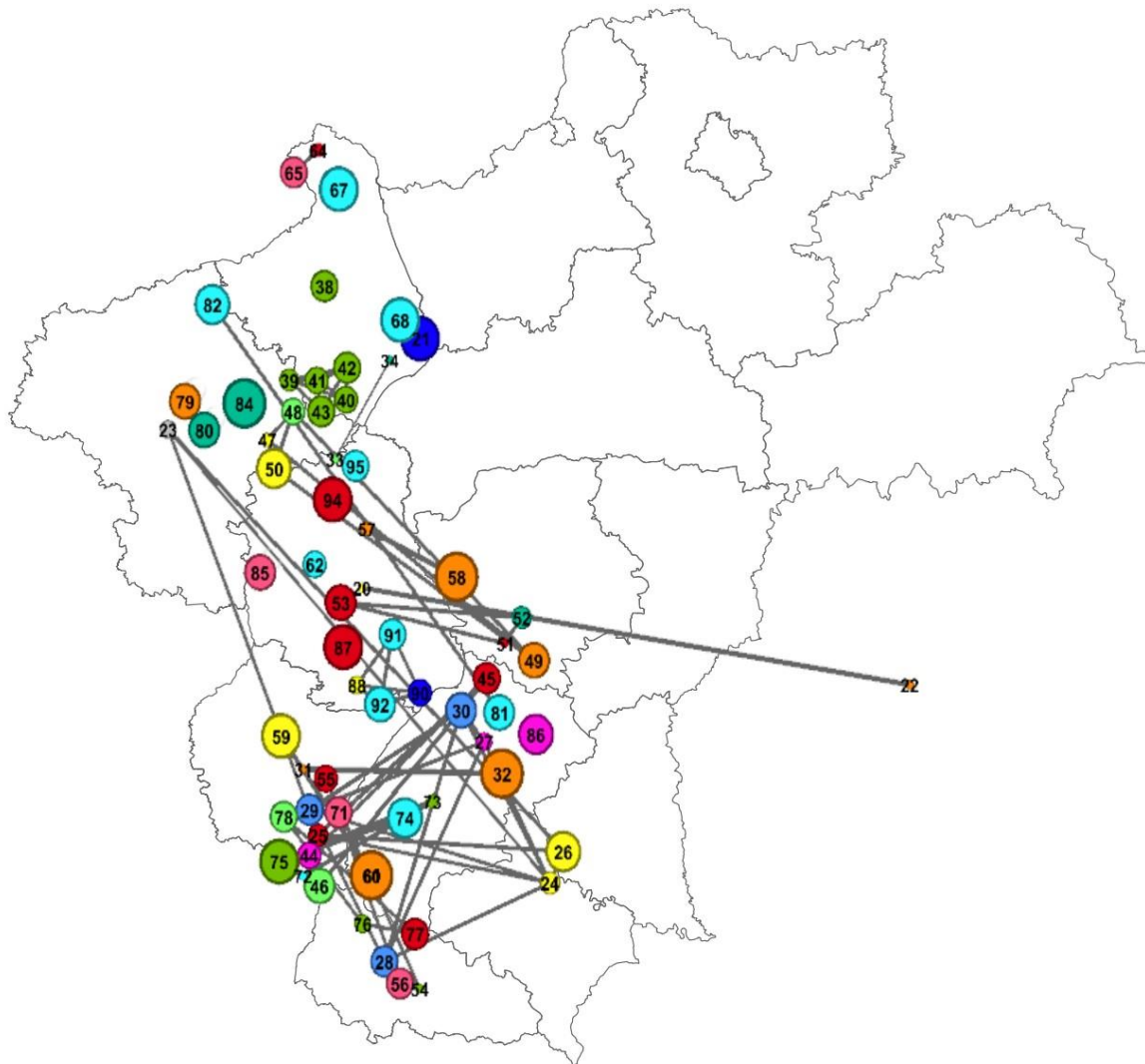
Key:

independent public healthcare facilities	public sector enterprises	State Treasury	state organisational units	authorities, government administration bodies	associations	local government communities	municipality-level local government organisational units	foundations
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

Analysis of the cooperation network for the legal form of the partners reveals the predominance, next to local government communities, of local government healthcare facilities. This arises from the characteristics of the Priority, which also encompassed issues connected with health and social welfare.

**Map 12. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus Price after legal form of beneficiaries for the TO Security**



Key:

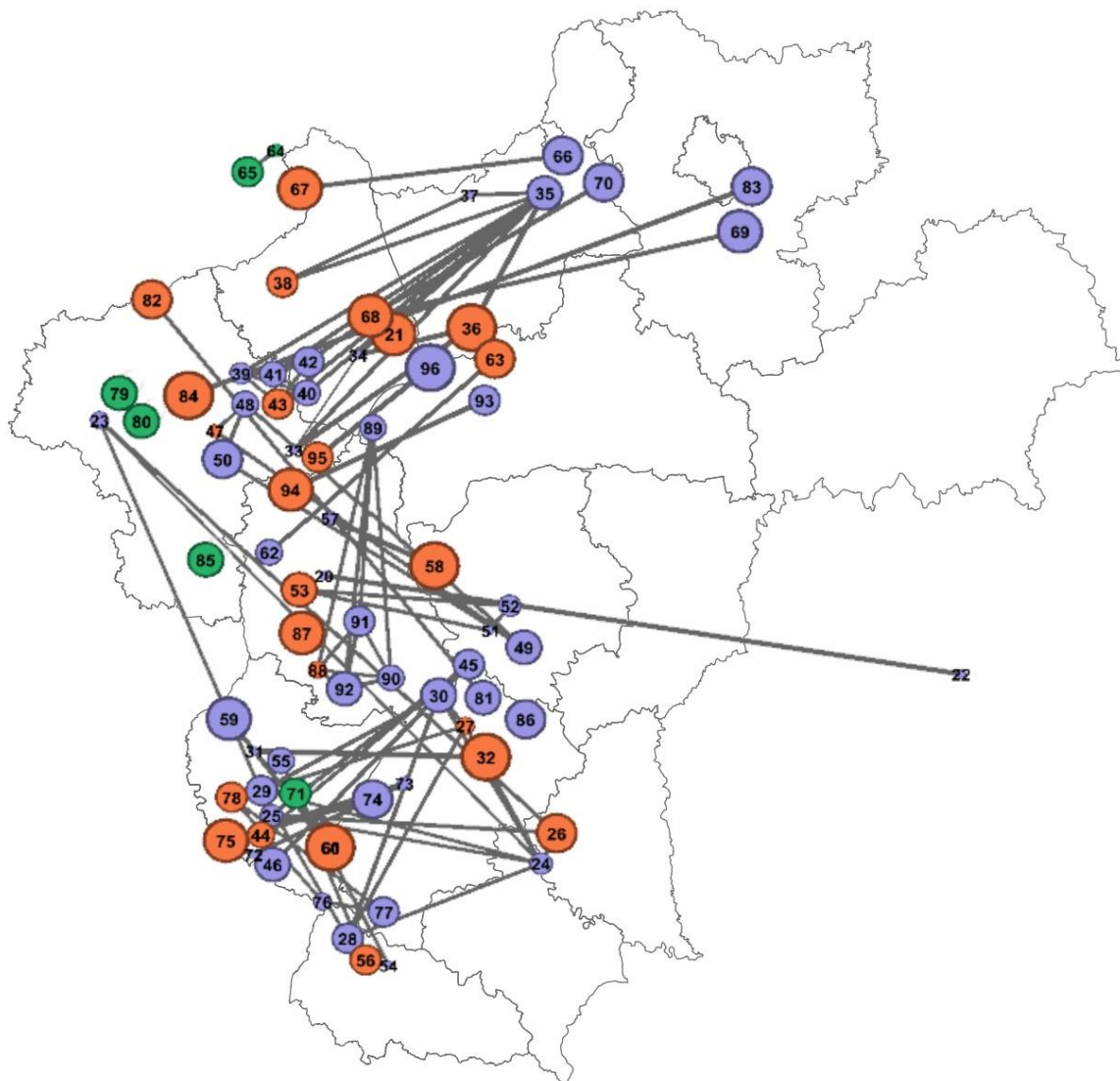
independent public healthcare facilities	public sector enterprises	State Treasury	state organisational units	authorities, government administration bodies	associations	local government communities	municipality-level local government organisational units	foundations
--	---------------------------	----------------	----------------------------	---	--------------	------------------------------	--	-------------

Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

Analysis taking into account the roles of partners shows that there were projects under this Priority which were independent by design, from the very beginning (green colour in charts Map 13.

Map 14. ). The charts show that the loss of entities from Belarus affected primarily project partners.

**Map 13. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by role of beneficiary on the project for the TO Security**

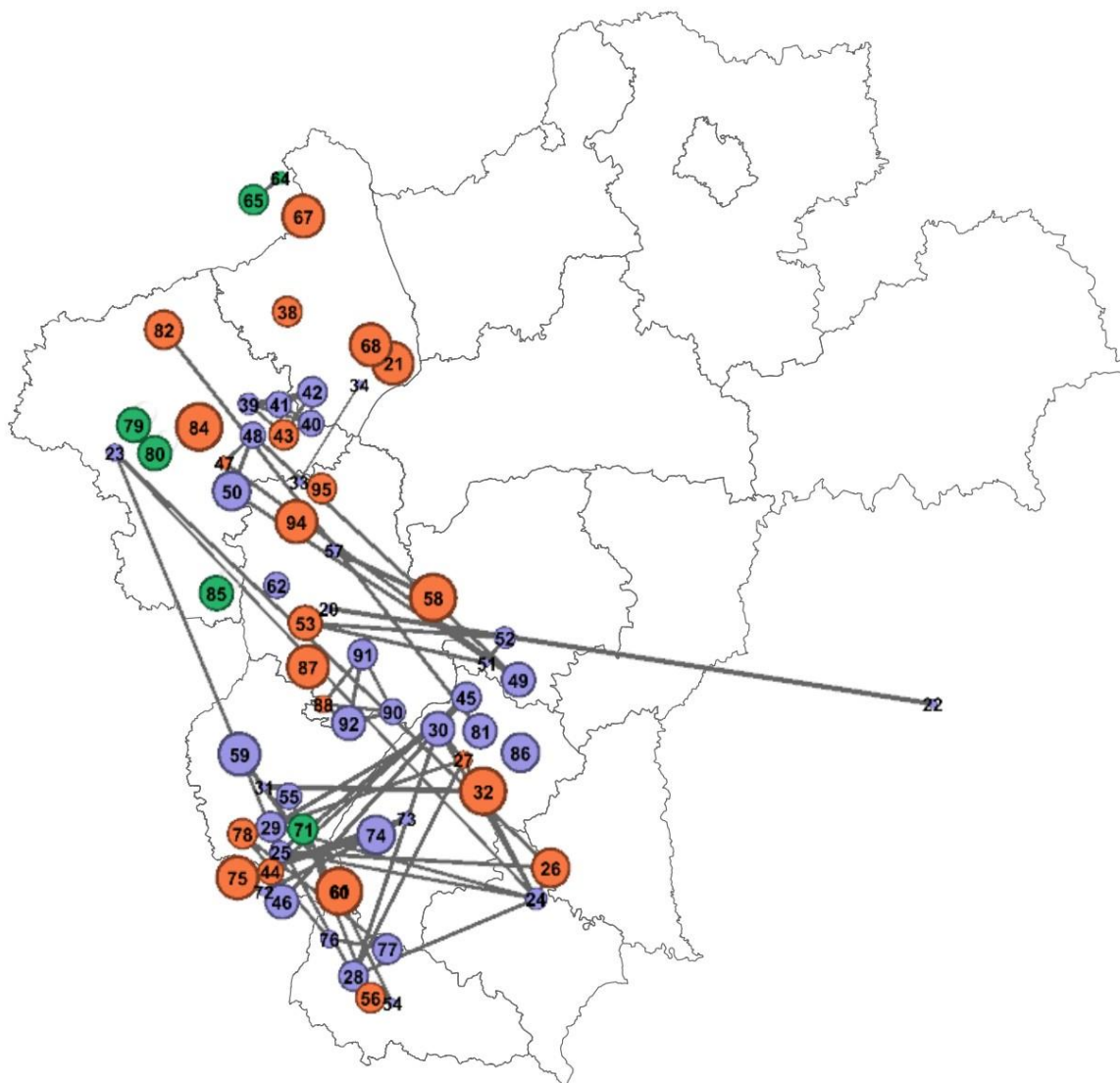


Key:

Leader	Partner	A project with no partners
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

Map 14. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus Price after role of beneficiary on the project for the TO Security



Key:

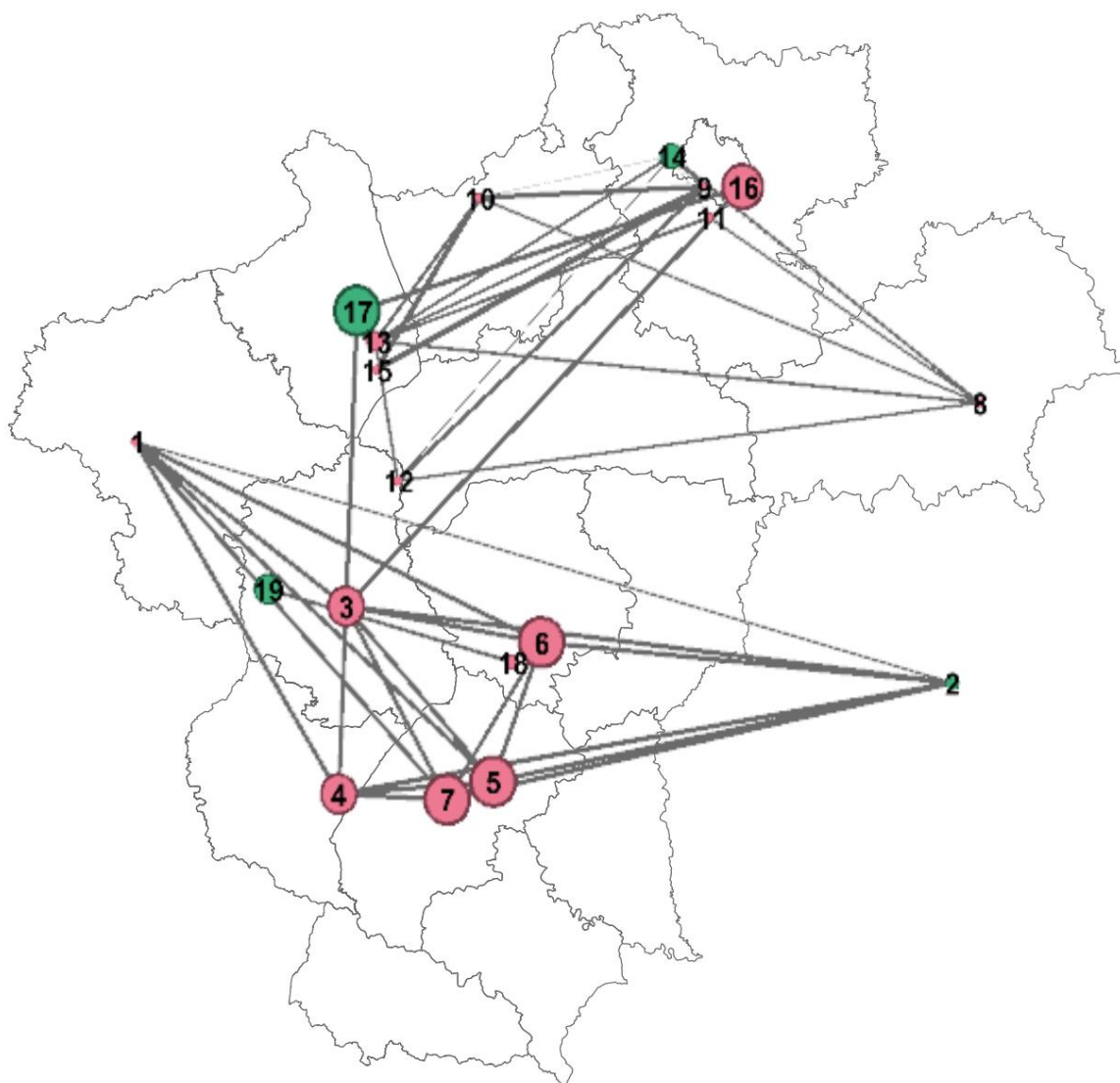
Leader	Partner	A project with no partners
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

## Borders

The cooperation network for the Borders Priority (borders) is the smallest. It had 19 nodes before the cooperation with entities from Belarus was suspended. The nodes had 144 links with other nodes. This is a network characterised by the highest density (0.842). It consists of 3 isolated subnetworks, the smallest one having 2 entities.

**Map 15. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by role of beneficiary on the project for the TO Borders**



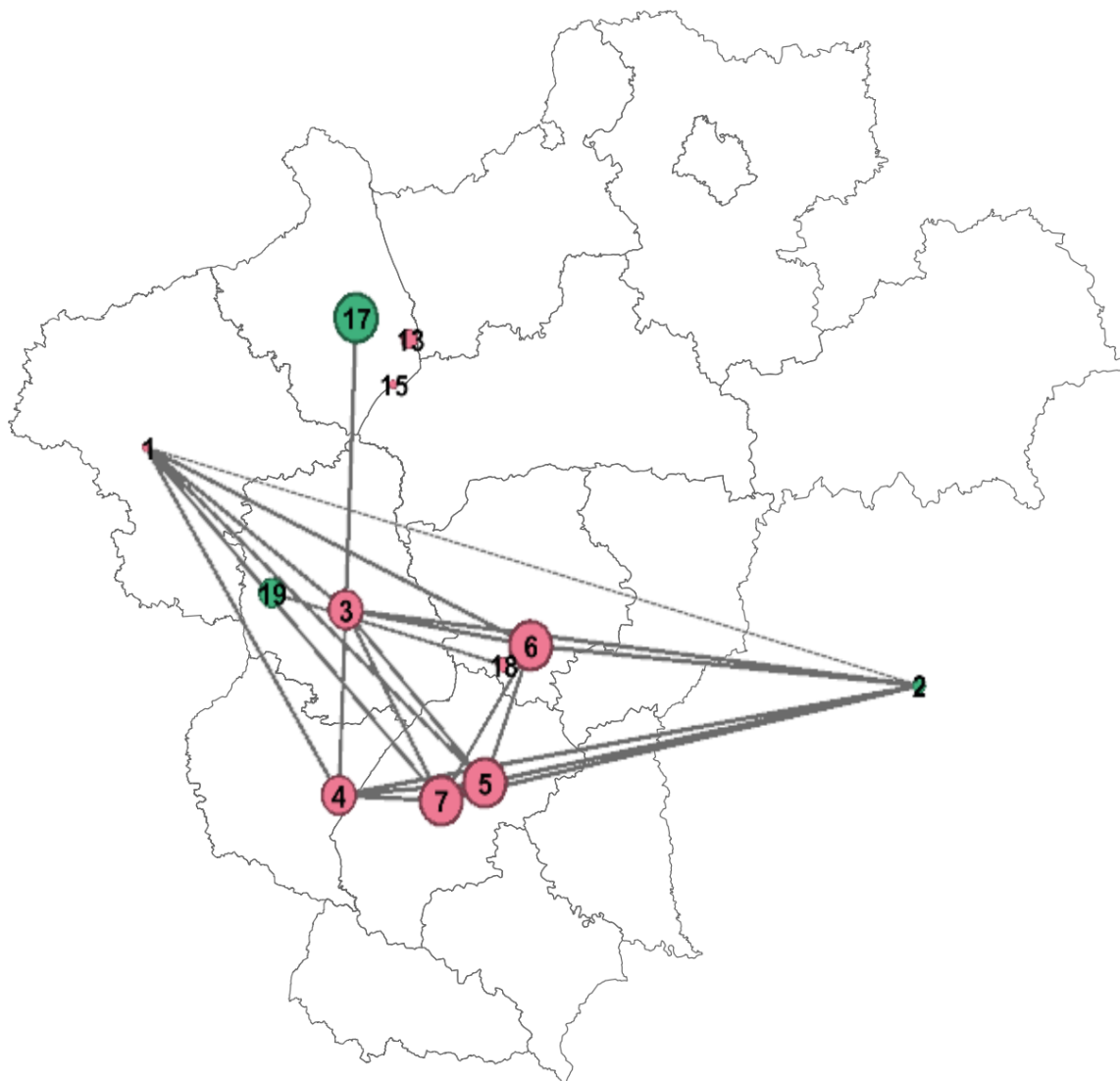
Key:



Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

The loss of the Belarusian partners caused the network to shrink to 12 nodes with 86 links and left two isolated nodes consisting of 1 entity. This means that in the case of this Priority, the loss of partnership forced two entities to complete the project laterally, on their own.

**Map 16. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus role of beneficiary on the project for the TO Borders**



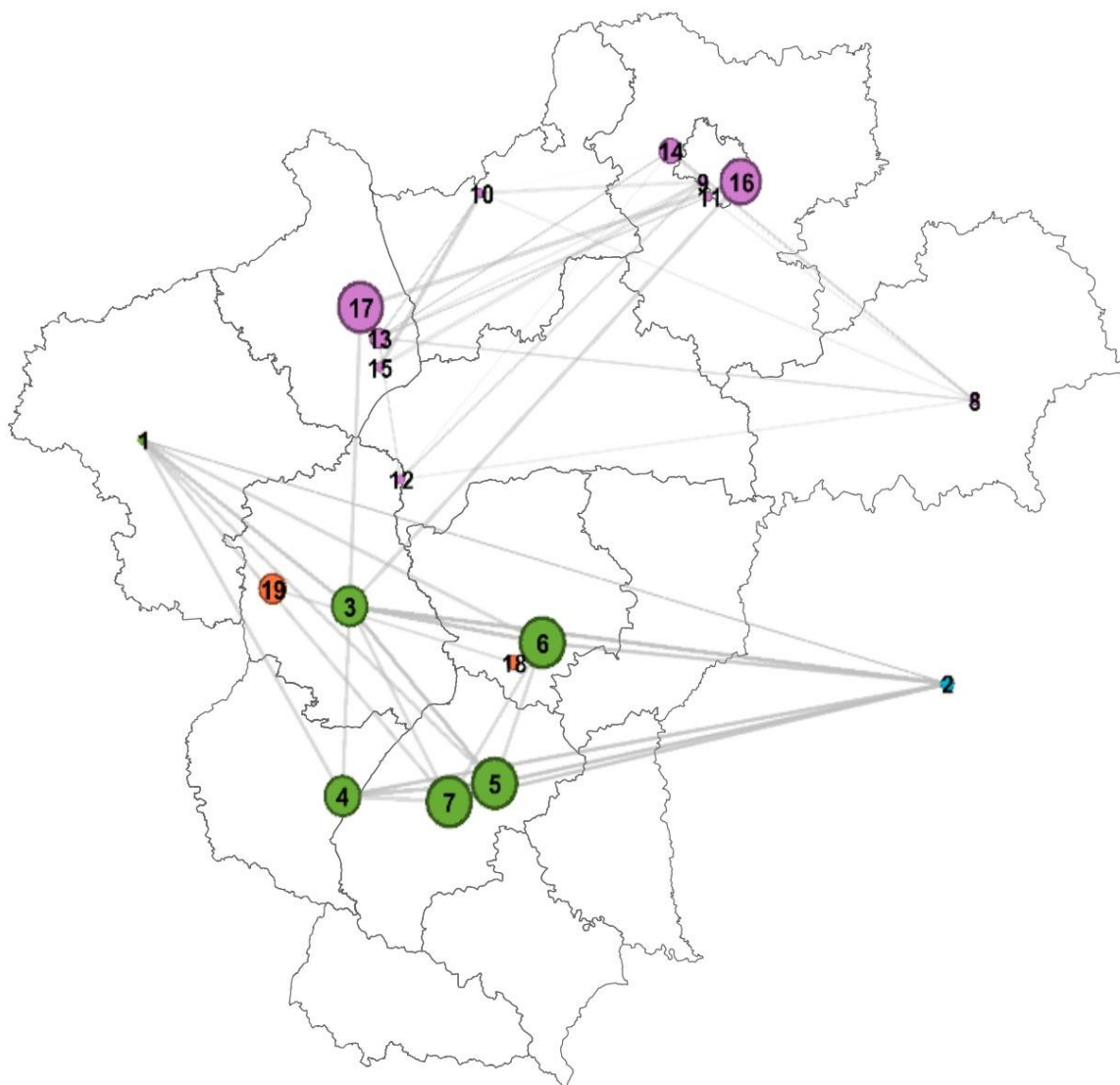
Key:

Leader	Partner
--------	---------

Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

The legal form of the partners implementing projects under this Priority are dominated by state government units and by government audit and law protection bodies. Universities and state authorities and government administration bodies are in the minority.

**Map 17. Cooperation network before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by legal form of beneficiaries for the TO Borders**



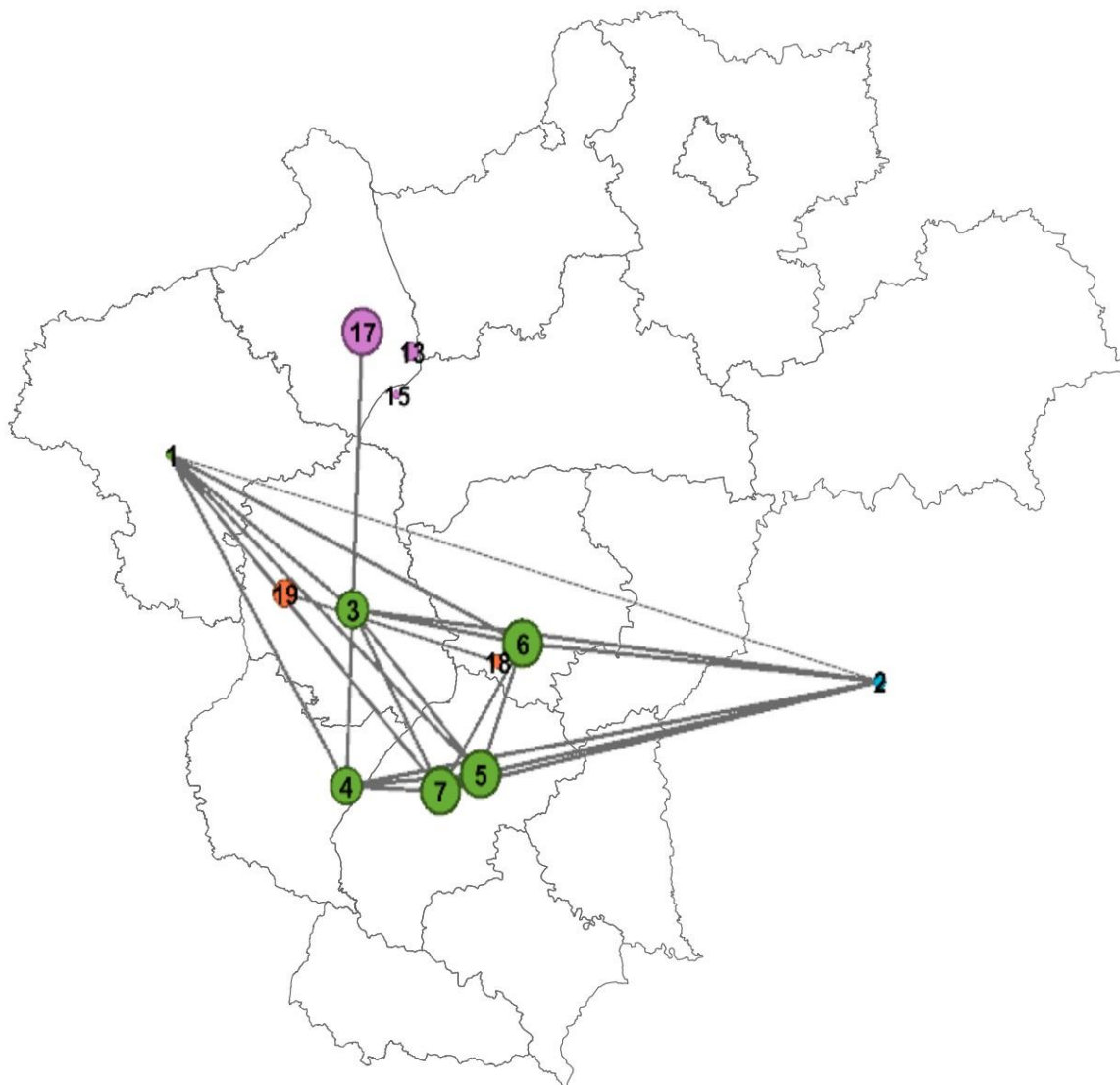
Key:

universities	state organisational units	government audit and law protection bodies
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

The activity of those entities is connected with the characteristics of the Borders Priority. The next map presents analogical data after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus.

**Map 18. Cooperation network after the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus by legal form of beneficiaries for the TO Borders**



Key:

universities	state organisational units	government audit and law protection bodies
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Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.



At this point, reference must be made to the results of the qualitative study – in-depth interviews with representatives of the institutions implementing the support. During the interviews, they mentioned that **there were no significant differences between the activity of the beneficiaries and partners and any specific characteristics of the regions, such as distance from the border, the GDP of the region or the number of inhabitants**. The established cooperation was the outcome of current or long-term needs of the entities from the eligible area. However, it must be remembered, as has been emphasised in chapter 1.5. hereof, that there were areas with no cooperation. Such areas were present on both the Polish side and the Ukrainian side of the eligible area.

Moreover, **representatives of the institutions responsible for implementing the support did not identify any situations during the in-depth interviews where a certain beneficiary type would be missing in the Programme or would be inactive**. This may show that there is a substantial demand for the support and that the catalogue of potential beneficiaries was designed properly. Furthermore, there is no visible need to modify the catalogue of the entities eligible for applying for the funding as the relevant provisions of the Programme were copied into the new INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine.

#### Chapter summary:

The activity of the beneficiaries depends on their legal form – the supported entities are mainly local government communities and their organisational units. For Ukraine, the high activity of the non-governmental sector must be additionally mentioned. Furthermore, there is noticeable diversification when it comes to the sizes of the locations where the project leaders and partners come from. The Ukrainian side is dominated by big cities (a population above 200,000), with 60% of beneficiaries coming from such locations (for Poland the percentage is below 20%). So efforts should be made to address the support to smaller borderland locations, mainly on the Ukrainian side.

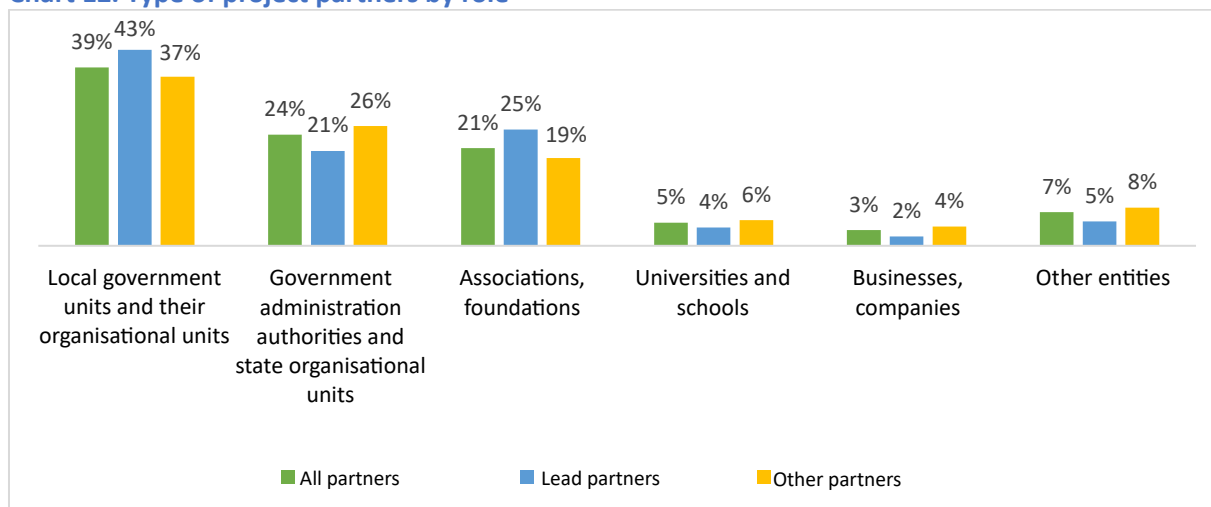
## 2.3. STRUCTURE OF PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

*Research question: What is the structure of project partnerships? Analysis based on the location, distance between partners, beneficiary type, number of partners, project type (micro-project/regular project/large infrastructure project), theme etc. Were there any changes versus the previous financial perspectives?*

The number of partners differed across the Programme's projects. **The average number of partners per project was 2.9**. The value was slightly lower (2.7) for the Thematic Objective Heritage, a number similar to the Programme average value was recorded for the TO Accessibility, whereas the highest number characterised the Thematic Objective Security (3.3) and the Thematic Objective Borders (3.4).

Project consortia consisted of leaders (beneficiaries/lead partners) and the remaining partners. Various type of entities were able to become lead partners on particular projects (local government units and their organisational units, government administration authorities, state organisational units associations, foundations and other non-governmental organisations, universities, schools, businesses, companies). For the purpose of the analysis, entities were assigned into the categories listed in the table below.

**Chart 12. Type of project partners by role**



*Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.*

**Local government units and their organisational units represent the highest percentage** of all the beneficiaries (**39%**). This group is also highly represented among lead partners – 43% of all lead partners are local government units. The next group consists of authorities of government administration bodies and state organisational units, which represent 24% of all the partners. This group is much better represented in the group of other partners, where it constitutes 26%. The next group with the significant share in the group of beneficiaries consists of associations and foundations, which have a strong representation among lead partners – 25%. Entities from the universities and schools category are less represented and so are businesses, companies.

The types of project partners present in the 2014-2020 perspective and their percentage of all the partners was similar to the structure in the previous financial perspective 2007-2013. In the previous Programme perspective, local government units and their organisational units represented the highest percentage, with government administration authorities, associations and foundations as other major groups.

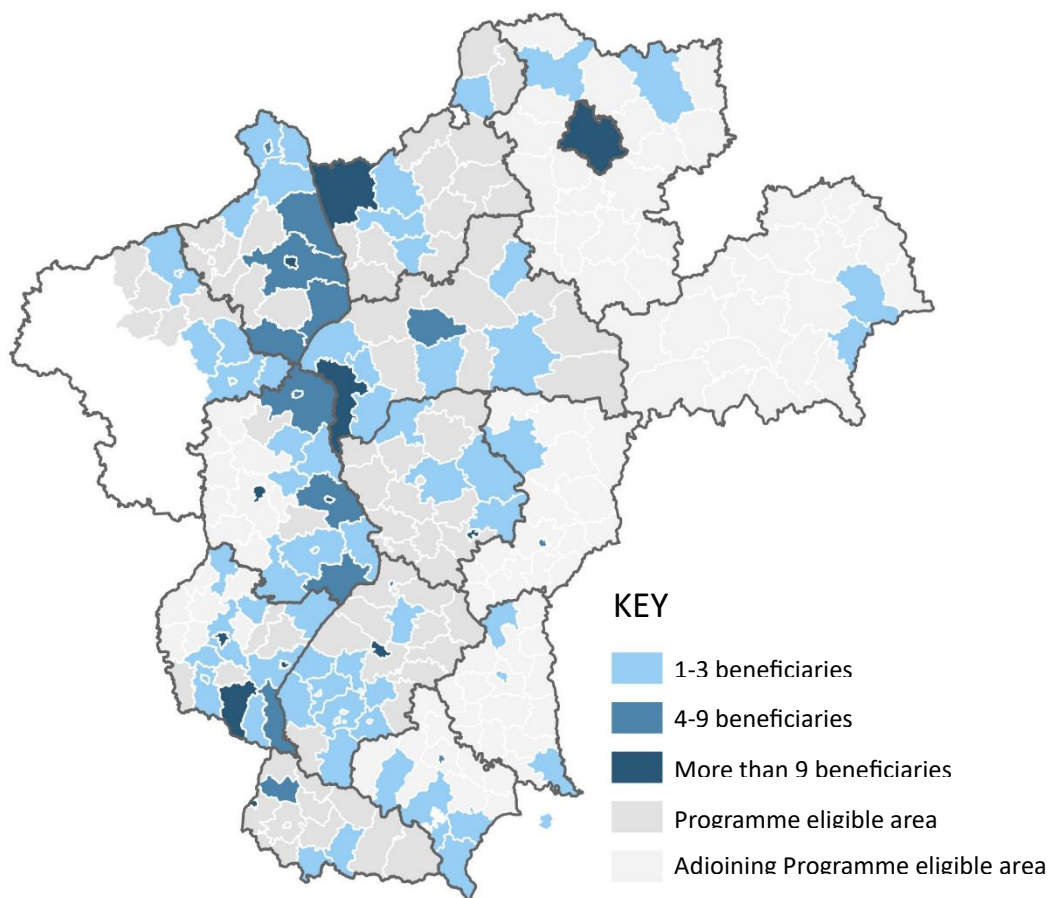
As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the highest percentage of partners on the projects came from Poland and the lowest from Belarus. The project with the most partners (11) was implemented by various types of partners (local government communities, foundations, schools, government authorities). Analysis of the partnerships on the largest projects (6 partners and more) revealed no correlations regarding the countries of origin of project partners or leaders and the large number of partners was linked to the characteristics of the specific projects. The partnership structure on projects implemented by just two partners (the lead partner and one partner) is very similar to the structure of the remaining partnerships – local government units also have the highest share.

The above information illustrates a special role of local governments and their units in becoming involved in project implementation under the Programme.

The **beneficiary categories defined for the Programme seem to be sufficient** as none of the Programme beneficiaries stated in the quantitative study that it wanted to partner with a certain entity but was unable to do so.<sup>15</sup>

Partnerships established for the purpose of large infrastructure projects consisted mainly of local government units and government administration units. Most large infrastructure projects were related to road undertakings or undertakings to modernise the road or railway border crossings, which is why the project partners were the local government and central government units responsible for the infrastructure of roads and border crossings (e.g. road management boards, regional administration). On smaller projects, the type of project partners was diverse, smaller projects were often implemented by associations and foundations.

#### Map 19. Number of beneficiaries by location of the main office



Source: own compilation based on the project partner database.

**Beneficiary distribution across the eligible area is characterised by a slightly higher share of beneficiaries along the Polish border, especially among Polish partners.** The largest concentrations of beneficiaries are present on the Polish side – in the Białostocki, Sokólski, Sejneński, Siemiatycki (Podlaskie Voivodeship), Bialski, Tomaszowski, Chełmski (Lubelskie Voivodeship), Sanocki and

<sup>15</sup> Pursuant to the quantitative study involving beneficiaries of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme 2014-2020 (n=84). Question: “Were there any entities with whom you wanted to partner on your project but were unable to?” All the answers were “no”.

Rzeszowski (Podkarpackie Province) districts, while the Ukrainian side is dominated by entities from the Uzhhorod district (the Zakarpattia Oblast).

On the Polish side of the eligible area there is no district bordering Belarus or Ukraine without at least one project partner. No pattern can be observed in the distribution of beneficiaries when it comes to the area of Ukraine and Belarus. In Ukraine, there were relatively many local government units where few (1-3) Programme beneficiaries had their main office, while in Poland districts with 4 or more beneficiaries were much more common.

*On the Polish side, it is obvious that the closer to the border, the greater the interest because in the borderland people think more about the partner, they are aware that there is a different country across the border and that there are opportunities to work together.*

*Source: individual in-depth interview.*

### **Geographic proximity was not the most frequent justification for the selection of partners.**

Beneficiaries participating in the quantitative study stated that more common reasons included knowing the partner, having a prior successful cooperation experience or being offered a partnership. Geographic proximity was mentioned by just above 27% of beneficiaries.<sup>16</sup>

There is diversification when it comes to the distances between project partners and project leaders – for projects implemented by the Polish and Belarusian side the average distance of each partner from the state border was 82.3 km and the average distance between the main offices of the leader and the partners was 114.1 km. There are different values for partners from Poland and Ukraine, the average distance between the partners and the border being 109.3 km (27 km more than for Polish and Belarusian partners) and the average distance between the partners and the leader being 143.1 km (29 km more than for Polish and Belarusian partners).

#### **Chapter summary:**

Project partnerships have varied numbers of partners, with 2.9 as the average number for the whole Programme. Partnerships with the most partners were recorded in the Thematic Objective Border, which had 3.4 partners per project. Three partner types were standing out: local government units and their organisational units; government administration authorities and state organisational units; associations and foundations. Out of those three groups, the first one was the largest among all the partners and its dominance was even more prominent among lead partners. On the Polish side of the eligible area, there were visibly much more beneficiaries near the border with Belarus and Ukraine, whereas the proximity of the Polish borders seemed to be less significant in Belarus and Ukraine, where the beneficiaries were distributed quite randomly.

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<sup>16</sup> Pursuant to the quantitative study involving project beneficiaries of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme 2014-2020, n=84.

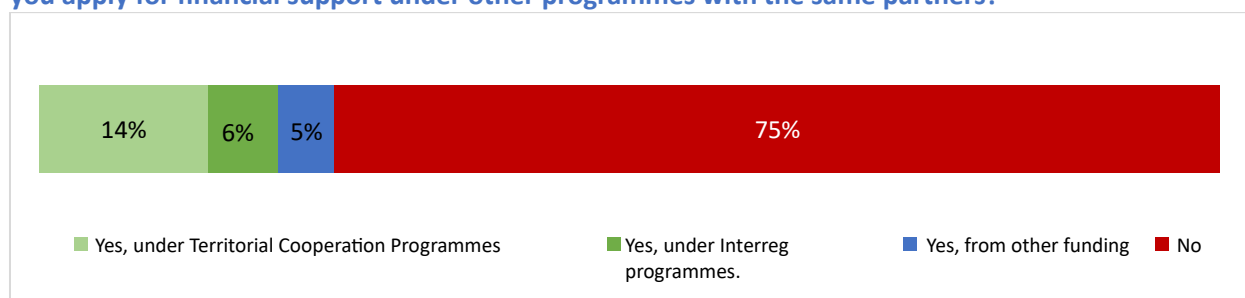
## 2.4. QUALITY OF COOPERATION

*Research question: What is/was the intensity and quality of the cooperation between partners? How would you describe the communication between the lead partner and the project partners? What are the differences now that the cooperation with Belarus was suspended? Were the project partnerships created for the Programme or did they exist before? Did the partners apply for EU funding before (under cooperation programmes ETC, INTERREG, PHARE etc.)? How did the acquisition of funding under pre-existing partnerships influence the continuation of the cooperation? Which projects were the continuation or extension of a pre-existing project partnership? Is there any correlation, and of what value, between the funding received for previous projects and projects implemented in the 2014-2020 perspective?*

Analysis of the database of project beneficiaries and partner who received support now and under the previous financial perspectives does not confirm that any complementarity between projects implemented by the same beneficiaries. However, it must be remembered that an analysis relying exclusively on pre-existing data is a single-dimensional and incomplete approach, which is why primary studies were also used in order to answer the research questions connected with the relationships between the present implementation and the prior and subsequent implementation of projects pursued by the same entities and with the role of the cooperation in the implementation of the projects. In this context, the main sources include the quantitative study involving project beneficiaries and partners.

Project beneficiaries and partners on the Polish side declared that they generally did apply for support under other programmes with the same partners before the project in question. Only every fourth entity declared they did. Furthermore, despite having applied for other support in the past, only two such applicants received the grant and each of them completed one project regarding cultural heritage and strengthening of the administrative capacity of public institutions. None of the respondents declared to have used PHARE funding in the past.

**Chart 13. Answer of beneficiaries to the question: Before the implementation of the project, did you apply for financial support under other programmes with the same partners?**

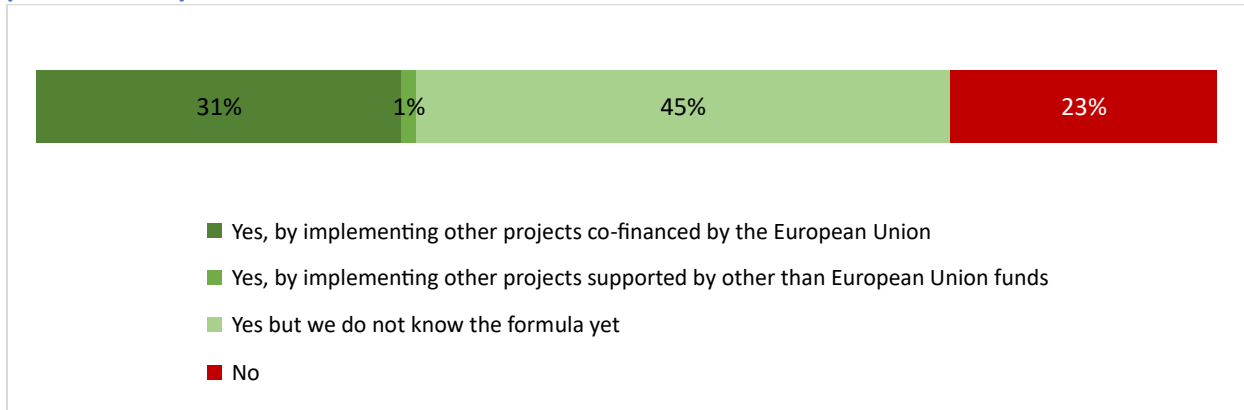


*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84). In the case of the answer "from other funding," the respondents usually mentioned funding from NGOs.*

At the same time, more than every fifth beneficiary and partner is not planning to cooperate with the partners they have worked with to date. The main reason is the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus, which makes such cooperation impossible if the partner is an entity from Belarus. There were rare answers that the decision not to continue the cooperation was the outcome of unsatisfactory project cooperation. The declaration does not mean that a particular entity did not wish to partner on projects at all, as evidenced by the results presented in chart Chart 14. Survey

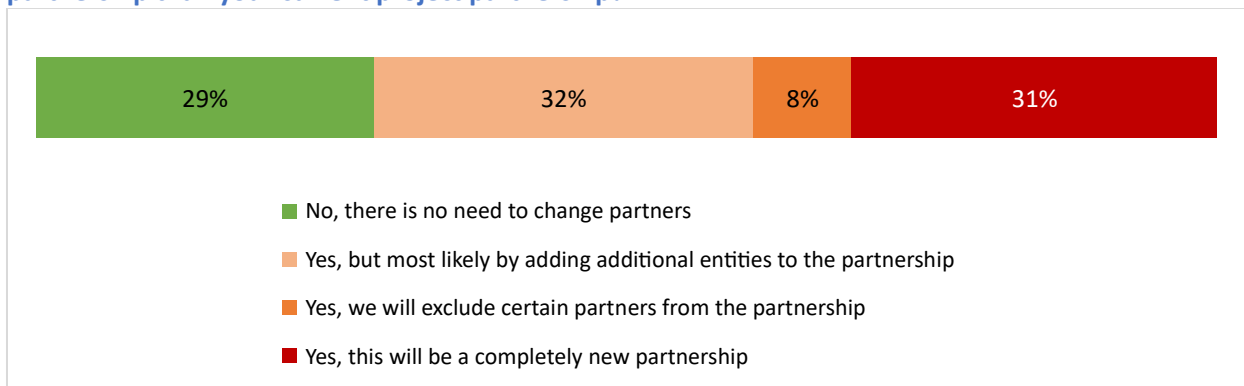
answers of Polish project beneficiaries and partners to the question: “Do you plan to implement a project under any of the Territorial Cooperation Programmes in the financial perspective 2021-2027?” – all partners plan to continue their project activity but in certain cases the partnership will be partially or completely different.

**Chart 15. Answer of beneficiaries to the question: Do you plan to continue to work with the project partners in any form?**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

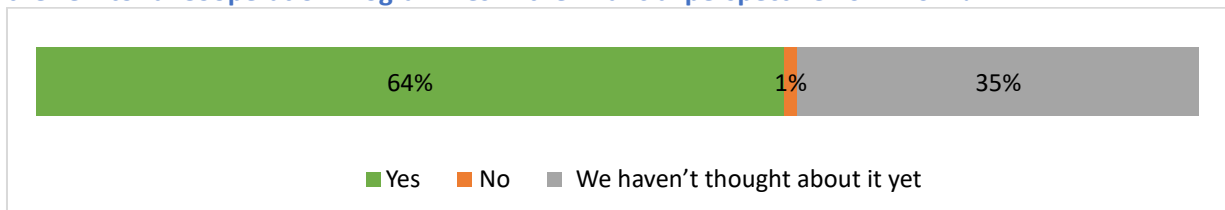
**Chart 16. Answer of beneficiaries to the question: Do you plan to implement projects in a different partnership than your current project partnership?**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

Furthermore, the respondents expect to finance the majority of the planned initiatives with EU funding. Only a small percentage plan to use other funding (from NGOs), while every third respondent has yet to think about it.

**Chart 17. Answer of beneficiaries to the question: Do you plan to implement a project under any of the Territorial Cooperation Programmes in the financial perspective 2021-2027?**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

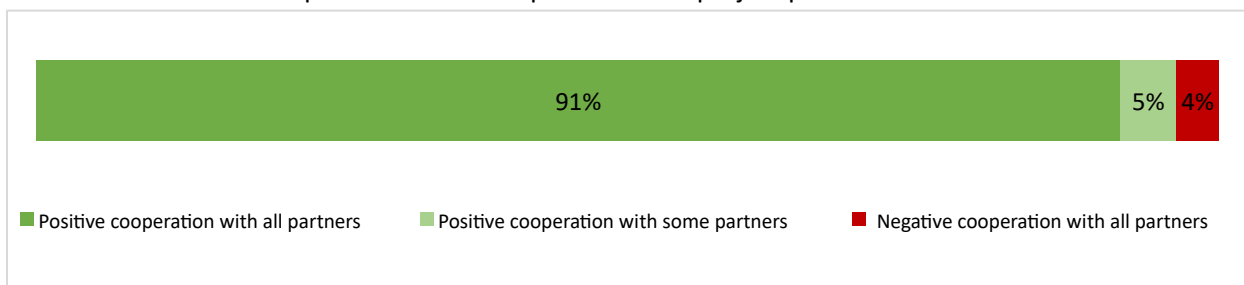
At this point, we should refer to the results of the Delphi method which presented experts' opinion on the impact of pre-existing cooperation on the continuation of joint efforts. The experts participating in the method mentioned the following issues as influencing this element:

1. **Cooperation helps build mutual trust between parties**, allows them to get to know each other, overcome barriers and, as a result, makes them more willing to cooperate.
2. **Implementation of prior cross-border projects helps better understand the specificities of such projects**, avoid mistakes in the cooperation and hold a dialogue between the parties.
3. **Having a partner often helps add new entities to the network of connections, which fosters not only the continuation of the partnership but also the inclusion of new partners**, and partners are the most valuable resource in the implementation of cross-border projects.
4. **Prior cooperation helps build long-lasting outcomes** but also makes it possible to identify new needs and find other fields of cooperation, which naturally generates further projects.

This is why already knowing a partner and having partnered on prior projects must be recognised as a key factor underlying the success of the cooperation.

Further in the quantitative study, project beneficiaries and partners were asked to rate their cooperation with their partners. A vast majority of them (more than 90%) considered the cooperation with all partners as positive. 5% of them felt it was positive with only some partners and 4% of the respondents had a completely negative experience.

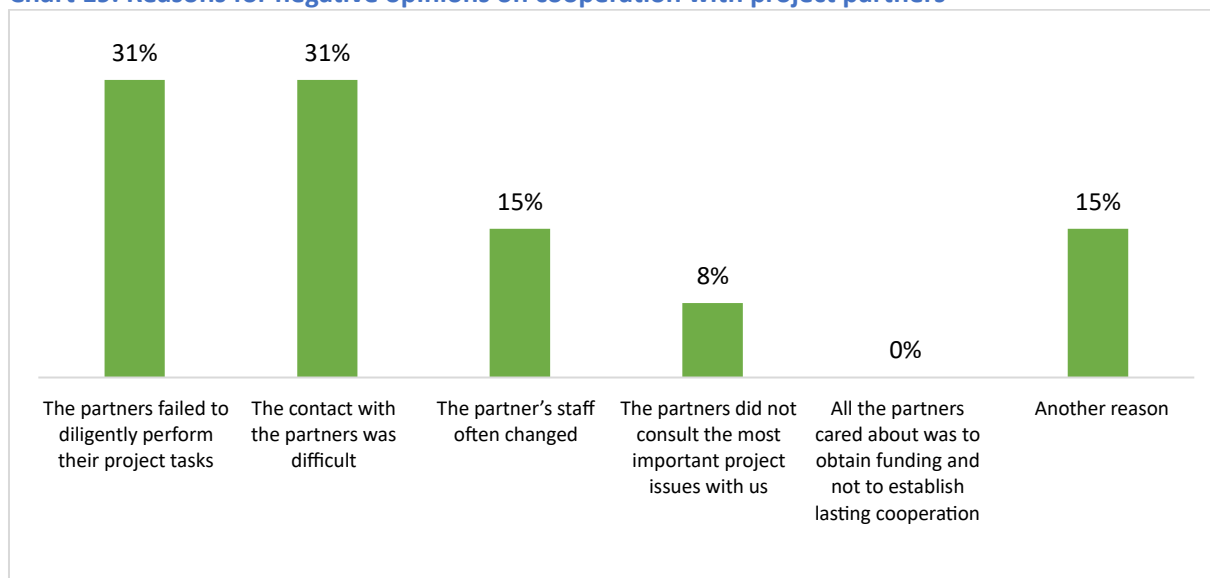
Chart 18. Beneficiaries' opinion on their cooperation with project partners



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

The negative opinions were mostly linked to difficult contact with the partner and with the partner's failure to perform their project tasks diligently. These were the two most common reasons for the negative opinions, each with 31% of responses. The other causes of negative opinions were frequent staff turnover of the project partner, which hindered efficient project implementation, and the bias and reluctance to work together after the work in Ukraine broke out (responses under the "Another reason" option). Only few respondents mentioned that their partners failed to consult major project decisions, thus making some entities involved in the project feel excluded from participation in the undertaking.

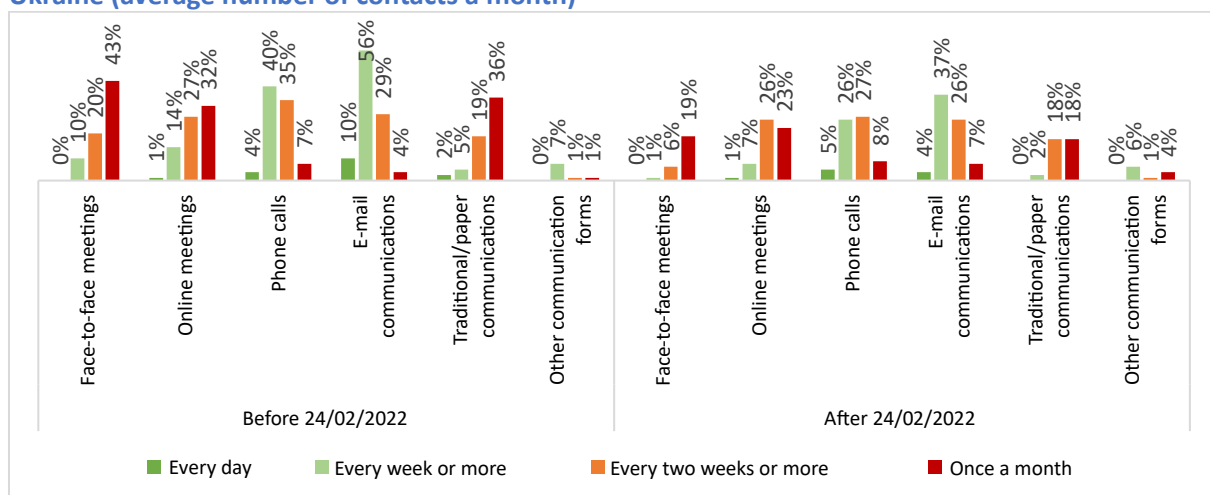
**Chart 19. Reasons for negative opinions on cooperation with project partners**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

This part of the report also addressed the intensity of the cooperation between partners. After the war in Ukraine broke out, the frequency of the contacts dropped noticeably. This change can be partially explained away by the loss of some partners – the ones from Belarus (fewer partners may have meant that fewer consultation meetings were necessary). Still, it must be remembered that entities from Belarus represented a small percentage of entities involved in projects. Furthermore, the geopolitical situation in Ukraine can also explain a reduced intensity of the contacts in the case of face-to-face meetings (this may be linked to safety issues, lack of space for travel and for meetings on project implementation sites on the Ukrainian side etc.). However, it does not explain the reduced frequency of online meetings, phone calls or e-mail communications.

**Chart 20. Frequency of contacts with project partners before and after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine (average number of contacts a month)**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

However, it must be remembered that the intensity of the contact was affected by a number of events which took place during the implementation of the Programme. The COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020 and this entailed a number of restrictions on travel and interpersonal contacts. On



the Polish side, the restrictions were lifted in 2023. This was the time when the cooperation with Belarus was suspended. Due to all that some forms of contact were not possible.

*The almost three-year period of the pandemic happened before the war in Ukraine broke out and before programmes with the involvement of Russia and Belarus were suspended. It definitely affected the methods of communication between the partners and delayed the implementation of certain undertakings which were planned and assigned indicators in the original grant applications filed by project leaders with the participation of the partners.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

Representatives of the institutions implementing the support stated that the forms of contact used during the pandemic were determined by practical reasons – a direct visit to Ukraine or Belarus entailed the need to undergo a quarantine after the return to Poland. Face-to-face meetings were harder to arrange because the group could consist of both vaccinated and non-vaccinated people and as such different sanitary regimes would apply. This is why face-to-face visits were replaced by remote meetings even when such visits became possible (albeit with certain restrictions) again.

*Yes, a return from Ukraine often required undergoing a quarantine. As far as I know, in Belarus as well. The rules were similar, especially in the case of people who were not vaccinated – they had to undergo a quarantine. There were some difficulties. The vaccinations may have facilitated mobility and travel but it was hard to arrange any joint meetings because the group could always include some virus carriers. Some were vaccinated, some were not, some had to undergo a quarantine and some did not so it was harder to arrange such group meetings. I think that this would have been problematic.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

However, the outbreak of the pandemic was not the only major problem that affected the eligible area. As has been noticed in in-depth interviews with representatives of the institutions implementing the intervention, they had intelligence that beneficiaries were considering returning to offline and face-to-face meetings with partners as soon as the scale of the COVID-19 infections decreased. But it was the subsequent changes in the borderland (outbreak of the war in Ukraine, suspension of the cooperation with Belarus) that made remote meetings and distance communication to become a permanent standard in the cooperation between the partners.

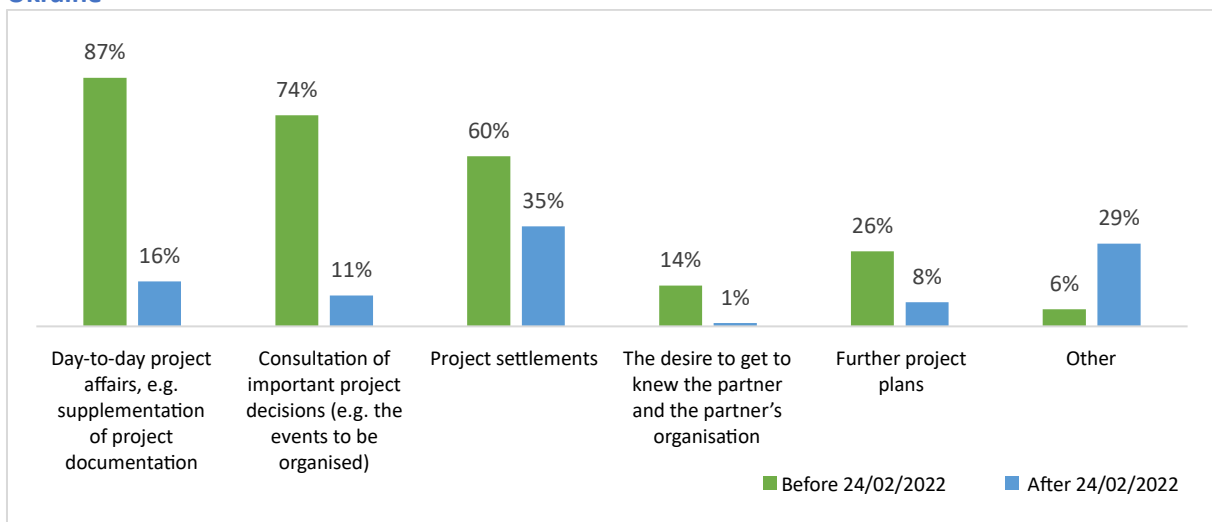
*Perhaps it would have been possible to return to the mutual visits after the pandemic, to joint organisation of undertakings that encompassed soft activities, where people met and did something together – this might have been possible. Yes, this was the time when the works on the projects were coming to an end.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

To establish the potential reasons why the intensity of the contacts dropped after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on 24/02/2022, beneficiaries and partners were asked what the cooperation focused on before and after the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine. Study results suggest that the number of contacts regarding day-to-day project matters and consultations related major decision-making for the project dropped substantially after the conflict broke out. Before the conflict, those issues were

the main reason for the contacts. After the conflict started, their significance became incidental. The issue of project settlements remained highly significant although the significance was reduced almost by half. The significance of the desire to get to know the partner and make further project plans decreased too. In contrast, the significance of contacts regarding other issues increased. The respondents mentioned e.g. contacts for the purpose of granting their Ukrainian partners support in connection with the conflict. This was both humanitarian support and equipment-related support. Even though the drop in the contacts undertaken to get to know the partner and explore further project plans can seem unsettling, the fact highlighted by beneficiaries and partners that the cooperation was preserved and was related to humanitarian and equipment-related support to Ukraine, which was being torn by the war, shows that the outbreak of the conflict did not break the bonds between the partners but it only shifted the emphasis in the mutual cooperation to aspects more current than further project cooperation.

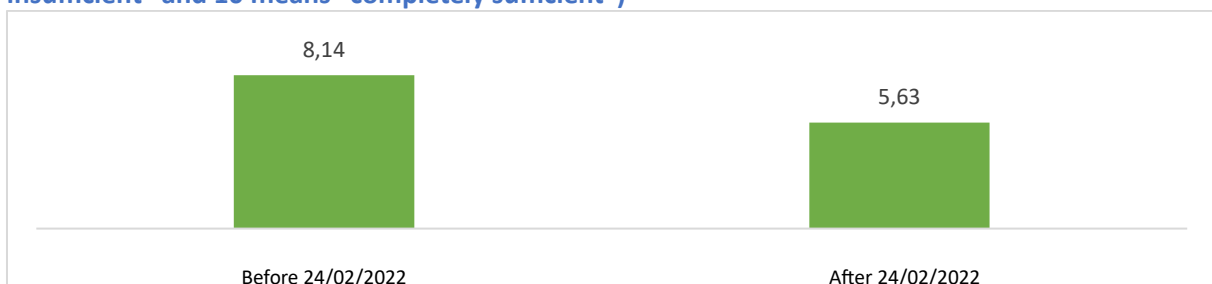
**Chart 21. Subject of the contacts with project partners before and after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

Subsequently, the beneficiaries and partners were asked if they felt that the number of meetings was sufficient. The respondents clearly felt something was lacking in this respect because the satisfaction level after the outbreak of the conflict was quite average (average rating of 5.63 on a scale of 1 to 10) versus the relatively high satisfaction level before the outbreak of the conflict (average rating of 8.14 on a scale of 1 to 10).

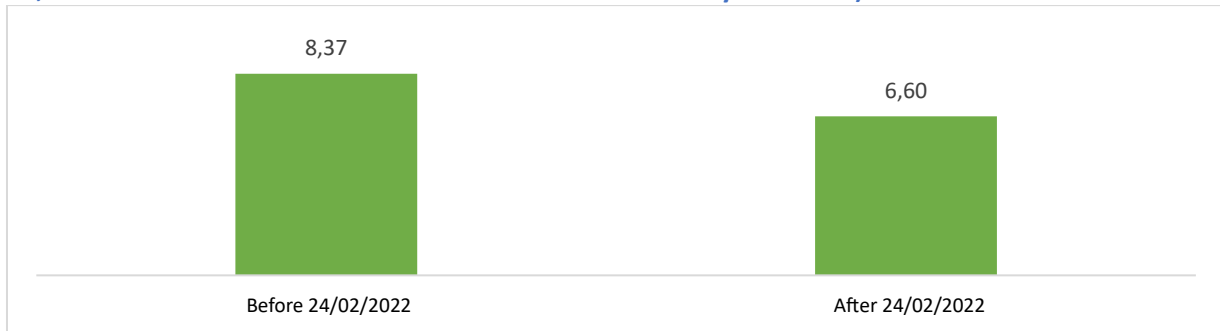
**Chart 22. Opinion on sufficiency of the cooperation for proper project implementation before and after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine (rating on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means "completely insufficient" and 10 means "completely sufficient")**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

Although the intensity of the cooperation dropped substantially, the satisfaction with the cooperation did not follow suit. The average rating was 8.37 before the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine and 6.60 after the outbreak. So the satisfaction drop is smaller than the drop in the cooperation intensity.

**Chart 23. Average satisfaction with the cooperation with project partners (rating on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “not satisfied at all” and 10 means “fully satisfied”).**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

#### **Chapter summary:**

The quantitative studies show that only some entities had participated in other projects before implementing the project under the Programme. Moreover, the cooperation receives generally positive opinions, with negative opinions being incidental. The beneficiaries also plan to continue the cooperation.

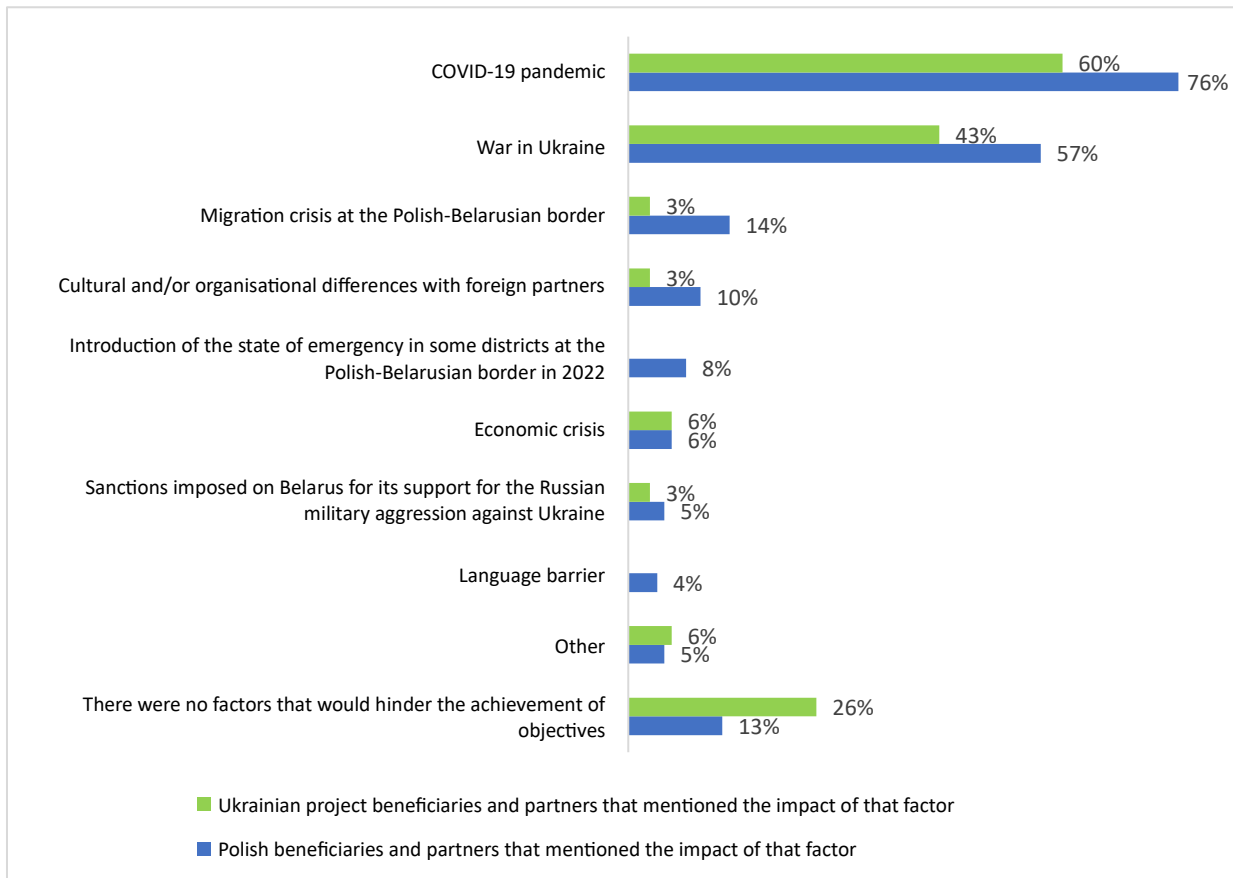
As regards the intensity of the cooperation, the number of meetings dropped after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and so did the satisfaction with the meetings in terms of their sufficiency to meet the needs. Nonetheless, the cooperation was continued, which is an auspicious prognosis for the future when it comes to the established partnerships and their quality.

## **2.5. THE IMPACT OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS**

*Research question: To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian military aggression supported by Belarus influence the implementation of the projects (with division into regular projects, the LIPs and micro-projects)? Were the project assumptions successfully achieved on the Polish side despite the loss of the connections with the Belarusian partners?*

The implementation of the projects financed under the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme 2014-2020 was affected by various crisis events. During the quantitative study, the Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries were asked which external factors made it harder for them to achieve their project objectives. Their answers have made it possible to identify the factors with the highest and the lowest impact on the beneficiaries' projects, according to the respondents.

**Chart 24. Factor which in the opinion of Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries hindered the achievement of objectives**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) and Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.

The responses show that language barrier had the least impact on the achievement of the objectives adopted by the beneficiaries, both on the Polish side and on the Ukrainian side, the factor mentioned only by 4% of beneficiaries on the Polish side. The interviews conducted with Polish project beneficiaries for the purpose of case studies suggest that whenever the language barrier was observed, it was effectively eliminated e.g. through adjustment of the form and method of communication between the partners (e.g. more communication was handled online, mainly by e-mail). Ukrainian beneficiaries did not notice any major impact of the cultural differences between the partners on their projects. The factor was identified by beneficiaries on the Polish side and it was mentioned by 10% of the Polish respondents.

Both on the Polish side and on the Ukrainian side, only 6% of the respondents mentioned the impact of the economic crisis on the achievement of their objectives. This may be due to the fact that some projects were already completed before the first crisis symptoms and prices increases. But the important thing is that the respondents stated in the qualitative studies (the interviews conducted with Polish project beneficiaries for the purpose of case studies) that the factor caused difficulties in the implementation of their projects. Especially, it made it hard to implement the infrastructural activities in accordance with the costs assumed at the project preparation stage. Inflation forced the **city of Ostrołęka**, implementing one of the regular projects, to increase the costs dedicated to the planned infrastructural activities, which ultimately allowed them to successfully complete all the

planned construction works. The beneficiary had human resources properly experienced in projects financed by the European Union and thus it was able to achieve savings on activities which in practice turned out to be much less costly than originally assumed at the stage of filing the grant application and it was able to move certain costs in the project budget to fund undertakings which were much more costly than originally anticipated. Beneficiaries also mentioned that their task implementation problems caused by the growing prices were partially solved by the funds “freed” by the exclusion of the Belarusian partners from the Programme. It was possible to use such funds to expand the project budgets of the beneficiaries. So it can be concluded that this factor may have hindered the implementation of certain projects but it did not significantly affect the achievement of the objectives adopted by the beneficiaries because the project budgets could be expanded. Additionally, some project partners had experience in the implementation of projects financed by the EU and thus were able to properly manage project funds.

**The quantitative study respondents did not identify any major problems connected with the migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border either.** Only 14% of Polish beneficiaries mentioned a major impact of the migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border on their projects. The introduction of the state of emergency in certain districts at the Polish-Belarusian border related to the migration crisis was mentioned by only 8% of Polish beneficiaries.

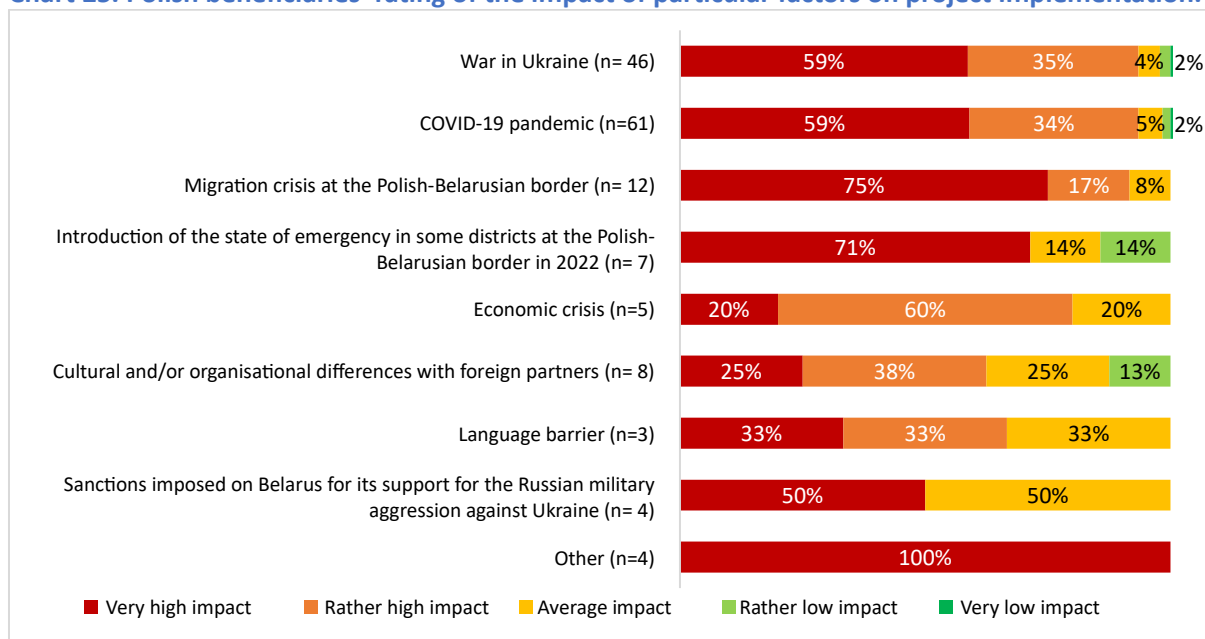
Both on the Polish side and on the Ukrainian side, beneficiaries mentioned the impact of other factors on the attainment of their objectives. Polish beneficiaries mentioned factors such as change in the project partner’s organisational structure, the political situation in Belarus, the partner’s misunderstanding of the project specificities. Ukrainian respondents mentioned the differences between the Ukrainian and European legislation and the changes in Ukraine related to the decentralisation of power, as a result of which the structure of the main project partner was shut down.

Many beneficiaries, especially Polish ones, stated that no factors affected the achievement of their project objectives. On the Ukrainian side, this was claimed by 13% of respondents and on Polish side by as many as 26% of respondents.

A hypothesis that could be adopted at the stage of preparing the study methodology was that **the pandemic and the war in Ukraine had the greatest impact on the projects**. The hypothesis was supported by the results of the above-mentioned quantitative study. The impact of the pandemic on the achievement of the objectives adopted by the beneficiaries was mentioned by the most Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries. The impact of war on the attainment of the assumed project objectives was specified by 57% Polish beneficiaries. Only slightly fewer Ukrainian beneficiaries mentioned that factor: 43%. As the further part of this chapter will show, the lower percentage of the Ukrainian beneficiaries mentioning the impact of that factor may result from the fact that many of them did not implement projects together with Belarusian partners so they were able to achieve all project objectives. The substantial impact of the above factors was just as often mentioned by beneficiaries in the qualitative studies, i.e. the interviews conducted as a part of case studies.

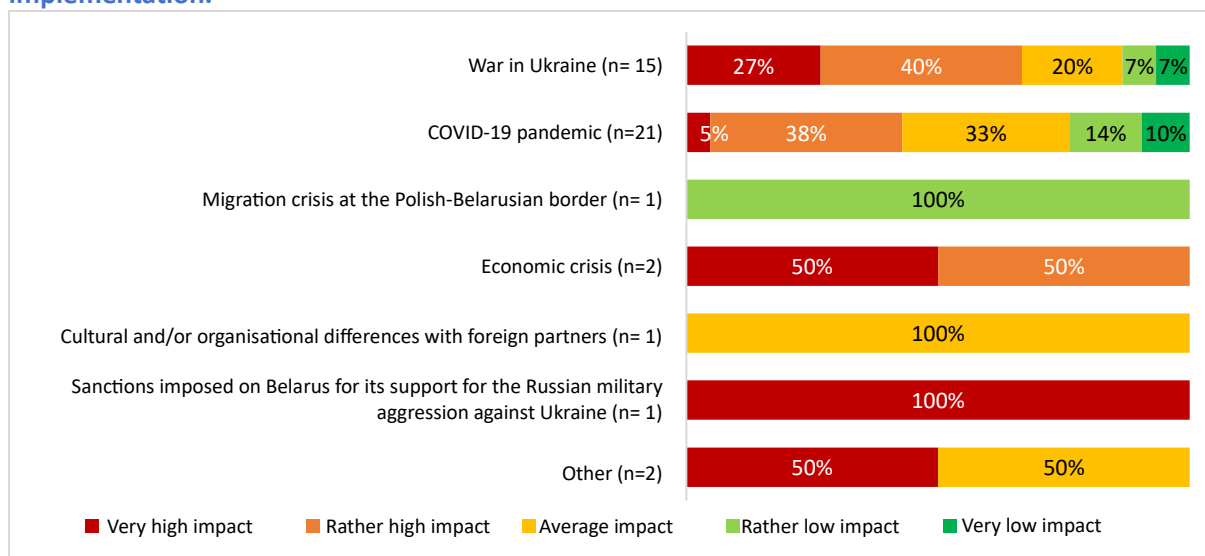
In the further part of the quantitative study, the beneficiaries who stated that a particular factor affected the achievement of their project objectives were asked to rate that impact.

**Chart 25. Polish beneficiaries' rating of the impact of particular factors on project implementation.**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) project beneficiaries and partners.

**Chart 26. Ukrainian beneficiaries' rating of the impact of particular factors on project implementation.**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.

The impact of the war in Ukraine on project implementation was rated by all Polish beneficiaries (94%) as high or very high. A just as substantial part of Ukrainian beneficiaries, 67%, also considered that impact of that factor on project activities as substantial. A small part of beneficiaries, both Polish and Ukrainian, mentioned that their projects were affected by the sanctions imposed on Belarus in connection with its support for the military aggression. However, the respondents who identified the impact of that factor considered it significant.

The pandemic, which the beneficiaries most often mentioned as the factor affecting the achievement of their objectives, was defined as a factor with a very high, high or average project impact. 93% of respondents on the Polish side considered that factor as very high or high. The assessment of the

factor by the Ukrainians was much more diversified: 43% of beneficiaries rated the impact of the pandemic on their projects as very high and 33% as average.

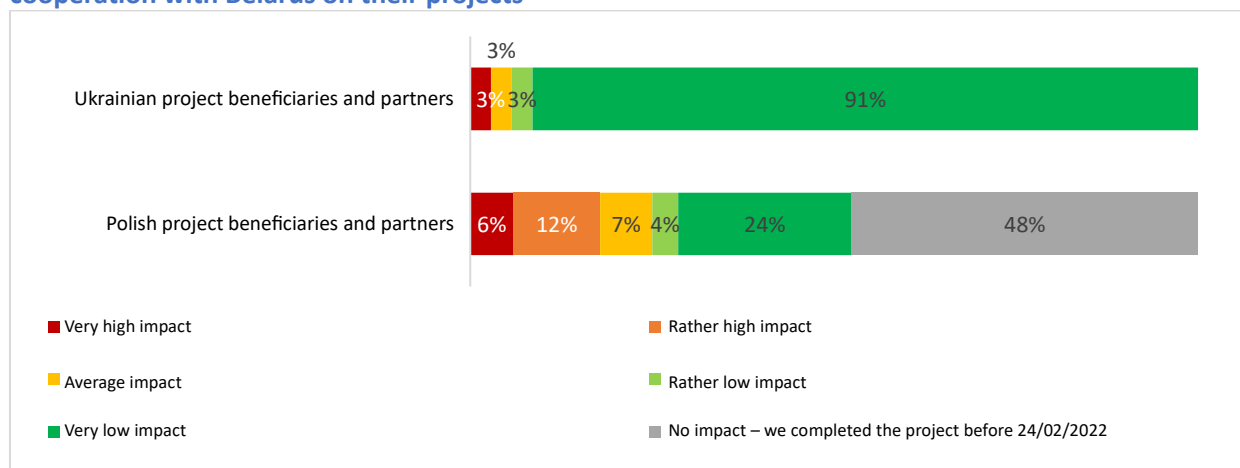
The **economic crisis** was mentioned by a small part of beneficiaries as a factor adversely affecting the attainment of their project objectives. However, the respondents who mentioned it rated its impact as very high. A just as small group of beneficiaries believed that the language barrier and the cultural differences affected the attainment of their objectives but those who did also usually rated that impact as very high or high. The situation is similar for the migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border and the related state of emergency in certain districts in Poland. The factor was relatively rarely identified by the respondents as hindering the achievement of their objectives but wherever it was present, it was considered having a very high or high impact on the projects.

Some beneficiaries also identified the presence of other factors affecting the achievement of their goals, i.e. **changes of a project partner's organisational structure, the political situation in Belarus, misunderstanding of the project specificities by the partner, differences between the Ukrainian and European legislation and changes in Ukraine related to the decentralisation of power**, as a result of which the structure of the main project partner was shut down. In their opinion, the impact of those factors on their projects was mostly significant.

The further part of this chapter will precisely describe how the factors identified in the quantitative and quantitative studies as having the highest impact on the projects (the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic) actually affected the implementation of particular undertakings.

The Belarusian support for the Russian Federation's military aggression resulted in the **exclusion of the Belarusian partners from the support offered under the Programme**. In the next part of the survey, beneficiaries from Poland and Ukraine were asked to rate how much the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus affected their projects. The following chart presents the distribution of answers.

**Chart 27. Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries' assessment of the impact of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus on their projects**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) and Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.

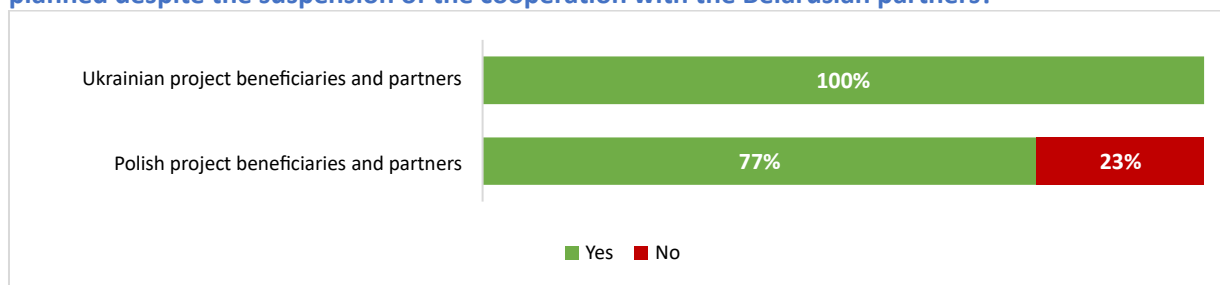
Despite the declarations of almost a half of Ukrainian and over a half of Polish beneficiaries that the war in Ukraine affected their projects, the respondents stated in the survey that the impact of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus on their project was mainly low or very low. The most Polish beneficiaries stated that their projects were completed before 24 February 2022 (before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine) so the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus had no impact on their projects. The most Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries claimed that the impact of this factor on their projects was low or very low. As many as 94% of Ukrainian beneficiaries stated that the impact of this factor on their projects was low or very low. On the Polish side, the percentage was not as high – the low or very low impact of the factor was mentioned by a total of 28% of respondents. So it seems that the hypotheses that the suspension of the cooperation with the Belarusian side was the consequence of the war in Ukraine that affected the beneficiaries the most is not supported by the quantitative study results obtained in the evaluation.

To establish where this low rating of the impact of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus (especially by Ukrainians) was coming from, the respondents who stated that the factor had a low or average impact on their project were asked to justify their opinion. Ukrainian beneficiaries mostly justified their rating of the factor by the fact that their project did not entail establishing any contact with Belarus (they had only partners from Poland or Ukraine) or they had not planned any joint tasks and, as a consequence, they were able to complete all the planned activities on their side without the need to modify the project after the suspension of the cooperation with the Belarusian side. A single answer mentioned that the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus prevented a Ukrainian entity from completing the planned promotional actions (it was unable to shoot a promotional video in Belarus) and to use the outputs created by the Belarusian partner (e.g. the computer game created by the Belarusian partner). It was because of those factors that the beneficiary rated the impact of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus on the beneficiary's project as average. Polish beneficiaries also mentioned that they did not have a project with the Belarusian side and that in February 2022 their projects were at the final implementation stages so the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus had little impact on them. Some Polish beneficiaries who were implementing a project with an entity from Belarus rated this factor as low or very low because they had been able to fully complete all the assumed activities on their side. Polish respondents rated this factor as average because the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus caused a change in the project but the change turned out positive and gained recognition from the local community and because they were unable to complete all the soft activities.

As has been mentioned above, some beneficiaries, both Polish and Ukrainian, were unable to implement all the pre-defined project activities. To explore the scale of this phenomenon, respondents were additionally asked in the quantitative study if they were able to complete the project on their side as planned.



**Chart 28. Respondents' answers to the question: "Were you able to complete the project as planned despite the suspension of the cooperation with the Belarusian partners?"**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=69) and Ukrainian (n=24) project beneficiaries and partners.

The majority of the projects implemented by Ukrainian beneficiaries did not assume an involvement of a Belarusian partner, which is why Ukrainian beneficiaries were able to complete the projects as planned, despite the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus.

The majority, i.e. 77% of Polish beneficiaries completed all the project activities on their side despite the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus. In the case of 23% of Polish beneficiaries, the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus rendered them unable to complete certain activities on their side. They were mainly unable to complete the soft activities that were to take place in Belarus, e.g. study visits, staff exchange. However, the beneficiaries emphasised that where it was impossible to implement soft activities in Belarus, the activities were replaced by identical ones which took place in Poland or the money was allocated to other tasks. Some beneficiaries also mentioned that they were unable to complete some promotional tasks which were the responsibility of the Belarusian partner. In certain cases they were also unable to receive the product outputs of which a Belarusian entity was in charge. Some respondents also mentioned that the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus extended the implementation time of their project. The suspension of that cooperation also rendered them unable to achieve the target level of project indicators. Despite the completion of all the activities on the Polish side, the project indicators which assumed the completion of activities on the Belarusian side as well could not be achieved in 100%. This is also confirmed by the measurement of the project indicators conducted as a part of the evaluation. Beneficiaries of the projects selected for a case study description also mentioned this. One beneficiary implementing a regular project, the city of Ostrołęka, was unable to achieve the target project values despite having completed all the planned activities because the activities also assumed tasks on the part of the Belarusian partner.

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine definitely affected the implementation of particular projects financed under the Programme. The answers that the factor affected the achievement of project objectives represent about 50% of all the responses. This relatively low level can be explained away by the fact that some projects, on both the Polish and the Ukrainian side, were completed before 24 February 2022, i.e. before the war in Ukraine broke out. Additionally, some projects assumed no involvement of Belarusian partners so they did not suffer any consequences of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus whatsoever. For Ukrainian beneficiaries, the loss of Belarusian partners in no way rendered them unable to complete their activities, especially because their projects assumed no participation of partners from Belarus. Polish beneficiaries were also in most cases able to complete or the activities planned on their side. The suspension of the cooperation with Belarusian entities in some cases resulted in an extended project implementation time or in the inability to

complete joint soft activities or soft activities planned on the Belarusian side only or to achieve the target project indicators.

Another factor that especially affected the implementation of particular projects was the **COVID-19 pandemic**. As has already been demonstrated, the most Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries mentioned in the quantitative study that the attainment of their project objectives was substantially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This was confirmed in the interviews conducted as a part of case studies. A beneficiary implementing a regular project, the city of Ostrołęka, mentioned that its project was considerably affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It extended the project implementation time and changed the form of certain soft activities: events originally planned as offline events had to be delivered online. The other beneficiary of a regular project selected for a case study description, i.e. the city of Siedlce, also mentioned the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its project. The consequences of the pandemic were the same as for the project pursued by the city of Ostrołęka. The city of Siedlce also had to change the form of its soft activities: cancel one joint event which was to be implemented together with a foreign partner and the change event form to two separate events held on two sides of the border. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic also extended the project implemented time for the city of Siedlce.

The consequence of the pandemic that was the extension of the project implementation times was also identified for small projects. During in-depth interviews with the institutions responsible for Programme implementation, it was established that certain beneficiaries of micro-projects postponed project commencement due to the pandemic. Another specificity of micro-projects is that they usually encompass soft activities. And the COVID-19 pandemic was a time of various restrictions, e.g. the borders of most countries were closed. As a result, many small projects had to be suspended because the beneficiaries were unable to complete the planned soft activities in their original formula, for instance activities that were originally planned to be held simultaneously on the site of the Polish partner and on the site the foreign partner.

The qualitative and quantitative studies conducted as a part of the evaluation show that the COVID-19 pandemic had many negative consequences for the projects. For example, it extended the project implementation times and changed the form of many pre-planned activities. The time of the pandemic was especially hard on small projects, which are particularly oriented towards soft activities. Many small projects had to be suspended for the duration of the pandemic, which substantially increased their implementation time.

**Chapter summary:**

The implementation of projects was affected the most by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Negative consequences arising from the language barrier had the lowest impact on beneficiaries. The COVID-19 pandemic affected especially small projects by forcing them to extend the implementation time. It also made it necessary to change the form of originally planned activities (especially soft activities).

The support of the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine by the Belarusian authorities resulted in the exclusion of Belarus from the financing under the Programme. Many Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries lost their project partners because of that. Almost 50% of Polish and Ukrainian beneficiaries stated in the quantitative study that the outbreak of the war in Ukraine affected their planned project objectives. However, the majority of beneficiaries stated that the

suspension of the cooperation did not prevent them from completing the pre-defined activities. Some beneficiaries mentioned that the war rendered them unable to achieve the target project indicators, complete certain planned soft activities or promotional activities or obtain the project outputs which were to be created for them by their Belarusian partners.

## 2.6. POSSIBLE CHANGES IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

*Research question: Do the Polish partners see other INTERREG programmes (especially: the Lithuania–Poland Programme 2021-2027 and the South Baltic Programme 2021-2027, considering the planned expansion of those programme to include the Łomża and Olsztyn subregions (LT-PL) and the Olsztyn Subregion (SB) respectively) as capable of satisfying their cross-border cooperation needs which they will be unable to pursue in cooperation with Belarusian partners? What needs could be satisfied under other cross-border programmes which cannot be satisfied after the Russian aggression against Ukraine?*

Any analysis of the potential changes to the cross-border cooperation must take into account the fact that the eligible area is within reach of other territorial cooperation programmes, such as:

- INTERREG Central Europe;
- INTERREG Europe;
- INTERREG Baltic Sea Region.

Furthermore, the Ukrainian part of the eligible area is covered by the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine. Single subregions are also supported under other cross-border programmes:

- In the case of the Krosno and Przemyśl subregions, it is the Poland-Slovakia Programme;
- In the case of the Białystok, Suwałki and Łomża subregions, it is the Poland-Lithuania Programme.

It must be borne in mind that the biggest changes may take place on the Polish side of the eligible area, in the part that used to work with Belarusian partners. The most important change in this case is the inclusion of the Białystok, Suwałki and Łomża subregions in the INTERREG Programme Poland-Lithuania 2021-2027.

It should be remembered in this respect that the change will not fully compensate for the loss of the partnership because the potential beneficiaries from the programming period 2014-2020 will have little possibility of finding the sources to find the cooperation under other programmes.

This was confirmed by the experts participating in the Delphi study.

*If it is not possible to partner with Belarusian and Russian entities, Polish entities may seek other partners, such as Lithuania, to develop their cross-border activities.*

Source: Delphi method.

*Establishment of new partnerships under other programmes, such as e.g. the Poland-Lithuania cross-border programmes, may compensate for the lost possibility of partnering with Russia and Belarus after the aggression against Ukraine in a substantial but also limited way.*

Source: Delphi method.

The experts also mentioned the significant limitations connected with changing partnerships. First of all, building a partnership requires time. That time was devoted to build the partnerships with entities from Belarus. The parties got to know each other, explored each other's cultures, overcame the barriers to the cooperation and learned to understand each other's expectations and limitations. This process will need to be repeated for the new partnerships. Furthermore, specific benefits arising from access to certain cultures, environments, resources (e.g. infrastructural resources) or markets will be lost. This loss will be exceptionally hard to compensate for. Moreover, as experts pointed out, most partners from other countries already had their project consortia which knew each other well and knew how to work together. Partners from the Białystok, Suwałki and Łomża subregions will join this cooperation as new entities, which may be hard since they will be joining an already dynamically functioning partnership.

*Although there are possibilities of forming new partnerships, it will be hard to fully compensate for the specific advantages arising from the cooperation with Russia and Belarus, especially when it comes to access to certain markets, resources or infrastructure.*

Source: Delphi method.

*The opportunities can be compensated for but the new cooperation will bring new effects. Moreover, new partners, e.g. Lithuania, are already "booked" under programmes that are already in progress, which means limited room for action. On the other hand, this may be an opportunity to introduce new cooperation themes and areas, also ones arising from the problems with cooperating with Russia and Belarus, e.g. strengthening the initiatives in the green transition sector or in cybersecurity.*

Source: Delphi method.

*(...) given the geographic proximity, the most opportunities lie in the cooperation with Lithuania. However, since this is a small country with a small borderland and since we are in the European Union and in the Schengen Area, the scale of the problems of that borderland is much smaller than in the case of Poland's border with Belarus or Russia. As a result, the chances of compensating the beneficiaries for the lost cooperation opportunities are not too high.*

Source: Delphi method.

Whether it is possible to compensate the Polish beneficiaries for losing the partners from Belarus by finding partners in other countries was a question that was also addressed to representatives of the institutions responsible for implementing the Programme during in-depth interviews. They replied that this was only partially possible. According to the representatives participating in the in-depth interviews, this was because the previous partners were planning joint projects for the next years. The plans were linked to the specific challenges and problems of the borderland. So it will be hard to replace a partnership with another partnership as this will require finding shared challenges to be answered by the project. Still, the experience of the beneficiaries offers some hope that the cooperation potential will be utilised.

*(...) I think that those beneficiaries will overcome this because for example beneficiaries from the Etłk and the Elbląg subregions already worked under other programmes, they are experienced. Or they have dual experience because I know that many beneficiaries have participated in the Lithuania-Poland Programme, they have used the funding provided under the Lithuania-Poland Programme and the South Baltic Programme. Moreover, we even guided the beneficiaries during the last annual event in Elbląg in 2022 and the event concluding the programme (...). We presented the cooperation opportunities under other programmes so as not to leave those beneficiaries to themselves.*

Source: individual in-depth interviews.

*It must also be noted that the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus substantially affected beneficiaries from the Lubelskie Voivodeship as they lost established partners with whom they had been working since 2004. This forced them to search for and establish new partnerships in Ukraine for the new Programme 2021-2027.*

Source: individual in-depth interviews.

#### **Chapter summary:**

The study shows that it will be possible to replace the Polish-Belarusian partnership with another partnership but this will not fully compensate for the lost opportunities of the already established cooperation. The Polish-Lithuanian programme has a chance of becoming a certain substitute for the beneficiaries who have lost their Belarusian partners, as shown by the long Polish-Lithuanian project partnership traditions. Still, building new partnerships will take time.

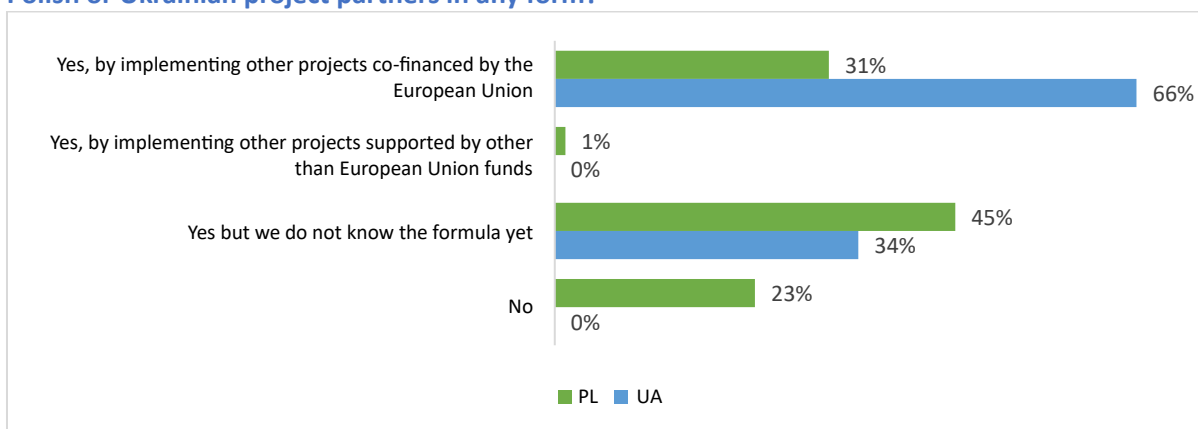
## **2.7. DURABILITY OF THE PARTNERSHIPS**

*Research question: How durable are the project partnerships under the cooperation Programme? Do the partners plan to continue the cooperation? Do the partners plan to apply for EU funding together again? In what thematic areas (with regard to the specific objectives for 2021-2027)? Do they plan to work together without the EU support? Do they plan to change the partnerships in any way?*

The durability of the partnerships under the Programme was analysed based on a survey conducted with the participation of Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners. **Asked whether they planned to continue their partnerships with the Polish or Ukrainian partners, they mostly answered 'yes,' which shows that the partnerships were highly durable.** Almost 100% of the responding partners from Ukraine declared that they planned to continue their current partnerships, of whom 66% planned to implement projects with EU funding and 34% are already planning the cooperation without any precise idea about the formula of the cooperation. For Polish partners and beneficiaries, the desire to continue the cooperation was also high as 77% of the respondents declared they wished to continue the cooperation in the same partnership, of whom 31% planned to implement projects with EU funding and 45% had not chosen the form of the cooperation yet. Unlike Ukrainian respondents, some Polish respondents stated they did not plan to continue the cooperation with their partners – such answers were given by 23% of respondents from Poland. However, it must be noted that the majority of the answers applied to the cooperation with Belarusian partners because

that was their project partnership based they were giving answers. Since references to Belarusian partners were left out in the study and some respondents most likely misunderstood the question, the scale of negative answers should be adjusted down. Generally, only three respondents actually declared they did not wish to work with partners from Ukraine and they justified this with the shutdown of the entity in Ukraine as a result of the administrative reform and with absence of good cooperation and lack of integrity in financial settlements as the report included costs which were not actually incurred and failure the unused funds were not returned. Additionally, one of the Polish partners stated that it was not ruling out the possibility of continuing the cooperation with the Ukrainian partner but given the current war in Ukraine and the security reasons, it was not planning the cooperation at that time.

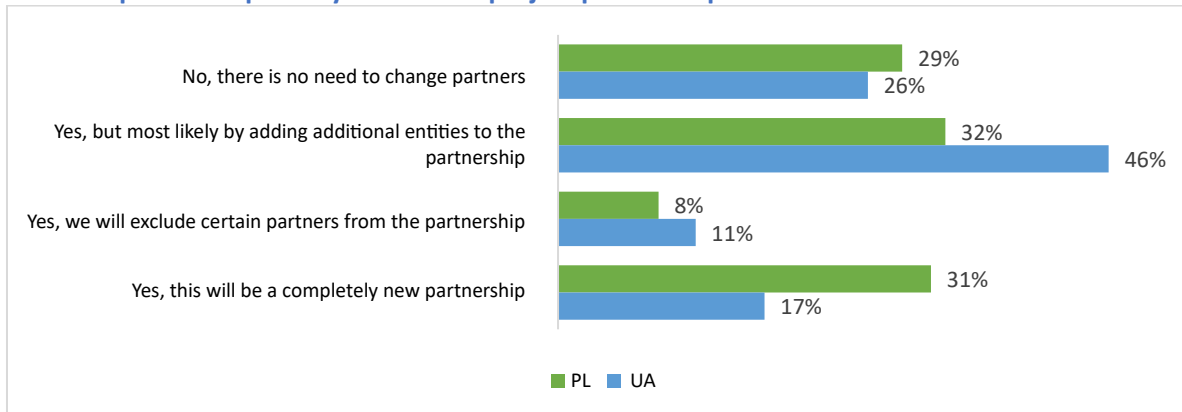
**Chart 29. Answers of the respondents to the question “Do you plan to continue to work with the Polish or Ukrainian project partners in any form?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n= 84+35).

The respondents were asked if they planned to implement projects in a different partnership. Many respondents, both from Poland (29%) and from Ukraine (26%), responded that they were going to continue the projects in the same partnership, whereas 32% of partners from Poland and 46% of partners from Ukraine planned to add new partners to their partnership. Moreover, 31% of partners from Poland and 17% of partners from Ukraine declared that a completely new partnership was going to be created. Asked why they were planning to abandon their partnership, the respondents stated that the planned project type did not fall within the scope of activity of the current partner, in addition to giving obvious responses regarding the termination of the Polish-Belarusian relations due to the war or the discontinuation of the Programme for the Belarusian partner. They also highly emphasised the war in Ukraine as a factor substantially hindering the performance of joint objectives and often preventing contacts. There were single answers mentioning bad experience with the partnership.

**Chart 30. Answers of the respondents to the question: “Do you plan to implement projects in a different partnership than your current project partnership?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n= 84+35).

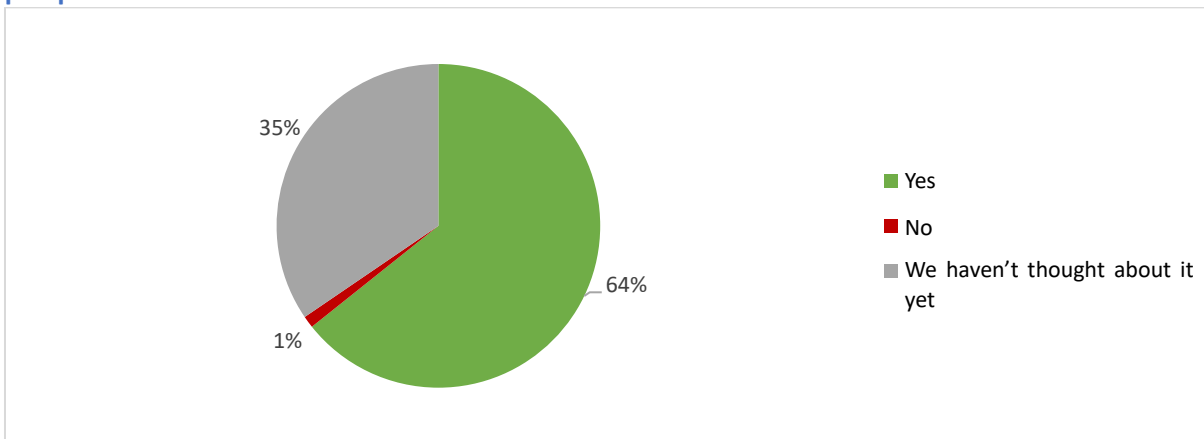
In in-depth interviews with beneficiaries of the projects for which case studies were developed, the interviewees also expressed opinions suggesting that despite the geopolitical events which brought about major Programme changes, the cooperation with the partners was good and the mutual attitude on joint projects was positive. If it were possible to continue the partnership, it would be continued.

*We never had a bad attitude towards each other. We all understand that certain things are beyond our control, that there are some macro determinants. We are merely an element of that and we can do nothing about it. We understand the policy of both countries, we of our country and they of their country, we understand the various international determinants – there has never been a problem here, full understanding on their part.*

Source: An individual in-depth interview with a project partner.

Afterwards, Polish project beneficiaries and partners were asked in the survey about their plans to implement projects under territorial cooperation programmes in the financial perspective 2021-2027. According to the survey, 64% of respondents plan to implement the projects, 35% are undecided and one gave a negative answer. Beneficiaries intend to file applications mainly under the following programmes: INTERREG NEXT Poland-Ukraine, INTERREG Poland-Slovakia, INTERREG Lithuania-Poland. Programmes such as INTERREG Brandenburg-Poland, INTERREG Czech Republic-Poland, INTERREG Europe, INTERREG Central Europe, INTERREG Baltic Sea Region received one answer each.

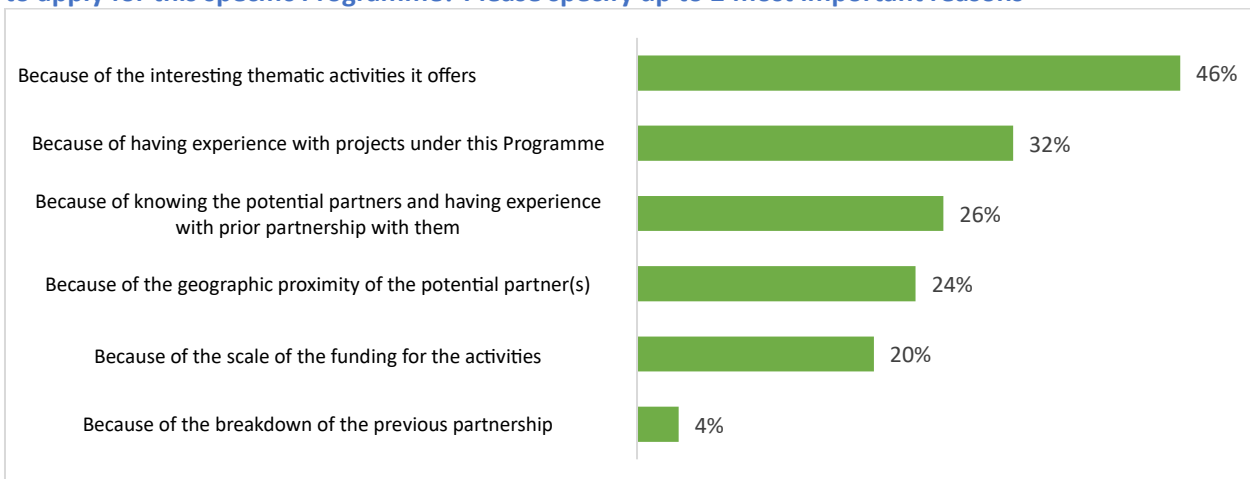
**Chart 31. Survey answers of Polish project beneficiaries and partners to the question: “Do you plan to implement a project under any of the Territorial Cooperation Programmes in the financial perspective 2021-2027?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

The factors that determine the potential beneficiary’s choice of a given programme include the conformity of the planned undertaking with the thematic activities pursued under the programme and the experience with projects implemented under that programme. An important factor underlying a decision to apply under a particular programme is knowing the partners and having positive experience with the partnerships on other projects. Another factor that was highly rated by the respondents was the geographic vicinity of the potential partner.

**Chart 32. Survey answers of project beneficiaries and partners to the question “Why would you like to apply for this specific Programme? Please specify up to 2 most important reasons”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n= 84+35).

The above results also overlap with the theses that were mentioned by experts as a part of the Delphi study. There are several main reasons why the prior experience with the partnership between entities from both sides of the border, the developed trust and the established relations can have a highly positive impact on the continuation of activities as a part of cross-border cooperation.

*Partners who have already had an opportunity to work together usually better understand each other's strengths, potential difficulties and efficient performance*

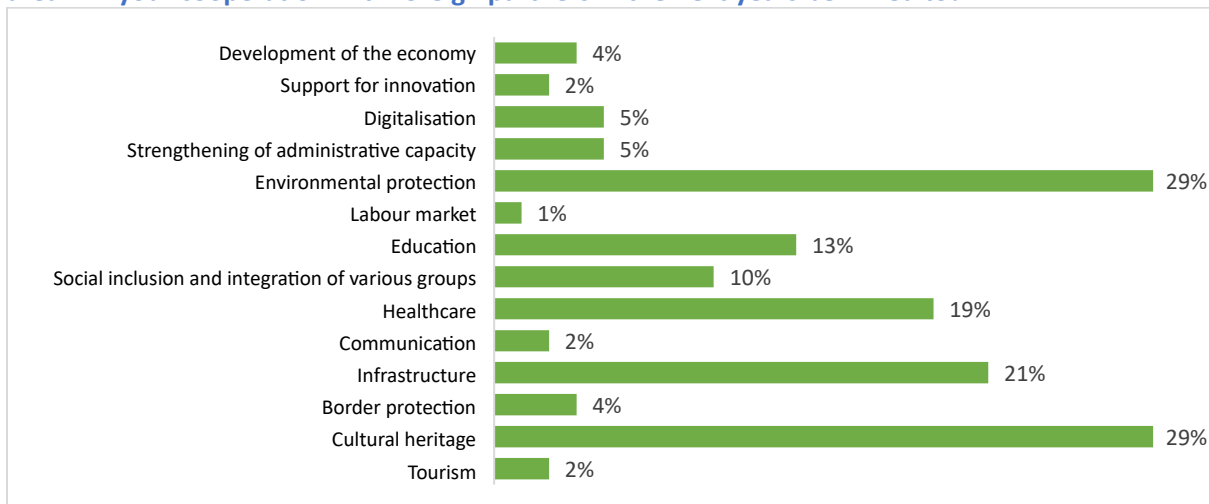


*methods and this is what builds trust and facilitates communication. (...) The previous cross-border initiatives are valuable lessons on what went well and what can be improved, and partners who have already worked on such projects can capitalise on their experience to better plan and execute the new activities. Cooperation on prior projects often helps build a network of contacts and relations with other organisations, institutions or people from different sides of the border, which are highly valuable resources for further development of the cooperation. (...) if the partnership is continued, the partners have a chance to continue their joint actions, which can be appreciated by the local communities and result in greater involvement of the inhabitants and local institutions in the next projects. (...) Cooperation based on prior experience can yield more durable and long-term effects.*

Source: Delphi study.

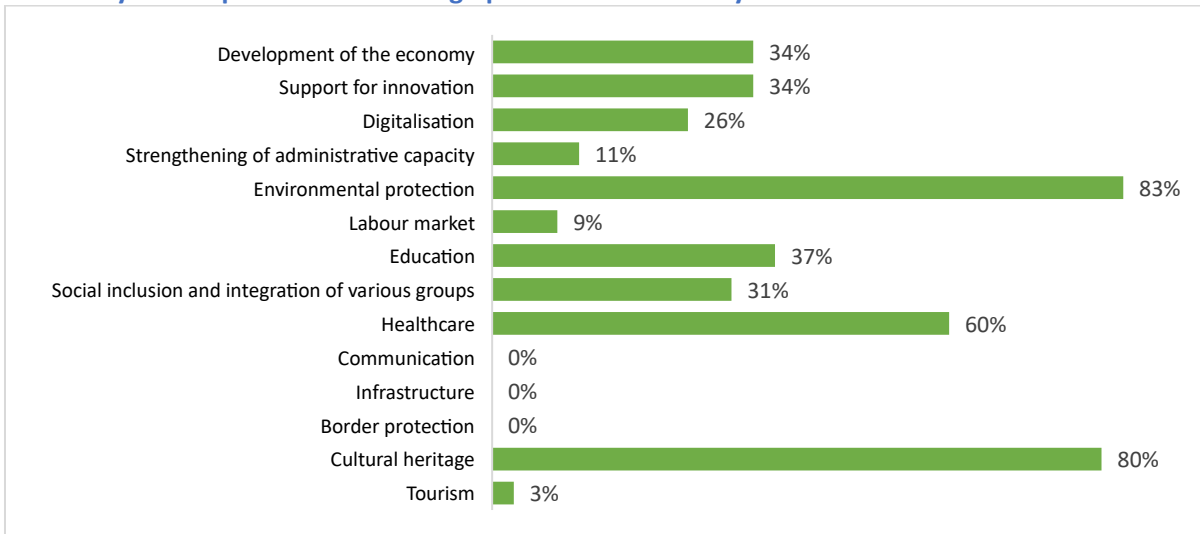
The evaluation also explored the thematic areas in which partnerships with foreign partners will be established in the next years. The answers to the survey questions suggest that partners from the Polish side of the support under the Programme are planning to pursue projects in each of the analysed thematic areas, focusing especially on issues linked to environmental protection, cultural heritage, infrastructure and healthcare. In the case of respondents from Ukraine, the plans pertain mainly to projects related to environmental protection, cultural heritage, education and development of the economy. Unlike the partners from Poland, entities from Ukraine are not planning to pursue investment projects related to infrastructure, communication, border protection, which may be linked to their concerns about the current war in Ukraine.

**Chart 33. Answers of Polish project beneficiaries and partners to the question “Which thematic area will your cooperation with foreign partners in the next years be linked to?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

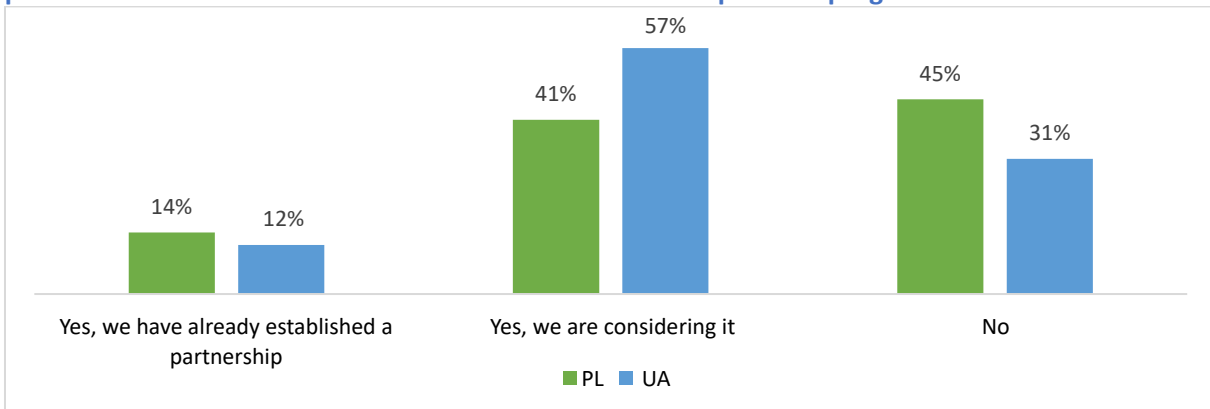
**Chart 34. Answers of Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners to the question “Which thematic area will your cooperation with foreign partners in the next years be linked to?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35).

Plans of the respondents to partner with entities from other countries under other cooperation programmes were also explored. 14% of Polish respondents have already established such partnerships and 41% are considering the idea. The Ukrainian partners gave similar responses as 12% have already established such partnerships and 57% are considering the idea. However, many partners from Poland are not planning to implement projects under cross-border cooperation programmes in the financial perspective 2021-2027.

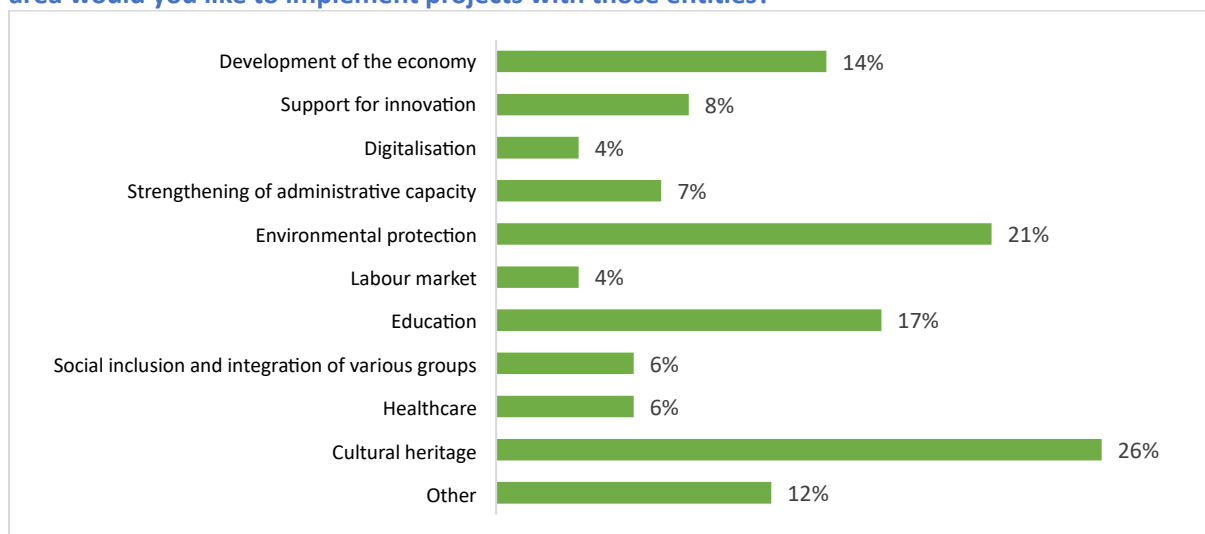
**Chart 35. Survey answers of project beneficiaries and partners to the question “Do you plan to partner with entities from other countries under other cooperation programmes?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n= 84+35).

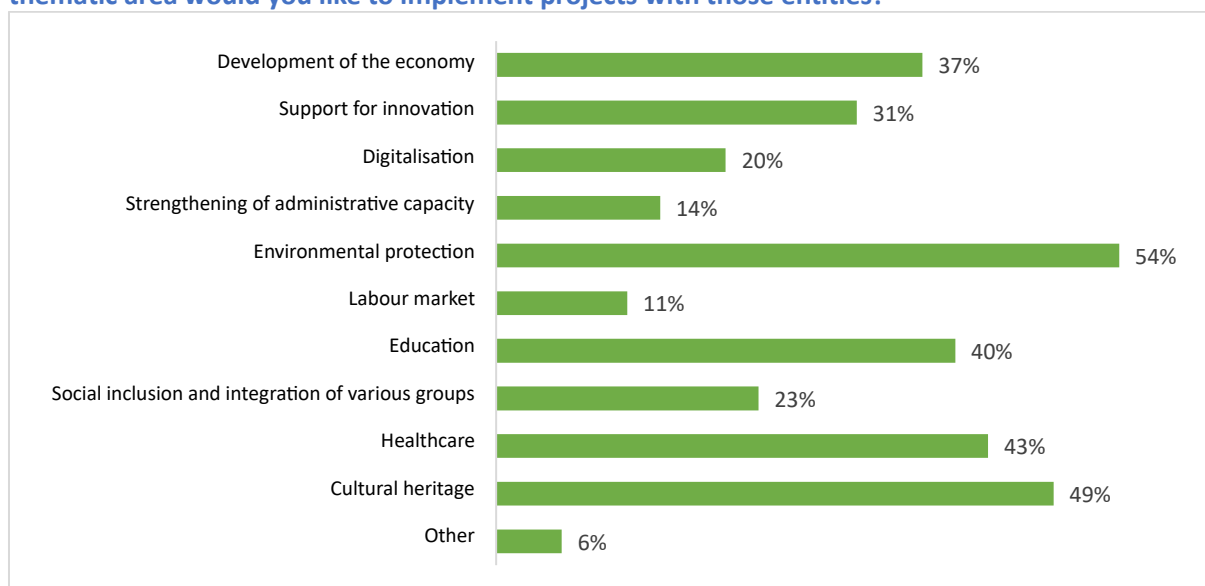
Polish respondents stated that they planned to partner mainly with entities from Ukraine, Lithuania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Hungary and Italy, while in the case of Ukrainian respondents, the cooperation was to be established with partners from Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. As far as the scope of the cooperation is concerned, the most responses mentioned environmental protection, cultural heritage, development of the economy.

**Chart 36. Answers of Polish project beneficiaries and partners to the question “In which thematic area would you like to implement projects with those entities?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

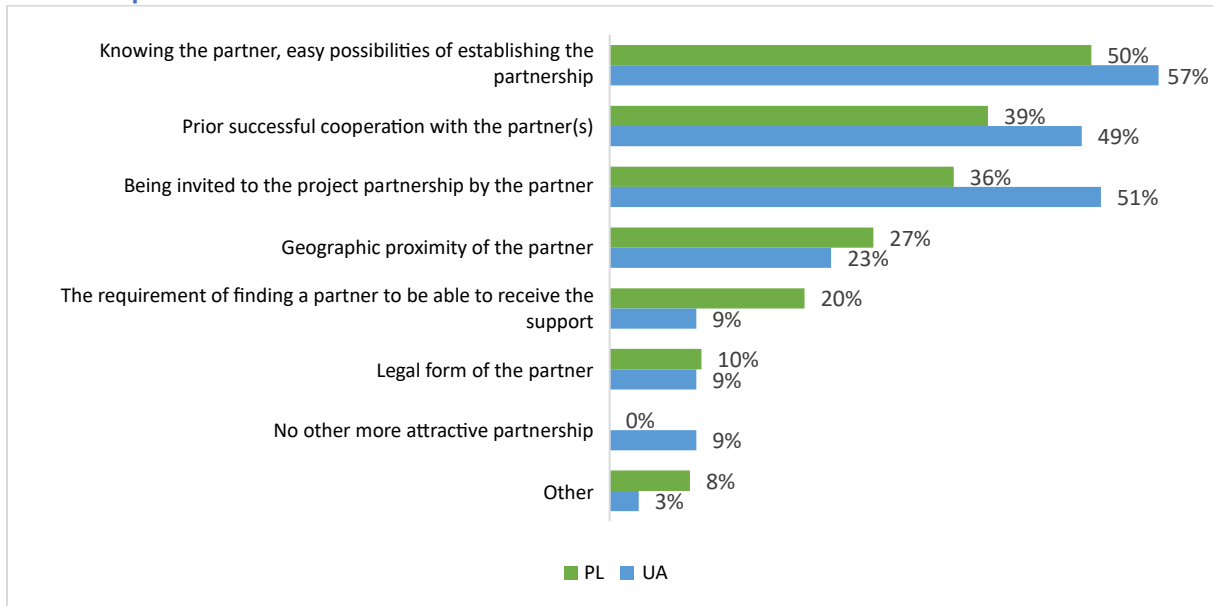
**Chart 37. Answers of Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners to the question “In which thematic area would you like to implement projects with those entities?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n=35).

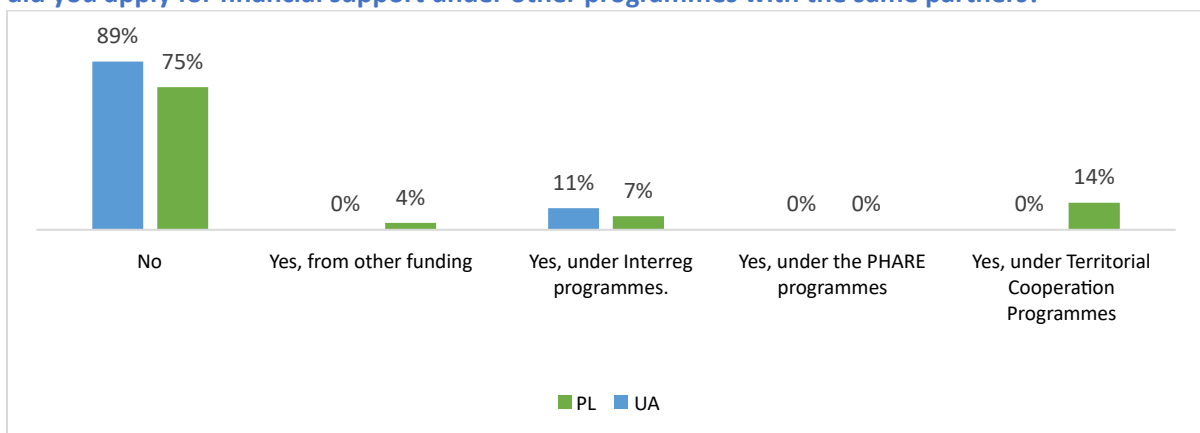
Analysis of the factors that contributed to the establishment of partnerships under the Programme in the 2014-2020 perspective shows that the partners based their decision on knowing the partner, which made it easier to establish the partnership, and subsequently on positive partnership experience, invitation to the partnership and the geographic proximity of the partner. Further factors included partnership formation as a result of a search undertaken in order to apply for support under the Programme.

**Chart 38. Factors determining the composition of project partnerships in the opinion of Polish and Ukrainian partners**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n= 84+35).

**Chart 39. Answers of the respondents to the question “Before the implementation of the project, did you apply for financial support under other programmes with the same partners?”**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners (n= 84+35).

Still, the answers of the respondents suggest that, before the project, a vast majority of the entities did not apply for support under other programmes with the same partners.

*We have a time-tested partner, we know that we work well together but we have been invited by another municipality, I think we were recommended to them because we are a reliable and good partner. I won't say the names but we were also invited to work with other partners. Some time ago, we received a letter encouraging us to apply in a bigger group, with one more Ukrainian partner.*

Source: individual in-depth interview with beneficiary for the case study

### Chapter summary:

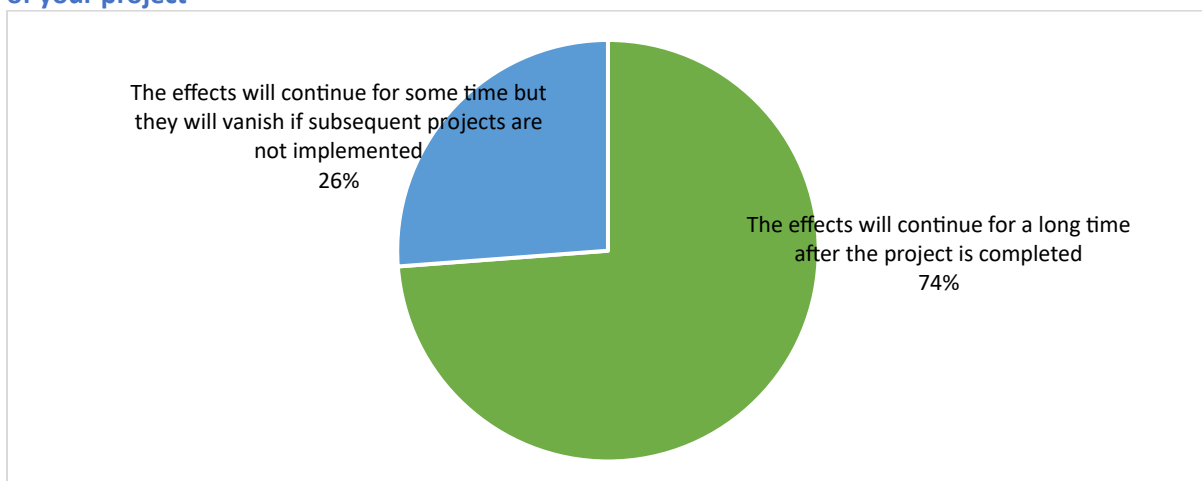
To sum up, analysis of the survey regarding the durability of the established partnerships and further cooperation plans between Polish and Ukrainian partners suggests that high effects were achieved in the Programme. More than 60% of the respondents from Poland and 70% of the beneficiaries from Ukraine stated that the current Respondents would be continued in the same or wider group. Despite the negative circumstances in which the Programme was implemented, i.e. the COVID-19 pandemic, in Ukraine, the positive experience gained from the cooperation is a reason to expect that the cooperation will continue and develop in the years to come. Furthermore, interviews with certain beneficiaries suggest that the positive experience from working with partners from Belarus will prompt attempts to continue the partnerships if this becomes possible (i.e. the political situation stabilises).

## 2.8. DURABILITY OF PROJECT EFFECTS

*Research question: What is the durability of the effects of the projects and the related partnerships? Are project effects tangible also after the projects are completed? Is it possible to sustain the effects of projects without further funding from the EU?*

Project beneficiaries stated that the durability of the effects of their projects was very high. None of the beneficiaries included in the study claimed that the effects had no chances of continuing after the project was completed.

**Chart 40. Answers of the respondents to the question: “What is your opinion on the durability of the results of your project? Please select the sentence that best describes this durability in the case of your project”**



*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).*

Some respondents (about 1/4) stated that without further support the project effects were going to continue only for some time. Still, the majority of the participants in the quantitative study stated that the project effects would continue for a long time after the project was completed. Some projects, especially infrastructural projects, assumed the construction of specific sections of roads, the infrastructure of railway or road border crossings or the purchase of equipment – for those projects, there is no risk of failure to maintain the project use durability for several years. Border crossings are a special case as they must function even if the cooperation on cross-border projects

ends – the use of the resulting infrastructure will not cease completely. The road or border crossing infrastructure built together with Ukrainian partners is used especially intensely – due to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the traffic between the countries, which had been substantial even before the war, increased considerably to reach its peak at the start of the armed conflict in spring 2022.

*To be honest, the present situation does not affect the commodity traffic, the traffic continues, the border crossings are open, employment is increasing, the size and quantity of commodity in clearance are growing.*

Source: individual in-depth interviews.

*There are no risks for the durability of the project and the durability of the project results. The warranty for the works applies for 7 years.*

Source: individual in-depth interviews.

*(...) the city is responsible for the upkeep of the whole building. We have entrusted the administration to our municipal company but this is how we keep the whole building from deteriorating. There is a team of people whose job is to oversee everything.*

Source: individual in-depth interviews.

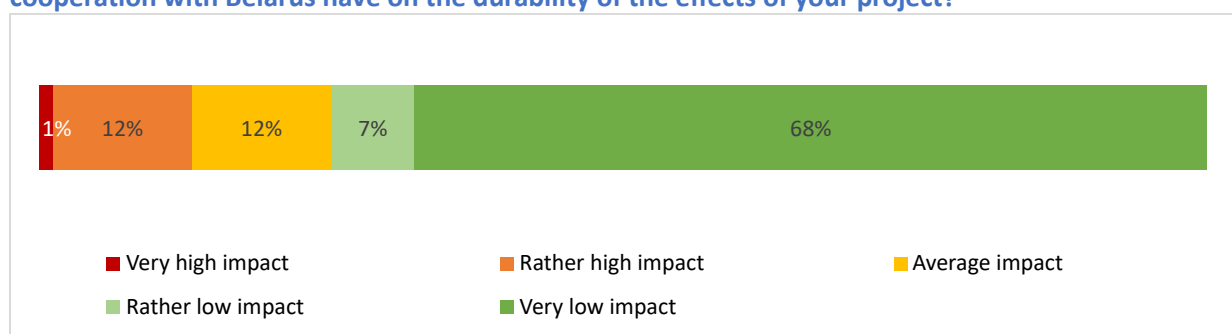
The suspension of the cooperation with Belarus affected only a part of the projects as many did not have a Belarusian partner and some were completed in 2021. So the time when the cooperation with Belarus was suspended was a time of project settlements and not of actual activities related to project implementation.

*As far as I remember, the actual project tasks were completed and all that was left were the matters connected with settlements and disbursement of the remainder of the grant because on cross-border projects disbursements are made in tranches.*

Source: individual in-depth interviews.

The quantitative study respondents were also asked about the extent of the impact of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus on the durability of project effects.

**Chart 41. Answers of the respondents to the question: What impact did the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus have on the durability of the effects of your project?**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish project beneficiaries and partners (n=84).

The above results show that only ca. 13% respondents saw the impact of the suspension of the cooperation on the durability as high or very high, while about 3/4 of the Polish partners participating in the quantitative study considered the impact as low or very low. The insignificant impact of such an important factor as suspension of the cooperation with a foreign partner confirms the previous, high overall durability ratings.

#### Chapter summary:

According to the majority of project beneficiaries and partners, the durability of projects is not at risk and the effects of the projects will continue long after the completion of the projects. Many projects were completed before the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus while some of them were, at the moment the cooperation was suspended, at the final implementation stage, which is why this did not substantially affect them, as confirmed by the results of the quantitative study, where more than 2/3 of beneficiaries and partners mentioned a very low impact of the suspension of the cooperation with Belarus on the durability of project effects.

## 2.9. COMPLEMENTARITY OF UNDERTAKINGS

*Research question: How complementary were the projects to other projects pursued under operational programmes implemented under the cohesion policy in Poland and what were the links between various cooperation programmes?*

Analysis of Programme documents has shown<sup>17</sup> that in terms of links to other cohesion policy programme in Poland, the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 was complementary to:

- Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Russia
- INTERREG Lithuania-Poland;
- INTERREG Poland-Slovakia;
- INTERREG Baltic Sea Region;
- INTERREG Central Europe;
- Operational Programmes implemented in Poland, especially the Operational Programme Eastern Poland and Regional Operational Programmes.

No call for proposal criteria were developed for large infrastructure projects, regular projects or micro-projects **which would obligate the applicants to demonstrate complementarity with other programmes**.<sup>18</sup> The grant application had a section “overlapping with other projects/programmes, public aid, revenue,” where the applicants were required to describe the correlations with other projects. However, the evaluation matrix included only a provision for establishing if the project overlapped with other projects in order to make sure it does not receive double financing. The applicants did not receive any extra points for their projects being complementary to other undertakings. Based on the desk research, no other mechanisms were identified which made it possible to link the projects under the Programme with other projects as a part of the cohesion policy

<sup>17</sup> *Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, 5th revision as of 9th December 2022.*

<sup>18</sup> *Based on the call for proposal documentation: project selection criteria, application form templates, application evaluation matrix, programme manual and guide for application evaluators.*

in Poland. This is confirmed by the results of the IDI with representatives of various institutions involved in the Programme. Representatives of the MC admitted that the applicants were neither obligated to or rewarded for demonstrating project complementarity to other undertakings pursued under the cohesion policy. Representatives of both the MC and the JTS did not rule out that certain complementarity could take place but even if projects were linked, the institutions implementing the Programme did not have the tools to monitor complementarity. The IDI interviewees mentioned the following examples of complementarity: complementarity of projects in the area of road transport, water and sewage infrastructure, bicycle infrastructure and equipment and modernisation of healthcare facilities, as well as supplementary equipment for dispatching groups. The examples are reflected in the desk research conducted for this evaluation.

The desk research checked which beneficiaries (both leaders and partners) of projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 on the Polish side benefited from other cohesion policy programmes, including cross-border programmes.<sup>19</sup> The analysis covered all the programmes which were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter and which met the assumptions included in the Programme documents. Furthermore, the analysis included the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment as it had objectives similar to those of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. With regard to the OPI&E, projects were implemented under three axes: 1. *Environmental protection, including adaptation to climate change*, 3. *Development of TEN-T road network and multi-modal transport* and 8. *Protection of cultural heritage and development of cultural resources*. The next step was to analyse if, and to what extent, projects implemented by the same beneficiary under more than one programme were linked. For this purpose, abridged project descriptions were analysed and where the descriptions were not enough to establish the existence of a link, websites of the projects and/or beneficiaries and other online sources were consulted. The implementation times and implementation areas of two or more potentially complementary projects were considered too. Two basic configurations were identified where projects of one beneficiary were inter-linked:

- I. **Complementarity of project objectives** (projects focused on the same objective, e.g. environmental protection, preservation of cultural heritage, increase of the tourism potential etc.);
- II. **Complementarity of project activities** (the activities were complementary, e.g. activities of one project made use of infrastructure modernised under other EU funds, training and preventive activities were complemented with purchase of supplementary equipment, projects focused on modernisation of the same space etc.).

It must be noted that the above categories were not always mutually exclusive, i.e. some projects focused on the same objective and at the same time their activities were complementary.

95 out of 158 unique beneficiaries implementing projects under the Programme (in the financial perspective 2014-2020) were beneficiaries of at least one other programme: Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Russia, INTERREG Lithuania-Poland, INTERREG Poland-Slovakia, INTERREG Central Europe, Operational Programme Eastern Poland, Regional Operational Programme

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<sup>19</sup> Based on the list of projects implemented under the EF posted on the website of the Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy and based on data provided by the Client as well as data from the websites of other programmes: INTERREG Central Europe and INTERREG Baltic Sea.



of the Podlaskie Voivodeship, Regional Operational Programme of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, Regional Operational Programme of the Lubelskie Voivodeship or Regional Operational Programme of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. INTERREG Baltic Sea Region was the only programme in which none of the Programme beneficiaries participated. Still, 33% of beneficiaries implementing projects under the above programmes and under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 pursued projects complementary to the projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. Almost all beneficiaries of complementary projects (97%) implemented projects using different funds which had the same purpose as the projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. In turn, in over a half (55%) of the cases, the projects were linked through activities to projects pursued under the Programme. Also more than a half (52%) of beneficiaries of complementary projects implemented undertakings connected with project of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 through both objectives and activities.

**Coinciding objectives included mainly cultural and/or natural heritage preservation/environmental protection.** As many as 14 out of 31 beneficiaries implementing complementary projects were focused on that objective. Six beneficiaries of related projects were oriented towards the development of tourism in the borderland. Almost the same number (15 beneficiaries) pursued complementary projects designed to improve the **access to and/or the quality of healthcare services for the inhabitants of the borderland**. Three beneficiaries focused in their complementary projects on **improvement of security in the borderland**. **Two entities implemented related projects with the objective of improving the transportation infrastructure and one beneficiary wanted to adapt the education system to the labour market.**

Examples of complementary project activities include mainly:

- activities to protect the environment of different parts of one whole, i.e. different shores of the Solina Lake;<sup>20</sup> tourism development and promotion of the areas around the Bug River and the concurrent preservation of the natural heritage through the preservation of biodiversity around that river;<sup>21</sup> renovation of the existing tourist trails and creation of thematic trails regarding the biodiversity of the Białowieża Forest, as well as pro-ecological activities and

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<sup>20</sup> As a part of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship ROP, the Solina Municipality implemented the following projects: 'Development of sewage management in the Solina Municipality – construction of a sewage treatment plant and construction of the sewage system in the Polańczyk Agglomeration,' 'Alteration of the pumping station and water treatment station along with construction of two mineral water pumphouses and the Health Resort Information Centre in Polańczyk.' As a part of the Programme under evaluation, the beneficiary implemented the project 'Protecting the Solina Lake and Schodnica's sources of healing waters - a common challenge and opportunity to maintain and exploit the potential of the natural heritage.'

<sup>21</sup> As a part of the Podlaskie Voivodeship ROP, the Drohiczyn Gmina implemented the following projects: 'Protection of the Biodiversity on the Bug River Banks as our Heritage, Protection of the biological biodiversity on the Bug River banks in the city of Drohiczyn.' Under the Programme, the municipality implemented the project 'Bug unites us - creation of two cross-border tourist kayak trails.'

creation of new tourist routes within that area;<sup>22</sup> development of different sections of the same trail, i.e. the Wallachian Culture Trail;<sup>23</sup>

- modernisation of cultural heritage sites followed by implementation of activities within that area as a part of a different project, e.g. a multicultural festival in the Memorial Chamber of the Wojślawice Land<sup>24</sup> created in the historical synagogue in Wojślawice; cultural events in a former monastery converted to a culture centre in Zagórze;<sup>25</sup>
- the participation of fire fighters in the borderland and the purchase of a fire engine with EU funding;<sup>26</sup>
- preventive and educational activities regarding ontological urology along with supplementary equipment for the ward dedicated to patient treatment in this area;<sup>27</sup>
- modernisation of infrastructure, financing of various stages of works from various funds, e.g. construction of the Bielsko-Biała Autism Support Centre.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> As a part of the Podlaskie Voivodeship ROP, the Hajnowski District implemented the following projects: 'Following the biodiversity trail of the Białowieża Forest and the Narew River Valley region.' The same entity used the funding under the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment to implement the project 'Forest and People.' Under the Programme under evaluation, it implemented the 'Cross-border heritage of the Białowieża Forest' and the 'Nature's treasury beyond borders' projects.

<sup>23</sup> The "Pro Carpathia" Podkarpacie Development and Promotion Association implemented the 'Wallachian Culture Trail' project under the INTERREG Poland-Slovakia Cooperation Programme and the 'Wallachian Culture Trail in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland'" project under the evaluated Programme.

<sup>24</sup> The Wojślawice Municipality implemented the project 'On the trails of cultures and traditions of the Wojślawice Land – protection and use of the cultural heritage resources of the Wojślawice Municipality' under the Lubelskie Voivodeship ROP, which project resulted in the creation of the Memorial Chamber of the Wojślawice Land. Afterwards, the following project was implemented using the funding provided under the Programme: 'Polish-Ukrainian cooperation for the development of tourism and preservation of cultural heritage in the area covered by "The Picturesque East" brand' (multicultural festival).

<sup>25</sup> The Zagórz Municipality implemented the project 'Comprehensive cultural heritage protection on the Sanok-Lesko Urban Functional Area – conversion of the ruins of the Discalced Carmelites' Monastery Complex to a culture centre in Zagórz' under the Podkarpackie Voivodeship ROP and then it implemented the following project under the Programme: 'A culture forged in fire.'

<sup>26</sup> The Korczew Municipality purchased a medium-sized fire engine along with equipment for the Korczew Fire Station with funding from the Mazowieckie Voivodeship ROP and it took part in a project under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 entitled 'Effective coordination of rescue operation in the Ostrołęka-Siedlce subregion and Volyn Oblast.'

<sup>27</sup> The SP ZOZ Wojewódzki Szpital Zespolony im. J. Śniadeckiego hospital implemented the following projects: 'Protection of work resources in the Podlaskie Voivodeship through modernisation of cardiology treatment and urinary tract cancer treatment at the SP ZOZ WSZ im. Jędrzeja Śniadeckiego hospital in Białystok' and 'Improvement of the quality of medical services at the Orthopaedic and Trauma Department and the Oncological Urology and General Urology Department at the SP ZOZ WSZ im. Jędrzeja Śniadeckiego hospital in Białystok' with funding from the Podlaskie Voivodeship ROP. Under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, the hospital implemented the 'Improvement of cross-border health services in oncological urology in Białystok and Grodno regions' project.

<sup>28</sup> The "Wspólny Świat" Association for the Support of Autistic Children and Teenagers and Children and Teenagers with Related Disorders implemented the project entitled 'Bielsko-Biała Autism Support

**Projects implemented under the Programme were usually complementary to projects relying on the ROP funds.** This is because the entities participating in the Programme usually widely used the ROP funding. Furthermore, as has been mentioned in the interviews conducted with beneficiaries for case studies, the ROP money is seen by beneficiaries as relatively easier to secure, e.g. given that the applications can be prepared in Polish. All beneficiaries of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 who implemented projects from other funds used the ROP money. It must be noted the ROPs offer a slightly wider range of activities than other programmes, e.g. programmes oriented only towards the EFRR, such as the OPEP, or having specific objectives, such as the OPI&E. In turn, cooperation programmes require projects to be implemented in partnerships. Furthermore, the territorial scope of the support provided under cooperation programmes other than this Programme, for instance Poland-Slovakia, Lithuania-Poland, covered only some of the entities implementing projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. The ROP funding was available to every entity pursuing a project thereunder. So the degree and scale of project complementarity to cooperation programmes are naturally lower.

Only 8 beneficiaries of the Programme under evaluation implemented projects under other cooperation programmes, e.g. INTERREG Poland-Slovakia, Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Russia 2014-2020, INTERREG Poland-Lithuania and the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment. However, only three projects pursued under other cooperation programmes and one project financed under the OPI&E were linked to interventions of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. Only one beneficiary pursued a project under the INTERREG Central Europe Programme and it was not linked to this Programme. So it can be stated that there were practically no relations between the cooperation programmes, i.e. the projects were interlinked to a little degree. Five beneficiaries of this Programme benefited from the OPEP but no complementarity was identified.

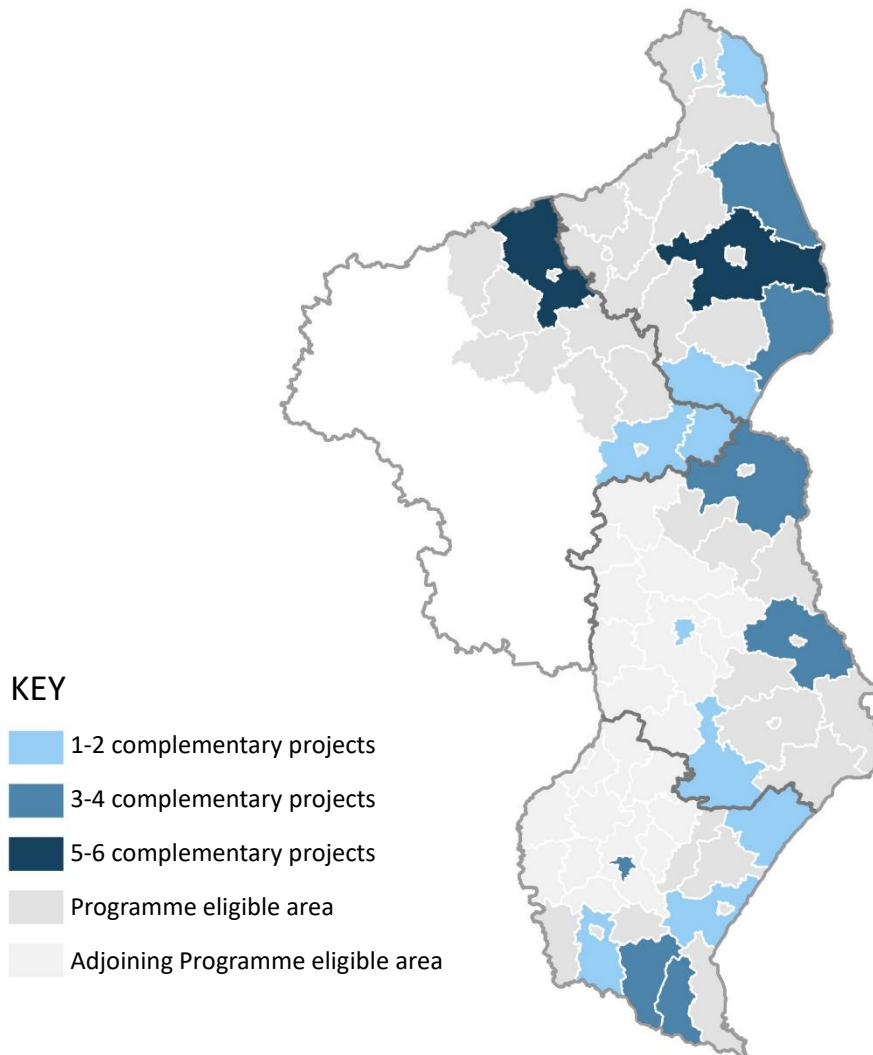
**No major patterns were noted when it came to the type or geographic distribution of the entities involved in complementary projects.** Complementary projects were implemented mainly by local government communities, which also predominate in the structure of Programme beneficiaries. It is noteworthy that the highest number of complementary projects was recorded in the Augustowski District (Podlaskie Voivodeship) and the Ostrołęcki District (Mazowieckie Voivodeship), as presented on the map above.

The geographic distribution of the beneficiaries of complementary projects is presented on the map below.

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*Centre Stage I – Construction of a Therapy and Diagnostics Centre. Preschool for Autistic Children’ using the funding of the ROP. They used the funds of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 to implement the project ‘Development of cross-border cooperation in helping people with autism on the Polish-Belarusian borderlands,’ as a part of which they planned to create an Employment Preparation School and a Community Assistance Centre as well as training flats with a possibility of transforming them into permanent housing for autistic adults supported by the Bielsko-Biała Autism Support Centre.*

**Map 20. Projects complementary to projects pursued under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 by district**



*Source: own compilation based on the list of projects implemented with European Funds in the financial perspective 2014-2020..*

Importantly, a different type of complementarity was also observed, i.e. the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine projects were the continuation of projects implemented from different or the same funds (in both financial perspectives – 2007-2013 and 2014-2020). This type of complementarity is hard to capture in desk research but the beneficiaries themselves provided information on this matter. Fifteen percent of project authors on the Polish side declared in the CAWI that the project under the Programme continued prior projects.<sup>29</sup> Prior projects were financed mainly by the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 and by the ROPs 2007-2013. Single projects were implemented under the following programmes: the RIT (Region in Transition) programme, bilateral youth exchange programmes, the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013, the Polish development support programme of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Visegrad Fund.

<sup>29</sup>  $n=84$ .

**Chapter summary:**

Although the scale of the links between projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 and projects co-financed under other cohesion policy programmes was low, the links can be considered as strong. It must be noted that an **additional project complementarity mechanism was ensured in the first call for proposals for the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 which was absent in the Programme under evaluation**. In the qualitative assessment, the applicants can receive 6 points if *the project is complementary and contributes an added value to other initiatives in this area – if it complements and relies on prior achievements. The project uses the outcomes of other initiatives.*<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the application includes a field “*Complementarity to other activities, projects, initiatives*” and describes in detail how complementarity should be understood and what aspects must be addressed in the description.<sup>31</sup> Considering the results of this study, the activities undertaken as a part of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 in order to make projects more complementary are justified and worth continuing in the next calls for proposals.

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<sup>30</sup> Appendix 2 Application evaluation matrix to the Programme Manual – Regular Projects. Part 1 – Application process.

<sup>31</sup> Draft template for preparing an Application in the call for proposal under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2021-2027.

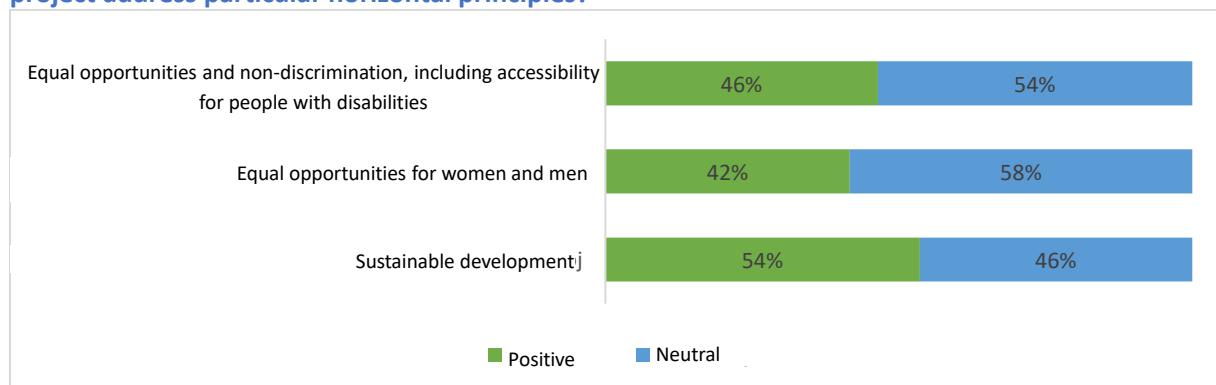
### III. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

#### 3.1. WAY AND EXTENT OF ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

*Research question: How and to what extent are the horizontal policies (the principle of promoting the equality of men and women; the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities; the sustainable development principle) complied with in the implementation of the Programme and how is it reflected in the projects? What actions were taken in the projects to respond to the requirements of the horizontal principles?*

According to the provisions of the Programme, the horizontal principles should be respected at all Programme implementation stages, from the application evaluation and selection stage to the implementation stage. In accordance with the structure of the Programme grant application form, beneficiaries were obligated to explain the project impact on the following cross-cutting issues: sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, democracy. The beneficiaries were asked to assess and explain the project impact on the aspects arising from the horizontal policies and describe the applied solutions. Only projects with a positive or neutral impact could receive a grant under the Programme.

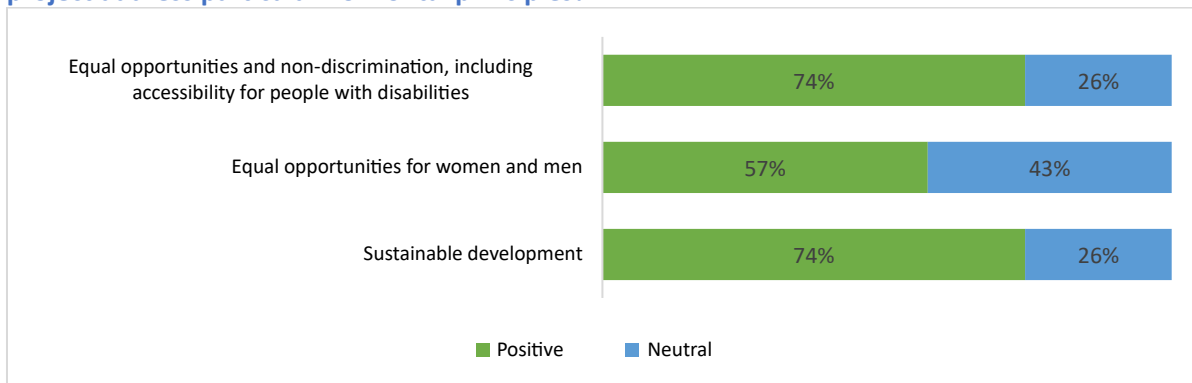
**Chart 42. Answers of Polish project beneficiaries and partners to the question “How did your project address particular horizontal principles?”**



*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) project beneficiaries and partners.*

Analysis of the results of the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners in terms of how their projects addressed particular horizontal principles shows that the distribution of responses was comparable. Partners from Poland saw their projects as having a positive impact mainly on the sustainable development principle, while the Ukrainians claimed that their projects had a positive project impact on both the sustainable development principles and the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities.

**Chart 43. Answers of Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners to the question “How did your project address particular horizontal principles?”**

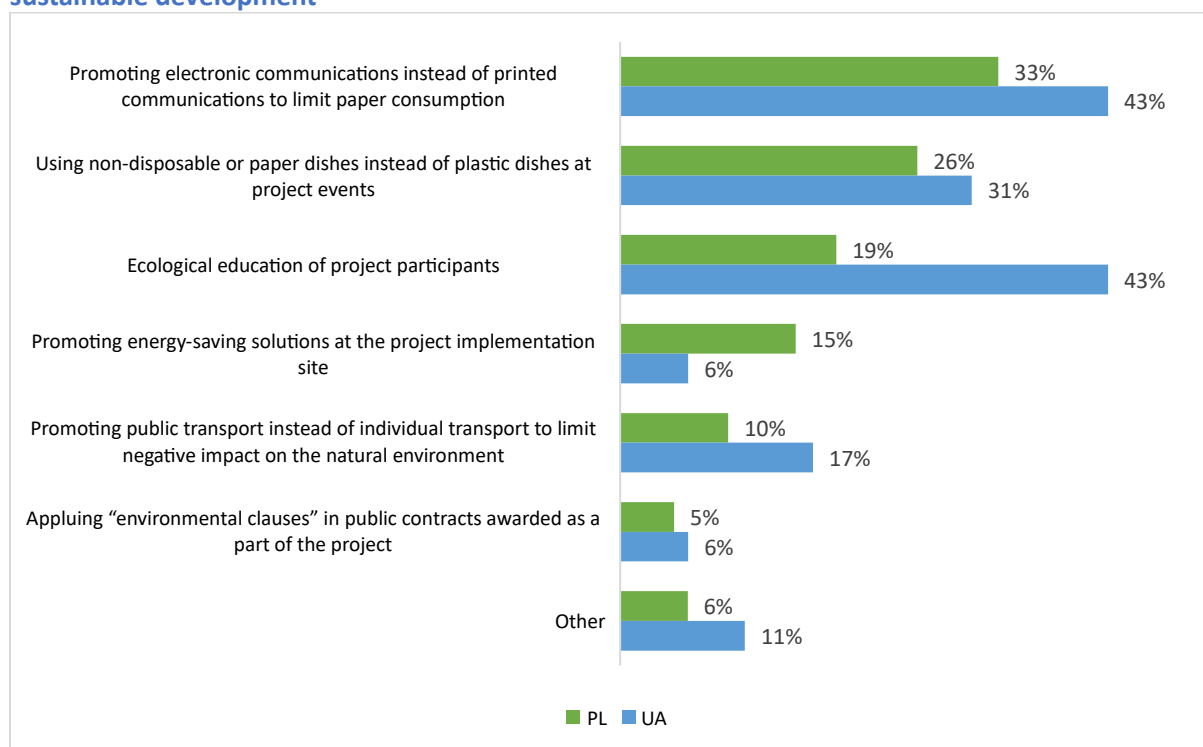


Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.

### Sustainable development

As a part of the CAWIs, entities from both the Polish and the Ukrainian side of the eligible area stated that the most common application in the projects was connected with promoting electronic communications instead of printed communications to limit paper waste and with using non-disposable or paper dishes instead of plastic ones during project events. Other often mentioned issues included ecological education for project participants (43% of the responses from Ukrainian partners and 19% of the responses from Polish partners) and promotion of public transport instead of individual transport to limit the negative impact on the natural environment (7% and 10% of responses respectively). Other solutions mentioned by the partners from Poland were aspects connected with the reduction of the driving time by 20 minutes due to the construction and reconstruction of roads, which limited the emission of pollutants, and using natural and recycled materials and modern equipment during workshops, meeting the latest environmental standards. Polish partners answered that their projects promoted bicycle tourism and included activities to improve accessibility for underdeveloped regions in order to give them a chance at sustainable development. The responses of Ukrainian partners included also environmentally friendly equipment (e.g. boats with better performance parameters and appropriate certificates), activities to raise the ecological awareness of event participants, to be continued after the completion of the project. The significance of projects undertaken to preserve the historical and cultural heritage for the sustainable development principle were emphasised. However, there were also answers suggesting that the principles were misunderstood – Ukrainian respondents listed activities related to the promotion of historical and cultural heritage, the use of innovative technologies, social inclusion, which is not entirely what sustainable development is about.

**Chart 44. Types of project activities undertaken by Polish and Ukrainian partners with regard to sustainable development**



*Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) and Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.*

**Most project beneficiaries and partners generally stated that they did not encounter any difficulties while implementing sustainable development assumptions.** Only two Ukrainian beneficiaries noted that the bureaucratic procedures in Ukraine required them to retain and deliver documents in paper format and that there was too little time to follow the legislation and adapt to the legislative changes taking place in this respect. Furthermore, the problems caused by the martial law and war in Ukraine and by the COVID-19 pandemic were mentioned as this created certain limitations and difficulties for the implementation of projects. However, they had little to do with the incorporation of the horizontal principle but more to do with general project implementation.

Representatives of the institutions implementing the Programme also confirmed during interviews that compliance with the sustainable development principle posed no major problems. The interviews also suggest that Polish partners have more experience and knowledge regarding compliance with the horizontal policies since Poland has years of experience with projects co-financed by the European Union, where compliance with those principles is verified at every project stage.



*(...) our non-European Union partners are often still learning how to work on projects. How to follow the requirements to be met at project implementation stages. Some time ago, we also had to learn all this and now our partners have to do the same. Not everyone is already experienced with those cross-border projects. Sometimes they are completely new partners and they all meet – have to meet – the requirements for those projects. I find this a positive element of the projects.*

*Source: individual in-depth interview.*

### Equal opportunities for women and men

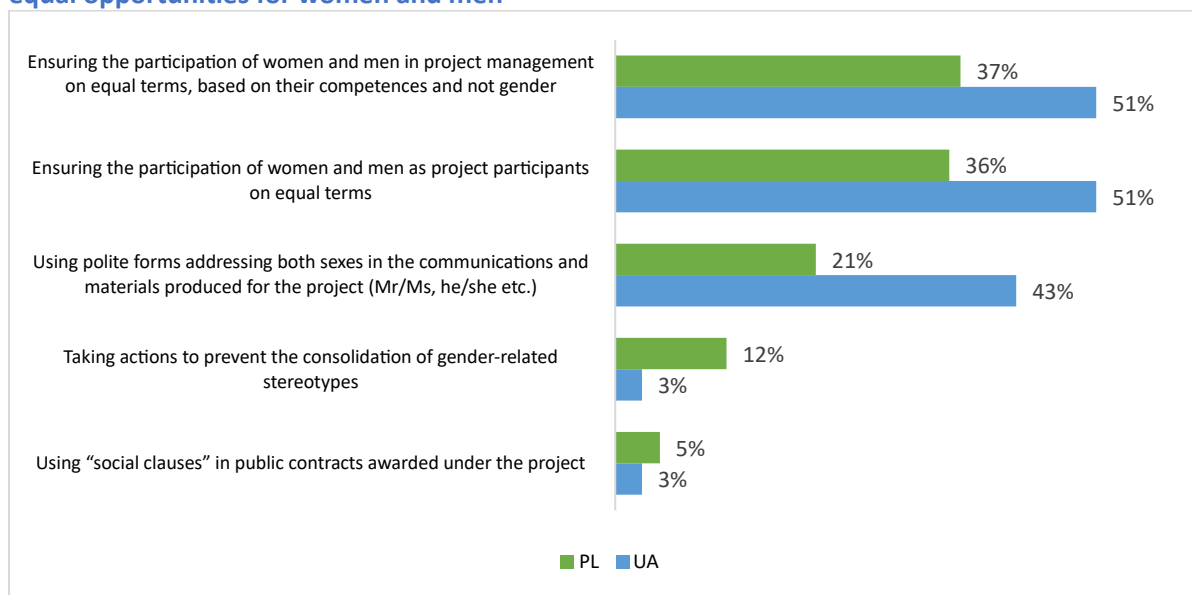
Analysis of the projects completed under the Programme shows that the principle of equal opportunities for women and men was complied with in the projects but the survey respondents usually stated that their projects were neutral when it came to that principle. The distribution of the partners' responses suggests that the most common solutions applied in the projects were: ensuring the participation of women and men in project management on equal terms, relying on competences rather than gender as the selection criterion; subsequently, ensuring the participation of women and men as project participants on equal terms; using polite forms addressing both sexes in the communications and materials produced as a part of the project (Mr/Ms, he/she etc.); actions were taken to prevent the consolidation of gender-related stereotypes; and "social clauses"<sup>32</sup> were used in public contracts awarded under the project. The case studies attached hereto also present how the horizontal principle was complied with by selected projects. In the case studies, beneficiaries mentioned such solutions as: involving both women and men in the project, treating both sexes equally, hiring people only based on their experience. Still, in the opinion of beneficiaries, some projects analysed in case studies had a neutral impact on the principle of equal opportunities for men and women.

In general, beneficiaries did not mention any difficulties in respecting the principle of equal opportunities for women and men on the projects. In the survey, one Ukrainian partner signalled a problem arising from the geopolitical situation in Ukraine (related to the limited participation of men due to the martial law, which most likely entails reduced participation of men in social life and in events given the compulsory conscription into the armed forces of men up to the age of 65) and another one mentioned a problem connected with the language barrier, which may suggest that the partner misunderstood the principle.

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<sup>32</sup> *In public procurement processes, the contracting authority may define additional social requirements, i.e. the social clauses, for instance by obligating the contractors to hire people from specific groups or by precisely specifying the forms of hiring the individuals performing specific activities under the contract.*

**Chart 45. Types of project activities undertaken by Polish and Ukrainian partners with regard to equal opportunities for women and men**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) and Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.

### Equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities

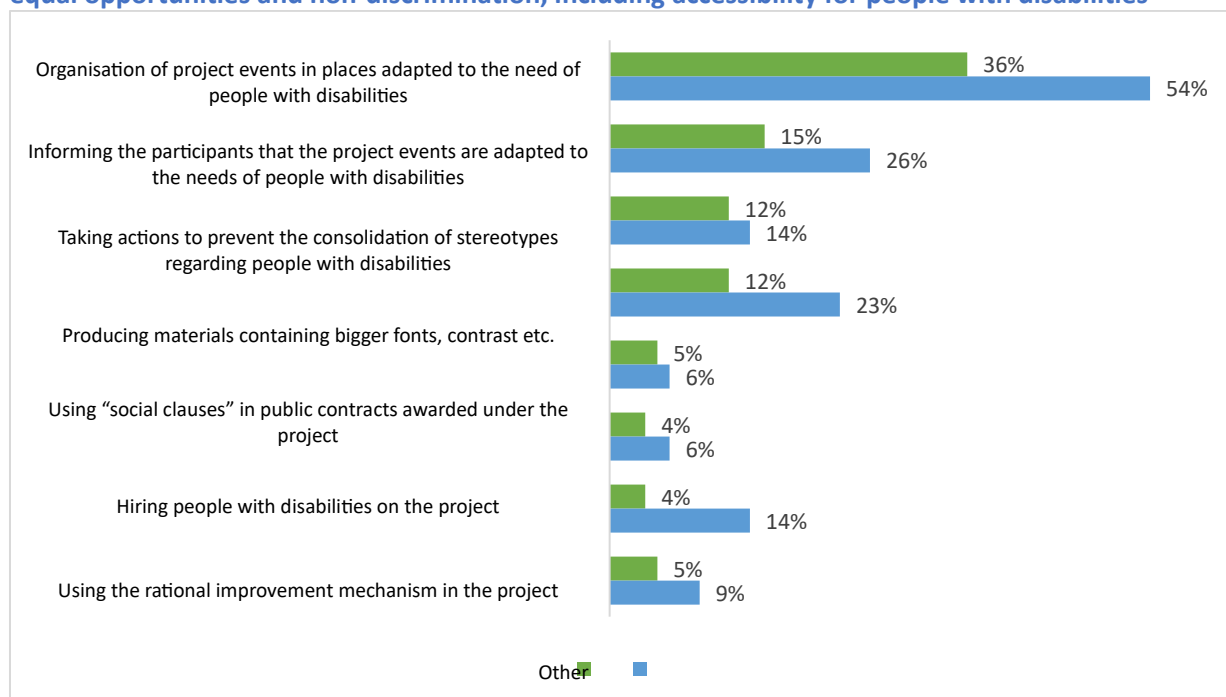
The projects followed the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities, which means allowing everyone, without any discrimination based on gender, race or origin, to fairly and fully participate in all spheres of life on the same terms. The principle applies the most to cross-border cooperation (European cooperation) programmes because such projects substantially focus on accessibility criteria, both on Programme level and in aspects related to project promotion, execution and implementation. According to the applicable laws and guidelines, infrastructural projects must make it possible for people with disabilities to use the infrastructure and thus relevant solutions (especially on the Polish side of the eligible area) are becoming a basic requirement. The implementation of appropriate solutions dedicated to people with disabilities encountered no major problems during the implementation of soft projects (training, conferences, workshops). The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the cancellation of the physical form of many events and initiatives and sent them to a remote mode, ensured equal access for groups of the disabled (with mobility impairments).

The types of solutions applied in projects to further the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities, were studied for example based on the CAWI results. The most responses of Polish and Ukrainian partners were related to such solutions as organisation of events in places adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, i.e. in places without architectural barriers (54% of the responses from Ukrainian partners and 36% of the responses from Polish partners). The other solutions were: informing the participants that the project events were adapted to the needs of people with disabilities; using bigger fonts, contrast etc. in written materials; preventing the consolidation of stereotypes related to people with disabilities; using the rational improvement mechanism in projects.

Additional solutions identified by partners on the Polish side of the support were: building the infrastructure adapted to people with disabilities; improving project accessibility for people with

disabilities; increasing access to social services for people with disabilities. Ukrainian partners and beneficiaries mentioned, as an example, meetings with people with disabilities and parents of disabled children to discuss the problems connected with mobility in the city and the solutions to such problems. The outcomes included the release of an audiobook with a printed version and the development of a catalogue with recipes for traditional dishes in the Braille code. A different project engaged people with disabilities in project activities (people in wheelchairs and visually-impaired individual) as equal partners.

**Chart 46. Types of project activities undertaken by Polish and Ukrainian partners with regard to equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish (n=84) and Ukrainian (n=35) project beneficiaries and partners.

When asked about the difficulties in complying with the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities, the respondents answered that there were none. However, some Ukrainian entities gave answers suggesting that their projects were hindered by poorly developed accessibility infrastructure in the region in Ukraine and the implementation of appropriate measures to comply with the principle required major expenses and additional funds.

**Chapter summary:**

To sum up, it must be emphasised that projects pursued under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 respected and complied with the horizontal principles. The requirement to comply with the horizontal principles resulted in practical project solutions. However, it must be noted that some Programme beneficiaries were non-EU countries lacking major experience in EU projects, they may be less familiar with project solutions respecting particular horizontal policies. This leads to a conclusion that training is needed to present examples of possible solutions ensuring compliance with particular policies.

## 3.2. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

*Research question: Did the designed Programme implementation system, including the applied procedures and solutions, guarantee compliance with the horizontal principles?*

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The respect for and compliance with the horizontal principles was required directly by the Programme provisions (5<sup>th</sup> revision, 9 December 2022). The principles were described in chapter 3.4 Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues as ‘cross-cutting issues.’ However, unlike the other programmes of this financial perspective, the Programme describes only the cross-cutting issues linked to sustainable development (natural environment, human rights, including gender equality, HIV, AIDS and raising the social awareness in the areas of healthcare, democracy.<sup>33</sup> The Programme does not mention equal treatment of people with disabilities.

The evaluator also studied the five available (beneficiary) Program Manuals: PROGRAMME MANUAL part II IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL version III as of December 2020, PROJECTS ADDRESSING MIGRATORY CHALLENGES Direct Award Manual, PROGRAMME MANUAL part I – APPLICANT 1<sup>st</sup> CALL FOR PROPOSALS ver. VII September 2022, PODRĘCZNIK PROGRAMU DRUGI NABÓR WNIOSKÓW (Małe projekty) Dziedzictwo wer. 5.0 and PODRĘCZNIK PROGRAMU TRZECI NABÓR WNIOSKÓW (Małe projekty) Dziedzictwo wer. 3.0.

It must be stated that the manuals describe the cross-cutting issues modestly and inconsistently. Chapter ‘4.4. Ensuring equal opportunities’ of the first manual, i.e. PROGRAMME MANUAL part II IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL version III as of December 2020, describes issues related to ensuring equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation. Chapter ‘4.5 Environmental issues’ mentioned the need to promote sustainable development, both through the adopted approach and through solutions.

Another document – PROJECTS ADDRESSING MIGRATORY CHALLENGES Direct Award Manual, in chapter 2.3.3 on project eligibility, only briefly mentions that no actions having a negative environmental impact or failing to respect the rules of the other EU horizontal policies are allowed under the Programme.

The PROGRAMME MANUAL PART I – APPLICANT 1<sup>st</sup> CALL FOR PROPOSALS does not say anything about horizontal principles at all.

Both manuals issued in Polish – PODRĘCZNIK PROGRAMU DRUGI NABÓR WNIOSKÓW (Małe projekty) Dziedzictwo wer. 5.0 and PODRĘCZNIK PROGRAMU TRZECI NABÓR WNIOSKÓW (Małe projekty) Dziedzictwo wer. 3.0 – address the issue of horizontal principles but the matter is described in different parts of both documents (although in both documents in the same chapters). Chapter 7.6 describes the issue of accessibility and respect for the rights of people with disabilities in project planning and implementation. Chapters 9.7 and 9.8 describe the EU rules on equal opportunities

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<sup>33</sup> *It must be noted that three horizontal principles are currently addressed: the principle of promoting the equality of men and women, the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including the accessibility for people with disabilities, and the principle of sustainable development.*

(based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation) and environmental issues.

The grant application templates, for both large infrastructure projects and the remaining projects, were designed to address cross-cutting issues such as sustainable development (of the natural environment), human rights, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, democracy.<sup>34</sup> Beneficiaries were requested to state in the application if the project impact on each of the issues was negative, neutral or positive and to explain their choice in the descriptive part.

Analysis of the Programme documents shows that the **designed Programme implementation system, including its procedures and solutions, failed to describe explicitly enough how the horizontal principles were expected to be complied with.** The basic problem involved the (beneficiary) Programme Manuals, where the principles were described inconsistently, which opened room for the beneficiaries to adopt different approaches, interpretations and implementation methods.

Despite this assessment of the Programme documents, many Programme beneficiaries were of the opinion that they had no problems complying with the horizontal principles. According to one of them:

*(...) all the principles were fully complied with beyond any doubt, very clearly, across all Programme implementation stages. This element was thoroughly verified at the project evaluation stage and the verification was confirmed with an appropriate score assigned to compliance with particular horizontal principles. At the project implementation stage, the project implementation guidelines developed by the MA and the JTS clearly defined how to incorporate the horizontal principles.<sup>35</sup>*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

However, according to a different interviewee:

*(...) we know that those principles were treated on a “tick the boxes” basis in the grant application and later in the report. It was in fact irrelevant whether someone has done something or not.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

Furthermore:

*The Programme required those principles so there were appropriate provisions in the evaluation matrix at the application evaluation stage. But to be honest (...) it is hard to prove that a beneficiary is implementing a project in violation of those principles. So on the one hand, this was no problem but perhaps that’s because it wasn’t thoroughly checked. Although we do have nonconformity reporting*

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<sup>34</sup> Unlike in the Poland-Russia Programme 2014-2020 evaluated concurrently by the Team, the application for the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme 2014-2020 did not include a description regarding the cross-cutting issue ‘Equal treatment of people with disabilities.

<sup>35</sup> The respondent mentions the Visibility Guidelines. However, in our opinion, this document, available at <https://www.pbu2020.eu/files>, does not include information on horizontal principles.

*mechanisms and if a beneficiary was actually limiting the participation of some part of the society in the project, we would definitely know about this.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

Finally, we should bring up the opinion on horizontal principles of one interviewee who claimed that no violation of the horizontal policies (principles) was identified.

The 2020 Interim Evaluation of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 Programme confirms that “both the principle of promoting the equality between men and women and non-discrimination and the sustainable development principle is respected by the Programme beneficiaries. However, what needs to be pointed out is the relatively low awareness of the meaning of those principles.”<sup>36</sup> Just like in other programmes implemented at that time, the way of complying the principle of gender equality “mostly comes down to demonstrating a neutral project impact or the presence of typical solutions, routinely applied in the majority of projects, which are only designed to guarantee that the basic requirement is fulfilled.”<sup>37</sup> As far as the sustainable development principle is concerned, the interim evaluation has shown that the projects “in most cases do not include innovative solutions but they only concentrate on complying with the requirement.”<sup>38</sup>

One of the project managers selected for an in-depth interview as a part of the case studies:

*(...) for example, someone writes that the positive environmental impact (of the project) is that light bulbs will be replaced everywhere with energy-efficient ones. And this is of course complete rubbish but it also shows that people have problem with this, I mean they know that since they need 3 points for this in the application, they write whatever comes to their mind.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

On the other hand, the same person drew attention to the need for a rational approach to determining if the project has a neutral or positive impact on compliance with the horizontal principles:

*(...) as the implementing parties, we accepted for example the fact that beneficiaries simply have a neutral approach to certain principles, meaning they do not act against them. (...) I think that when it comes to micro-projects, this is enough. Beneficiaries are already aware that this is simply a must. (...) It is hard for me to imagine that a micro-project could have a drastically harmful impact on the environment. To me, the most crucial thing (...) is the accessibility for people with disabilities.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, the CAWI conducted for this evaluation with Polish Programme beneficiaries shows a more or less equal distribution of answers that the projects have either a positive or a neutral impact on the compliance with the three horizontal principles:

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<sup>36</sup> Interim Evaluation of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 Programme, Gdańsk 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

sustainable development, equal opportunities for women and men and equal opportunities and non-discrimination. In the case of sustainable development, responses regarding a positive impact slightly prevailed (54% versus 46%), whereas for the two other principles, neutral impact was identified more often than positive impact (58% versus 42% for equal opportunities for women and men and 54% versus 46% for equal opportunities and non-discrimination). An analogical study involving Ukrainian beneficiaries gave more answers claiming a positive impact of the projects on all the three horizontal principles (74% for sustainable development and for equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and 57% for equal opportunities for women and men).

The experts from the Delphi study also were of the opinion that compliance with the sustainable development principle was important or very important in cross-border cooperation. The issues of non-discrimination and accessibility for people with disabilities were considered as having average or low importance. Issues related to equal opportunities for women and men were assigned the lowest importance.

So it can be concluded that the designed Programme implementation system forced the beneficiaries to see the compliance with the horizontal principles as something important. According to respondents in the qualitative study:

*Beneficiaries are socially sensitive and they address the needs of certain groups. In certain cases, compliance with the principles is required by the applicable laws (e.g. the construction law defines the width of crossings etc.)*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

Analysis of the project data sheets for infrastructural projects shows that the construction law requirements and the construction best practice were additional arguments in favour of the application of the horizontal principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination and sustainable development. According to one of the interviewees:

*As far as the disability issue is concerned, there is definitely a huge progress when compared to the past.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

Representatives of one of the Monitoring Committees participating in in-depth interviews stated that beneficiaries were aware and knew that the Programme would require them to be familiar with and respect the horizontal principles:

*(..) much more than in historical times. The horizontal issues receive much more attention in Interact programmes and are awarded points (...). It is not enough to tick the box now – the issue needs to be approached descriptively and often some evidence is needed.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

At the same time, there have been cases where the descriptions of compliance with the horizontal principles were not entirely correct but still were approved by the MC. If this happened, the auditors of the project were unable to challenge the project implementation method due to its failure to respect a horizontal principle. It was mentioned during the interview:

*(...) if someone has described it incorrectly in the application, then even if we see that perhaps some did not comply with this horizontal principle, we are unable to demonstrate this because this is how the Monitoring Committee approved the grant application.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

The causes of this situation may include absence horizontal principles performance indicators among the required project indicators.

Seeing the problems related to the compliance with the horizontal principles at the Programme level and considering the activities under other programmes of the 2014-2020 perspective in this regards, interviewees were asked during in-depth interviews about possible training in this area. One of the interviewees said:

*(...) there was probably some (need to organise training) but we communicated the requirements during the information and promotion training and, rather than showing how to do something, we discussed the effect to be achieved.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

Some of the problems signalled in the chapter was already eliminated at the stage of preparing the documents regarding the implementation of aid programmes for the next programming period, i.e. 2021-2027. According to the information obtained during in-depth interviews:

*(...) now we have every principle described. It is no longer the way it was in the 2014-2020 perspective, where the beneficiaries stated that the impact on a certain policy was neutral (...). Now the beneficiaries will have to describe if the impact is negative or positive. If it is positive, they will have to specify how (their projects contribute to each principle). Now the indicators will be designed to show what they are doing and how. The accessibility principle – a special manual is being prepared right now to show how this is supposed to be done.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

#### **Chapter summary:**

Despite the absence of clear provisions regarding the horizontal principles in the beneficiary manuals, the Programme implementation system ensured the compliance with those principles. However, certain inconsistencies were identified, arising mainly from the approach to describing and subsequently implementing the horizontal principles. The information provided to beneficiaries on the principles was insufficient and allowed the beneficiaries to adopt different (inconsistent) approaches and different (not always optimum) ways of complying with them.



### 3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FURTHER COMPLIANCE WITH THE HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

*Research question: What solutions could be applied in to ensure compliance with the horizontal principles in the new programming period?*

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Since some Programme beneficiaries are non-EU countries lacking major experience with procedures and projects funded by the EU, they may be less familiar with project solutions respecting particular horizontal policies. This leads to a conclusion that **training is needed to present examples of possible solutions ensuring compliance with particular policies**. The financial perspective 2021-2027 should offer training to present the possible solutions for particular project types or a document laying down the best practice in this respect, as was also mentioned in the previous Programme evaluation.<sup>39</sup> According to the suggestion expressed during individual interviews, it would be a good idea to develop a publication about the best practice for compliance with the analysed principle at the project level and to post the publication on the website of each programme.

As was stated in the previous chapter, attempts were already made in programmes of the current financial perspective 2021-2027 to solve a number of problems related to the application of horizontal principles. It should be monitored how those solutions are being implemented and adjustments should be made as necessary.

It is not possible to determine beyond doubt if another, separate manual is the best place to describe the permissible approach to particular principles. According to the evaluator, the problems described in the previous chapters suggest that the **horizontal principles should be properly described in the (beneficiary) Programme Manual, which is the second most important document governing the implementation of the Programme, right after the Programme document**. First of all, the document must be a place where all the important information and requirements regarding the horizontal principles are gathered. This should be included in one chapter dedicate to this matter only. Beneficiaries cannot be required to search several chapters for the information they need, especially if the information is merely mentioned as an addition to descriptions of other procedures.

The Manual should specify examples of how to comply with the horizontal principles for particular project types (themes) and depending on project size. The requirement to explain the positive impact on certain principles must be waived for certain project types, such as purchase of a fire engine or development of a sanitary sewage system versus the principle of equality between women and men. In general, it must be highlighted that horizontal principles must by commonly applied but also that not every project is required to have a positive impact on each principle.

**It must be precisely stated that although the commonly used solutions, e.g. energy-efficient light bulbs, contribute to sustainable development, they cannot be the main element of compliance with this principle.** Similarly, the requirements of the applicable standards and regulations must be analysed (e.g. the construction law) and a clear distinction should be drawn between what is required by those standards and regulations and what actions can/should be taken to comply with the horizontal principles.

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<sup>39</sup> *Interim Evaluation of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 Programme, Gdańsk 2020.*

**Training focusing exclusively on the horizontal principles must be provided before the start of the call for proposal.** Given the importance of the matter (and the problems it causes), the training cannot be merely an addition to other seminars (e.g. as an extra training block). The training should be provided by experts having practical experience in preparing and implementing projects co-financed by the European Union.

Another issue is to verify the time required to check the submitted applications, especially the time needed to verify how the horizontal principles are going to be addressed, and to establish such time limits to permit an appropriate analysis of this issue, appropriate supplementation or proper adjustments.

At the same time, it would be beneficial to introduce indicators reflecting the compliance of every project with the horizontal principles. The process must be monitored in order to select the indicators that best reflect every horizontal principle. It must be remembered and communicated to potential beneficiaries that not every project has to be described with indicators applying to each principle.

## IV. INFORMATION AND PROMOTION

### 4.1. PERFORMANCE OF INFORMATION AND PROMOTION OBJECTIVES

*Research question: Did the tools and activities included in the Programme Communication Strategy effectively and efficiently further the information and promotion objectives of the Programme?*

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This chapter presents the conclusions regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the information and promotion activities. They are expanded in the next chapter by the results of the quantitative study involving project partners, which is followed by the development of recommendations regarding the 2021-2027 information and promotion activities. The presented conclusions rely on the desk research and on in-depth interviews with representatives of the institutions responsible for the implementation of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. We should first refer to the content of the Programme (section 5.7 *Communication Strategy and Information and Communication Plan*), which defines the main objectives of such activities, the target groups, the institutions responsible for communications, the basic assumptions of the communication strategy, the logo, the main communication channels and the sources of funding. The same document includes also a brief description of the information activities planned to be undertaken in the first Programme implementation year (2016). Other assumptions of this type for particular years were included in the annual Information and Communication Plans and the effects of those activities were described in Annual Reports. Those documents were also analysed to determine which of the Programme assumptions were actually achieved.

To address the research question, we must be emphasise that no separate Programme Communication Strategy document was developed during the 2014-2020 perspective but the Programme content included no provisions that would require the MA to prepare it. As has been mentioned, the information and promotion activities were defined in the annual Action Plans. It must be noted that in the current perspective, a Communication Strategy<sup>40</sup> was developed for the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027, which is seen as a good move as it makes it possible to plan such activities in the long run. This also permits defining long-term goals for the activities, links the scope of the events to the Programme progress status and defines the basic indicators for better management of the process for implementing the information and promotion activities. Still, the absence of a Strategy neither prevented nor adversely affected (although it potentially could have) the effectiveness and efficiency of such activities in the 2014-2020 perspective. By defining the general objectives and directions in the Programme content and then applying specific and detailed provisions in the Annual Plans, it was possible to adapt the activities to the Programme progress status, the current needs of the recipients and, primarily, the changes arising from external factors, especially the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine supported by Belarus.

According to the content of the Programme, *“The main objective of informational and promotional activities is to provide the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, as well as the general public with*

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<sup>40</sup> [https://pl-ua.eu/files/uploads/pages\\_en/pbu2021-2027/documents/PL-UA%20Communication%20Strategy\\_21.06.2023.pdf](https://pl-ua.eu/files/uploads/pages_en/pbu2021-2027/documents/PL-UA%20Communication%20Strategy_21.06.2023.pdf) (access: 04/12/2023).

*a wide access to information on the Programme and its financing sources, and simultaneously to strengthen the cooperation between partners/countries participating in the Programme and to implement the Programme more effectively.”* To assess how far the objective was achieved, the list of completed information and promotion activities included in the Annual Reports was analysed.

The first works connected with the information and promotion activities started in 2015, when the Programme logo was designed. The year 2016 was a time of intense preparation of events to summarise the effects of cross-border cooperation programmes to date and to present the commencing perspective and the project support possibilities – the **Bukowiec conference**, summarising the 2007-2013 period and concurrently opening the Programme for the 2014-2020 period, and the **2nd Cross-border Academy of Development in Janowiec**. This approach of linking the old and the new perspective is found to be efficient and useful as it makes it possible to inform the existing beneficiaries of the possibilities of continuing or developing their projects or undertaking new initiatives. This also helps avoid the costs of holding an event opening the new perspective. Such separate events would require additional involvement of the entities interested in participation, including the potential applicants. The grand opening of the Rzeszów Branch took place in the same year.

In 2016 and 2017, intense activities were addressed primarily to potential applicants – the **Partner Search Forum in Lublin**, the training for beneficiaries of large infrastructure projects and a whole series of training sessions for entities interested in applying for funding. The scale of the last activity is impressive, with meetings for almost 1200 people held in a total of 34 cities (14 in Poland, 8 in Belarus, 12 in Ukraine). Furthermore, the workshops for project leaders covered 4 cities and had 750 participants. To focus on activities addressed to potential beneficiaries in that period and on communicating the support possibilities offered by the Programme is seen as a positive thing. The main purpose of the institutions involved in Programme implementation in the initial years should be to provide proper information to the entities that can pursue projects. The next aspect to be addressed is to allow the institutions expressing preliminary interest in the funding to deepen their knowledge and learn about the conditions to be met to receive the money and the rules of applying and, subsequently, implementing projects.

In 2017, the scope of the activities addressed to the public was also expanded by such events as two editions of the Summer Youth Academy, the European Cooperation Days, major events connected with the 15th anniversary of the cross-border cooperation, the Annual Event and other. The participants of the events no longer were mainly the potential beneficiaries as more and more events were addressed to the inhabitants, experts and representatives of various institutions participating in the conferences, forums, congresses etc. The message that was conveyed became more related to the projects that were being or were planned to be implemented and to the progress statuses. An increasing role was played by activities related to informing the broadly understood public about the Programme and the sources of the funding for projects. In the 2017-2019 period, representatives of the institutions related to Programme implementation continued to participate in external events where the funding possibilities were presented. The number and diversity of such meetings and their form adapted to the characteristics of the audience (e.g. young people) are the factors that make them highly effective. They made it possible to achieve the objectives regarding the communication of the information about the Programme and the sources of its funding to the general public.

In 2019 and 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, large-scale meetings addressed to various audiences were continued: training for potential applicants, workshops for beneficiaries, art exhibitions, study visits, annual events, conferences etc. In the first half of the programming period, a website dedicated to the Programme was created and updated, social media accounts (Facebook and YouTube) were managed, articles were published in the press, events were announced on the radio, newsletters were sent, Manuals were prepared (in two parts: with information on the application process and with information useful at the project implementation stage), separately for regular projects, large infrastructure projects and micro-projects. Additionally, regular e-mail and phone consultations were held with entities interested in applying and with beneficiaries.

In 2020, restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic were introduced and as a result the planned information and promotion activities had to be transferred online. The process of modifying the plans and assumptions seems to have been handled efficiently and to have had no negative impact on the attainment of the objectives defined in the Programme for communication activities. In order to communicate information about the project, online activities were launched: News, as well as cycles: Project of the week, Project stories and Holidays with PBU projects. The Programme website became more used to present the outcomes of the first completed projects. A number of online competitions were also organised.

It was a challenge for the institutions responsible for implementing the Programme to reorganise the planned information and promotion activities and transfer them to the remote sphere:

*The pandemic was the first time when we had to think how to reformulate certain projects, that is how to transfer events planned for the real work to the virtual world. I think that this was the turning point where we started to look at meetings differently. Before that, we thought that the virtual world wasn't right for us, that we had to meet face to face. But the pandemic showed that we could actually meet virtually, that this even saved our time, was less costly and that this actually worked.*

*Source: Individual in-depth interview.*

The necessity related to COVID-19 increased the significance of modern communication channels – online events, information distributed through social media – while it undermined the importance of traditional forms, including face-to-face meetings. The inability to organise physical meetings addressed to a broad public, including outdoor meetings and the Annual Event, had a moderately negative impact on the usefulness of the information and promotion activities. It was no longer possible to attract various audiences of promotional communications who used to come to events because they found them appealing and then, during the events, they learned about the effects of the Programme, for example children, they local people, people not using social media etc. Still, it must be stated that moving the communication activities online (fully for some time and later to a greater extent than originally assumed) required substantial creativity and flexibility on the part of the individuals responsible for those activities. This also made the activities more efficient, especially activities addressed to beneficiaries – a similar number of people participated in online training and workshops but the cost of their organisation was much lower (both for beneficiaries and for representatives of the institutions implementing the Programme).

Another key factor affecting the information and promotion activities was Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine in 2022 supported by Belarus. The cooperation with the Belarusian side was suspended immediately and the situation required changing the communication methods and the project visualisation rules. The beneficiaries were relatively quickly informed what they were expected to modify given the situation and what further steps they must take in connection with the projects. Our evaluation is that the institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme, although the factor was completely beneath their control, ensured efficient continuation of projects and relatively quickly modified the planned information and promotion activities.

Addressing the Programme provisions (section 5.7) and the methods of achieving information and promotion objectives presented therein, we must conclude that they were attained in the 2014-2020 perspective. Activities described as *“providing constant information on the possibilities of financing being granted, as well as on the objectives and priorities of the Programme and the steps to be taken to apply for funds, as well as the criteria for project selection”* were carried out primarily in the first half of the programming period. Such activities were partially connected with the conclusion of the 2007-2013 perspective and with the presentation of the positive effects of the projects completed so far. Initially, the communications regarding the possibility of receiving funding for projects were addressed to a relatively wide audience. As the Programme progressed and the calls for proposals were launched, focus was given to more precisely defined activities (e.g. workshops related to writing grant applications, development of manuals for applicants and beneficiaries). Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities were efficiently and successfully transferred online, which improved their efficiency

Activities connected with *“informing the general public on the state of the Programme's accomplishment, on a regular basis, in particular on the results of the support and best practice in joint projects”* were largely determined by the restrictions related to COVID-19. It was temporarily impossible to carry out activities which representatives of the institutions connected with Programme implementation saw as the most useful, i.e. open meetings for the inhabitants. A major role was played at that time by online activities (social media, Programme website with the already mentioned new types of information, information in online press and on the radio). The termination of the pandemic-related restrictions made it possible to return to face-to-face meetings, that is a meeting form that is the most appreciated by representatives of the JTS. Here are some opinions expressed about the 2022 annual event:

*We had an evening concert afterwards, awards were given for the stamp competition and because of that people stayed until the end of the event and watched the evening concerts. People were inconsolable because a storm unfortunately ended the concert without the encore and they were having tremendous fun at the concert. It was a really good event. And to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Programme, we decided to prepare 20 events –10 in Ukraine and 10 in Poland. And this is what we did.*

Source: Individual in-depth interview.

As a result of the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Belarus was excluded from the activities addressed to the public, which is fully justified and understandable.

The activity type described in the Programme as “ensuring the visibility of EU funding” was implemented on an ongoing basis in all types of activities through appropriate information notices, logotypes, visualisation rules for materials developed and published both by the institutions implementing the Programme and by beneficiaries. A continuing important role in such activities is played by information boards put up on project sites.

#### **Chapter summary:**

The evaluation of the information and promotion activities implemented for the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 shows that their effectiveness and efficiency were relatively high. In the second half of the programming period, those activities were substantially affected by two crucial external factors (beyond the control of the institutions responsible for Programme implementation): the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine supported by Belarus and the resulting termination of the cooperation with the Belarusian side. As a result of the restrictions introduced to contain the pandemic, all the activities were temporarily implemented on a remote basis (online).

In the case of activities addressed to applicants and beneficiaries, the change in the nature and form of actions did not make the activities less useful. Wide-range activities were continued to communicate the support possibilities, training and workshops were still delivered and communication channels were maintained to answer any questions and doubts. The quality of such activities was evaluated as high. The fact that the activities addressed to this target group were transferred online increased their efficiency (as it reduced the costs while preserving the same effects).

Activities addressed to a wider audience (the inhabitants) were limited by the aforementioned external factors to a greater extent, which temporarily reduced their effectiveness. The effect of promoting Programme results was adversely affected because the online formula temporarily reduced the audience of the communications. For obvious reasons, the suspension of the cooperation with the Belarusian side further reduced the range of the information and promotion activities. The efficiency of such activities remained at the same level (cost reduction arising from the online formula from the smaller territorial range but also lower effects). Still, it seems that the planned activities were successfully adjusted despite the difficulties connected with the external factors and thus the objectives defined for the Programme were achieved.

## **4.2. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INFORMATION AND PROMOTION TOOLS**

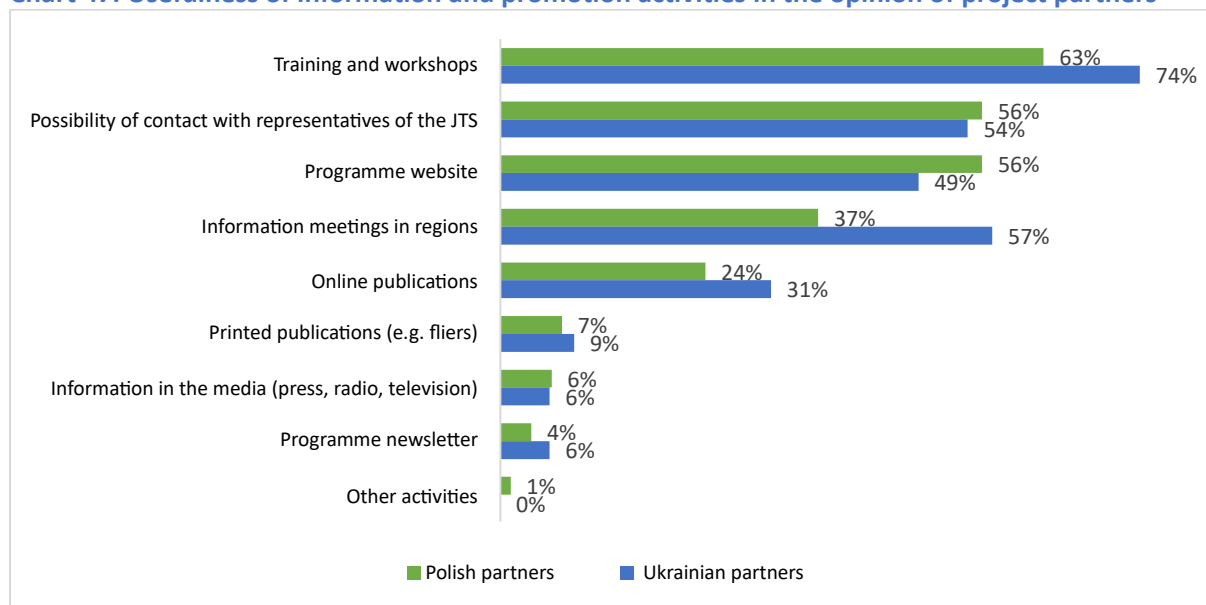
*Research question: Which of the information and promotion tools were the most effective and visibly reached the applicants and beneficiaries? Which tools failed to bring the intended effect?*

The conclusions presented in the previous chapter are connected with the criterion of effectiveness (how far the activities further the objectives, in this case the objectives of the information and promotion activities defined in the Programme) and efficiency (the cost-to-effect ratio) and they are also partially linked to usefulness (how far the information and promotion activities respond to the needs of their audience). This chapter deepens the evaluation of effectiveness and usefulness as it analyses the opinions expressed by recipients of the activities carried out by the institutions involved in the Programme implementation process. The research techniques applied in the evaluation make it

possible to present the opinions of project partners (representatives of the Polish and Ukrainian side) and the resulting data serves as the basis for the conclusions presented in this part of the Report.

In the quantitative study (CAWI/CATI), (Polish and Ukrainian) partners were asked which information and promotion activities they found the most helpful. Every respondent could identify up to three types of activities. The following chart presents the distribution of answers.

**Chart 47. Usefulness of information and promotion activities in the opinion of project partners**



Source: own compilation based on the CAWI with Polish and Ukrainian project beneficiaries and partners.

In both groups, the highest percentage of respondents (63% of Polish partners and 74% of Ukrainian partners) stated that training and workshops were the most useful. The respondents explained their opinion by saying that this allowed them to learn more about the process of applying for funding and implementing the projects. The respondents also mentioned the possibility of direct contact with the JTS representatives and other beneficiaries and the possibility of discussing practical issues, listening to other beneficiaries, exchanging experience and finding solutions together. This result confirms high effectiveness because training and workshops made it possible to achieve the objective of the information and promotion activities connected with *“providing constant information on the possibilities of financing being granted, as well as on the objectives and priorities of the Programme and the steps to be taken to apply for funds, as well as the criteria for project selection.”* It is also reflects well on the people who prepared the training programme (good identification of the current needs of the participants) and delivered the training (efficient use of time).

The second most frequent answer was the possibility of contact with a JTS representative (56% of Polish partners and 54% of Ukrainian partners). This is a high result which reflects well on the role the JTS plays for beneficiaries. It must be remembered that during the implementation of the Programme in 2014-2020, it was necessary to properly respond to the powerful external factors beyond the control of the implementing institutions. Both the beneficiaries and the partners were highly concerned about the possibilities and rules regarding the continuation of projects. Beneficiaries had a lot of questions and expectations towards the Joint Secretariat so they had frequent phone and e-mail contacts. Wanting to provide as reliable and precise answers as possible, the JTS representatives



often had to contact other institutions (mainly the MA). So considering the external factors, the high percentage of respondents seeing the JTS's actions connected with contact with project partners as useful is a very positive thing.

Representatives of the Ukrainian side found the information meetings in regions useful (57% of responses), unlike Polish entities, who were much less willing to select this answer (37%). The explanations included the following:

*This is due to the direct communications, the possibility of asking questions, information provided at information meetings is a very good means of communication.*

*It helps broaden the horizons to include the whole region and establish a social network.*

*Source: answers to the open-ended questions in the CAWIs with Polish and Ukrainian project partners.*

The situation was reverse when it came to opinions on the Programme website – it was more useful to the Polish side (56%) than to the Ukrainian side (49%). The explanations were that the website offered full information on the process of applying for and implementing the projects (including document guidelines and templates), it was transparent and easily accessible. Just like in the case of the possibility of contacting a JTS representative, here it was also especially important – given the crisis situations caused by external factors – to promptly post any information relevant to applicants, beneficiaries and partners.

Online publications were found less useful (24% and 31%) and the remaining communication tools were definitely less useful (printed publications, information in the press and on the radio and the newsletter).

The above results show which tools of the information and promotion activities are considered as the most useful and thus the most effective. They further the objective of those activities defined as “providing constant information on the possibilities of financing being granted, as well as on the objectives and priorities of the Programme and the steps to be taken to apply for funds, as well as the criteria for project selection.” It is confirmed that the possibility of direct contact (although sometimes in a remote form) with competent representatives of the institutions implementing the Programme is of the highest importance. From the perspective of applicants and beneficiaries, it is crucial to receive a reliable and binding answer to their doubts, i.e. an answer to be relied on in their actions connected with writing the grant application or implementing the project. The response time is also important. The answers can be provided over the phone/by e-mail, during training and workshops, information meetings etc. but they should be given by competent individuals. Such as the JTS employees.

#### **Chapter summary:**

Results of the quantitative study involving representatives of Polish and Ukrainian partners confirm the previously presented results of the desk research and the in-depth interviews. In the area of information and promotion activities, the effectiveness understood as the level of achieving the objectives is considered as high. In consecutive Programme implementation years, the relevant information needs of potential and actual beneficiaries were satisfied. This applied both to the

application stage and to the project implementation stage. As a result, the Programme objective of providing information on project support possibilities and rules was achieved. The activities of the Joint Technical Secretariat, including training and workshops, regular answers to questions and the website, were considered particularly effective. This was important in connection with the COVID-19 and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, when the beneficiaries needed reliable and binding information on project continuation rules.

### 4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

*Research question: Which information and promotion activities should be continued in the context of their effectiveness and usefulness? Which tools should be used to consolidate the effects of the information and promotion activities?*

The recommendations in this section are based on the conclusions presented in the previous two chapters as regards the usefulness, efficiency and effectiveness of the information and promotion activities undertaken in the Programme in the 2014-2020 period. Since the Programme is continued in the financial perspective 2021-2027 (as the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027), the recommendations apply to the upcoming years. Some of the recommendations are more general and can also apply to other cross-border cooperation programmes. The recommendations rely on the desk research results, in-depth interviews, quantitative study with Polish and Ukrainian project partners and on results of the Delphi study, where experts identified the desired information and promotion activities.

At the beginning of the 2014-2020 perspective, relatively much attention was devoted to the presentation of the effects achieved by the projects completed in the previous Programme edition. This happened both during events organised by the JTS and during external events with the participation of representatives of the implementing institutions. This was considered effective as the communications reach a wider audience. From the perspective of local government units and their subsidiaries, public entities, the NGOs and other potential beneficiaries, it is important to show that the effects made a specific difference. So it is a good idea to continue activities that disseminate information on completed projects and to spread the best practice and present the factors underlying the success.

Just like in the 2014-2020 perspective, the above-mentioned presentation of the effects to date should be combined with information on the possibilities of further use of the support under the new Programme edition. Such meetings are often attended by potential applicants, including previous beneficiaries who may be interested in continuing their projects. Such activities are also recommended from the perspective of efficiency as they reduce the costs while permitting the desired result. An expert taking part in the Delphi study stated as follows:

*Awareness campaigns should be arranged to present the benefits of cross-border cooperation. This may include information about the success of cross-border projects to date as well as the potential development possibilities, such as the funding under cross-border programmes.*

Source: Delphi method.

As has been emphasised in the previous chapter, it is crucial from the perspective of applicants and beneficiaries to be able to ask questions as needed to receive reliable and binding answers regarding the current calls for proposals and the implementation of projects. It is important to provide the possibility of regular contacts with representatives of the institutions responsible for Programme implementation or, in the case of cross-border cooperation programmes, with the JTS representatives. We would like to emphasise that direct contact is needed so in addition to e-mail contact, the possibility of phone contact and face-to-face meeting should be preserved. A high quality of the website (well received by the respondent project partners) should also be ensured, especially it should be legible and easily accessible and it should promptly post current information relevant to applicants and beneficiaries.

The training and workshops are considered as effective and useful. Both Polish and Ukrainian project partners saw this communication tool as meeting their needs the most. Such meetings should still be held but they should be adapted to the current needs, especially the needs linked to the current Programme implementation stage. Among the issues addressed at training, the experts in the Delphi study mentioned such matters as cross-border cooperation rules, application procedures, the upskilling required to implement cross-border projects in such areas as project management, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. Training in a remote format is recommended as this will improve training efficiency and increase the interest of entities located farther from the main office of the JTC. In the case of workshops, it should be decided on a case-by case basis which format – remote or physical – will be more appropriate.

Both the desk research and interviews with representatives of the institutions involved in the Programme show that the most useful and effective activities oriented towards the communication addressed to the inhabitants are open meetings combined with attractions for specific groups: competitions (e.g. art or sports competitions) for children, seniors, amateur athletes etc. Elements of rivalry may be a good idea: contests, quizzes, tournaments with prizes.

**Chapter summary:**

The 2021-2027 perspective should continue those activities which were considered the most effective, useful and efficient. The effects of completed projects and the best practice used to implement them should be presented. This will help widely disseminate effective solutions. In the day-to-day work, the possibility of direct contact between beneficiaries and the JTS representatives should be maintained and a high quality of the website should be ensured (quickly posted information, easy access, legible layout). Training and workshops should meet the current needs of the participants. The most efficient form (remote or stationary) of such activities should be chosen. When it comes to activities addressed to the inhabitants, open meetings and attractive events addressed to specific audiences combined with elements of rivalry and prizes are advised. Social media should be widely used.

## SUMMARY PART

### RECOMMENDATION TABLE

No.	Identified problem	Problem weight <sup>41</sup>	Conclusion	Recommendation	Recommendation addressee	Recommendation implementation method	Expected effect of recommendation implementation	Recommendation implementation time (quarter)	Report section
1	High territorial concentration of support	5	High support concentration is observed in the Programme. The support concentrates mainly in Polish cities and towns with district rights and 3 Ukrainian regions. It also concentrates in big cities – with a population of more than 100,000 (especially on the Ukrainian side). Moreover, the eligible area, even in locations near the border, includes “blank spots” – places where not a single project was implemented under the Programme.	Mechanisms should be introduced to promote even distribution of the support.	The MA of the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027	The mechanisms should include rewarding (e.g. with additional points at the application evaluation stage) projects where at least one entity from the project consortium represents a party having its main office in a district adjacent to the border.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased representation of the districts and municipalities which are now the “blank spots.”</li> <li>More proportionate distribution of the support across the area.</li> </ul>	Q3 2024	Section 1.5
2	Loss of ties to Belarusian partners	3	Entities from Belarus made the smallest group of beneficiaries – both among leaders and partners. However, the loss of the ties	It is recommended that the Łomża subregion, included in the eligible area of the	The MA of the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027	It is recommended that the current shape of the INTERREG Programme Lithuania-Poland 2021-2027 be preserved in terms of the	To include beneficiaries from the subregions that lost partners from Belarus in other cross-border,	Q3 2024	Section 2.6

<sup>41</sup>on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest rating and 5 is the highest rating.

No.	Identified problem	Problem weight <sup>41</sup>	Conclusion	Recommendation	Recommendation addressee	Recommendation implementation method	Expected effect of recommendation implementation	Recommendation implementation time (quarter)	Report section
			affects the cross-border cooperation prospects in the eligible area. Even though few, the partnerships broke apart and as a result it is no longer possible to jointly react to the cross-border challenges and threats. This project gap may be slightly compensated for by the inclusion of the eligible area in other cooperation programmes.	INTERREG Programme Lithuania-Poland 2021-2027 based on the EC Implementing Decision 2023/1638 of 14 August 2023, remain covered under the Programme.		range of the support on the Polish side.	transregional and interregional programmes.		
3	Challenges related to supporting cross-border projects in the area of the environment	5	The study has recognised a major interest of potential applicants in activities related to sewage infrastructure and water management. Such undertakings were particularly desired in Ukraine. The Programme assumptions did not directly provide for projects of this type. Given the substantial needs in this area and the necessity to implement pilot projects related to the introduction of the EU water and sewage	Joint cross-border activities in the area of the environment and the prevention of negative consequences of climate changes should be continued in the next financial perspectives.	The MA of the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027	To establish a priority related to the environment and to prevent the negative consequences of climate changes as a part of the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 and as part of the new Programme after 2027.	Improved condition of the environment as a result of cross-border projects involving the adaptation to climate changes and the prevention of the risks related to natural disasters, water management, nature and biodiversity protection and limitation of contaminants under the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027	Q1 2028	1.6

No.	Identified problem	Problem weight <sup>41</sup>	Conclusion	Recommendation	Recommendation addressee	Recommendation implementation method	Expected effect of recommendation implementation	Recommendation implementation time (quarter)	Report section
			management standards in Ukraine as well as the needs connected with nature conservation and biodiversity protection and rational management of natural resources, it is reasonable to finance such activities under the new INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027 and under the new Programme after 2027.				and the new Programme after 2027.		
4	The need to increase the involvement of children and teenagers in projects	2	The study shows that projects should put more emphasis on joint (educational, inclusive) activities addressed to children and teenagers given the high potential of this social group for building the future cooperation based on mutual understanding and openness, without historical bias.	Additional incentives are recommended to encourage educational and inclusive activities addressed to children and teenagers in projects pursued under the priorities: Environment, Tourism, Health, Accessibility.	The MA of the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027	To reward (at the application evaluation stage) projects which involve educational and integration activities addressed to children and teenagers.	The youngest generation being more involved in building positive cross-border relations and developing attitudes based on mutual respect and openness.	Q1 2024	1.6
5	The need to identify the possible	2	The study has identified some difficulties in understanding the	The financial perspective 2021-2027 should offer	The MA of the INTERREG NEXT Programme	To deliver beneficiary training dedicated to a range of solutions regarding project	Better understanding of the horizontal principles, raised	Q1 2024	Section 3.3.

No.	Identified problem	Problem weight <sup>41</sup>	Conclusion	Recommendation	Recommendation addressee	Recommendation implementation method	Expected effect of recommendation implementation	Recommendation implementation time (quarter)	Report section
	solutions for respecting the horizontal principles		horizontal principles, especially the sustainable development principle. This applies especially to Ukrainian beneficiaries.	training to present the possible solutions for particular project types or a document laying down the best practice in this respect, as was also mentioned in the previous Programme evaluation.	Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027	compliance with the horizontal principles. To create a “best practice guide” with possible solutions regarding compliance with the horizontal principles.	awareness of beneficiaries		
6	The need to provide information and promotion activities addressed to various audiences	2	<p>The evaluation shows that the high effectiveness of the information and promotion activities was linked to various activities dedicated to particular target groups. In the case of activities addressed to applicants and beneficiaries, the best effects were the result of training and workshops, a possibility of direct contact with the JTS employees and the website.</p> <p>In the case of activities connected with communicating the knowledge about the</p>	The information and promotion activities undertaken in the 2014-2020 must be continued, and especially a wide range of communication tools matching the needs of the audience should be used.	The MA of the INTERREG NEXT Programme Poland-Ukraine 2021-2027	<p>At the start of the perspective – combine the events concluding the projects from the 2014-2020 period with communications about new support possibilities. Maintain the possibility of direct (e-mail, phone) contact with representatives of the JTS and provide appropriate staff resources at the JTS.</p> <p>Maintain the high usefulness of the website by promptly posting information and publishing all the necessary materials (guidelines, templates, terms &amp; conditions, guides etc.).</p>	Maintained high usefulness of the information and promotion activities. Achievement of the objectives set in the Programme Communication Strategy 2021-2027.	Q1 2024	Section 4.3



No.	Identified problem	Problem weight <sup>41</sup>	Conclusion	Recommendation	Recommendation addressee	Recommendation implementation method	Expected effect of recommendation implementation	Recommendation implementation time (quarter)	Report section
			Programme to the public, open meetings and measures requiring the activity of the participants (competitions, quizzes etc.) were the most effective.			<p>Organise training (online, if there are no contraindications) and workshops (the format to be decided on a case-by-case basis) for applicants and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Organise events (including annual events) in the form of open meetings for the inhabitants with numerous attractions engaging the participants (competitions, city games, quizzes, sports rivalry).</p>			



## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Recommendation	Description of the results of implementing the recommendation with a rationale
1	<p>Mechanisms should be introduced to promote even distribution of the support.</p>	<p>If the recommendation is implemented, the support will be distributed evenly and it will concentrate more in areas the closest to the state border.</p> <p>However, if the recommendation is implemented, there is a risk that ad hoc partnerships will be formed to receive the support. Still, even then the distribution of funds will become more even across the eligible area.</p> <p>The implementation of the recommendation requires changes in the future competition documentation, e.g. the terms of the calls for proposal, where the geographic partnership or partnership with an entity from a border-adjacent municipality/district will be an additionally rewarded application assessment criterion.</p>
2	<p>It is recommended that the Łomża subregion, included in the eligible area of the INTERREG Programme Lithuania-Poland 2021-2027 based on the EC Implementing Decision 2023/1638 of 14 August 2023, remain covered under the Programme.</p>	<p>The implementation of the recommendation will require expanding the territorial range of another programme by new areas. This will increase the possibility of building a partnership both within the current eligible area under the Lithuania-Poland Programme and within an area newly included in the programme.</p> <p>However, the implementation of the recommendation will require the activity of beneficiaries in terms of establishing new partnerships for the projects – it is possible that potential beneficiaries will need support in this.</p>
3	<p>Joint cross-border activities in the area of the environment and the prevention of negative consequences of climate changes should be continued in the next financial perspectives.</p>	<p>The implementation of the recommendation will help satisfy the demand for project implementation in the area of adapting to climate changes and preventing the risks related to natural disasters, water management, nature and biodiversity protection and limitation of pollutants.</p> <p>The implementation of the recommendation requires the continuation in the current Programme – and the introduction in the future Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation programme after 2027 – of a priority related to the environment and to the elimination of negative climate changes.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Description of the results of implementing the recommendation with a rationale
4	<p>Additional incentives are recommended to encourage educational and inclusive activities addressed to children and teenagers in projects pursued under the priorities: Environment, Tourism, Health, Accessibility.</p>	<p>The implementation of the recommendation will help increase the involvement of the youngest generation in building positive cross-border relations between the Ukrainians and Poles and developing attitudes based on mutual respect and openness.</p> <p>The implementation of the recommendation requires changes in the future competition documentation, e.g. the terms of the calls for proposal, where education and inclusive activities addressed to children and teenagers will be an additionally rewarded application assessment criterion.</p>
5	<p>The financial perspective 2021-2027 should offer training to present the possible solutions for particular project types or a document laying down the best practice in this respect, as was also mentioned in the previous Programme evaluation.</p>	<p>Training presenting examples of practical solutions for respecting particular horizontal principles will improve the knowledge of beneficiaries, reduce the mistakes in identifying the project impact on the horizontal policies and increase the value of the projects.</p>
6	<p>The information and promotion activities undertaken in the 2014-2020 must be continued, and especially a wide range of communication tools matching the needs of the audience should be used.</p>	<p>Maintained high usefulness of the information and promotion activities.</p> <p>Achievement of the objectives set in the Programme Communication Strategy 2021-2027.</p>

## ADDENDUM 1 – LIST OF ENTITIES INCLUDED IN THE NETWORK ANALYSIS

ID	Name of beneficiary	Legal form	Role on the project	Thematic Objective	Country	Region	City/town
1	BORDER GUARD SERVICE HEADQUARTERS	government audit and law protection bodies	Partner	Borders	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Warsaw
2	ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE BORDER GUARD SERVICE OF UKRAINE	authorities, government administration bodies	Leader	Borders	Ukraine	KIEV	Kiev
3	BUG RIVER DEPARTMENT OF THE BORDER GUARD SERVICE IN CHEŁMNO	government audit and law protection bodies	Partner	Limits	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Chełm
4	BIESZCZADY DEPARTMENT OF THE BORDER GUARD SERVICE	government audit and law protection bodies	Partner	Borders	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Przemyśl
5	LVIV BORDER GUARD DETACHMENT OF THE STATE BORDER GUARD SERVICE OF UKRAINE	government audit and law protection bodies	Partner	Borders	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
6	LUTSK BORDER GUARD DETACHMENT OF THE STATE BORDER GUARD SERVICE OF UKRAINE	government audit and law protection bodies	Partner	Borders	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
7	MOSTYSKYI BORDER GUARD DETACHMENT OF THE STATE BORDER GUARD SERVICE OF UKRAINE	government audit and law protection bodies	Partner	Borders	Ukraine	LVIV	Mostyska
8	GOMEL CUSTOM HOUSE	state organisational units	Partner	Borders	Belarus	GOMEL	Gomel
9	STATE CUSTOMS COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS	state organisational units	Partner	Borders	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
10	GRODNO REGIONAL CUSTOM HOUSE	state organisational units	Partner	Borders	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
11	MINSK REGIONAL CUSTOM HOUSE	state organisational units	Partner	Borders	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
12	BREST CUSTOM HOUSE	state organisational units	Partner	Borders	Belarus	BREST	Brest
13	REVENUE ADMINISTRATION REGIONAL OFFICE IN BIALYSTOK	state organisational units	Partner	Limits	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
14	MINSK CENTRAL CUSTOM HOUSE	state organisational units	Leader	Borders	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
15	PODLASKIE VOIVODESHIP AUTHORITIES	state organisational units	Partner	Borders	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
16	STATE BORDER COMMITTEE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS	state organisational units	Partner	Borders	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
17	GENERAL HENRYK MINKIEWICZ PODLASKIE DEPARTMENT OF THE BORDER GUARD SERVICE	state organisational units	Leader	Borders	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
18	LUTSK NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	universities	Partner	Borders	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
19	THE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN	universities	Leader	Borders	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin
20	LUBLIN EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR MAINTENANCE OF BORDER CROSSINGS	state organisational units	Partner	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Chełm
21	PODLASKIE VOIVODE	State Treasury	Leader	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
22	STATE FISCAL SERVICE OF UKRAINE	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Security	Ukraine	KIEV	Kiev
23	UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW	universities	Partner	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Warsaw

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24	THE ADMINISTRATION OF STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE IN IVANO-FRANKIVSK REGION	state organisational units	Partner	Security	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Ivano-Frankivsk
25	REGIONAL GROUP OF THE MOUNTAIN VOLUNTEER RESCUE SERVICE, THE BIESZCZADY GROUP	associations	Partner	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Sanok
26	STATE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT VASYL STEFANYK PRECARPATHIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY	state organisational units	Leader	Security	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Ivano-Frankivsk
27	ASSOCIATION OF SELF-GOVERNMENTS "EUROREGION CARPATHIANS - UKRAINE"	foundations	Leader	Safety	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
28	THE MAIN ADMINISTRATION OF STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE IN TRANSCARPATHIAN REGION	public sector enterprises	Partner	Safety	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhhorod
29	REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE STATE FIRE SERVICE IN RZESZÓW	public sector enterprises	Partner	Safety	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
30	THE MAIN ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE IN LVIV REGION	public sector enterprises	Partner	Security	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
31	REGIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN RZESZÓW	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
32	LVIV REGIONAL BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE NATIONAL POLICE	authorities, government administration bodies	Leader	Security	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
33	CITY HEADQUARTERS OF THE STATE FIRE SERVICE IN BIAŁA PODLASKA	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Biała Podlaska
34	REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE STATE FIRE SERVICE IN BIAŁYSTOK	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
35	GRODNO REGIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS	state organisational units	Partner	Security	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
36	BREST REGIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS	state organisational units	Leader	Security	Belarus	BREST	Brest
37	GRODNO DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	local government communities	Partner	Security	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
38	DOBRYNIEWO DUŻE MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Dobryńewo Duże
39	PERLEJEWO MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Perlejewo
40	NURZEC STACJA MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Nurzec-Stacja
41	DZIADKOWICE MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Dziadkowice
42	MILEJCZYCE MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Milejczyce
43	SIEMIATYCZE MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Siemiatycze
44	SOS - NA RATUNEK FOUNDATION	foundations	Leader	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Sanok

ID	Name of beneficiary	Legal form	Role on the project	Thematic Objective	Country	Region	City/town
45	LVIV REGIONAL CONTROL AND RESCUE SERVICE OF TOURIST SPORTS ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINE	associations	Partner	Security	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
46	USTRZYKI DOLNE MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Ustrzyki Dolne
47	CITY OF SIEDLCE	district-level local government organisational units	Leader	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Siedlce
48	KORCZEW MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Korczew
49	MAIN DEPARTAMENT OF THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE IN THE VOLYN REGION	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Security	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
50	CITY COMMAND OF THE STATE FIRE BRIGADE IN SIEDLCE	state organisational units	Partner	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Siedlce
51	CHARITABLE FOUNDATION IHOR PALYTSIA FOUNDATION TILKY RAZOM	associations	Partner	Security	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
52	MUNICIPAL ESTABLISHMENT DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF EUROREGION BUG	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Security	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
53	ASSOCIATION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE BUG EUROREGION	associations	Leader	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Chełm
54	VYNOHRADIV CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Security	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Vynohradiv
55	RZESZÓW ANIMAL PROTECTION ASSOCIATION	associations	Partner	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
56	CENTER OF INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT VYNOHRADIV CITY COUNCIL OF THE TRANSCARPATIAN REGION	Businesses	Leader	Security	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Vynohradiv
57	WŁODAWA MUNICIPALITY	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Włodawa
58	KOVEL DISTRICT STATE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VOLYN REGION	authorities, government administration bodies	Leader	Security	Ukraine	VOLYN	Kovel
59	FREDERIC CHOPIN SPECIALIST CLINICAL HOSPITAL NO. 1 IN RZESZÓW	state organisational units	Partner	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
60	COMMUNAL NONPROFIT ENTERPRISE "REGIONAL CLINICAL PHTHISIOPULMONOLOGY TREATMENT AND DIAGNOSTIC CENTER" OF THE TRANSCARPATIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL	state organisational units	Partner	Security	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhhorod
61	HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF THE REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION OF TRANSCARPATIAN REGION	authorities, government administration bodies	Leader	Security	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhhorod
62	INDEPENDENT PUBLIC HEALTH CARE FACILITY IN ŁOSICE	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Łosice
63	HEALTHCARE INSTITUTION "BREST REGIONAL PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL"	independent public healthcare facilities	Leader	Security	Belarus	BREST	Brest
64	NIEMEN EUROREGION ASSOCIATION	associations	A project with no partners	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Suwałki

ID	Name of beneficiary	Legal form	Role on the project	Thematic Objective	Country	Region	City/town
65	AGENCJA ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO "ARES" SPÓŁKA AKCYJNA IN SUWAŁKI	Businesses	A project with no partners	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Suwałki
66	GRODNO CITY CLINICAL HOSPITAL OF EMERGENCY CARE	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
67	LUDWIK RYDYGIER REGIONAL HOSPITAL IN SUWAŁKI	independent public healthcare facilities	Leader	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Suwałki
68	JĘDRZEJ ŚNIADECKI INDEPENDENT PUBLIC HEALTHCARE FACILITY REGIONAL COMBINED HOSPITAL IN BIAŁYSTOK	independent public healthcare facilities	Leader	Security	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
69	MINSK REGIONAL CLINICAL HOSPITAL	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
70	HRODNA UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL	State Treasury	Partner	Security	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
71	RZESZOWSKA AGENCJA ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO S.A.	Businesses	A project with no partners	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
72	INDEPENDENT PUBLIC HEALTH CARE CENTRE	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Ustrzyki Dolne
73	SAMBIR REGIONAL COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Security	Ukraine	LVIV	Sambir
74	STARYI SAMBIR CENTRAL DISTRICT HOSPITAL	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Ukraine	LVIV	Staryi Sambir
75	BIESZCZADZKI DISTRICT	local government communities	Leader	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Ustrzyki Dolne
76	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF UZHGOROD CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Security	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhgorod
77	FUND OF TRANSBORDER COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT	associations	Partner	Security	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhgorod
78	CITY OF KROSNO MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Security	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Krosno
79	GOVERNMENTAL STRATEGIC RESERVES AGENCY	authorities, government administration bodies	A project with no partners	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Warsaw
80	MAZOWICKIE VOIVODESHIP	regional local government organisational units	A project with no partners	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Warsaw
81	COMMUNAL NONCOMERCIAL ENTERPRISE OF LVIV REGIONAL COUNCIL "LVIV REGIONAL CHILDREN'S CLINICAL HOSPITAL "OHMATDYT"	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
82	JÓZEF PSARSKI MAZOWIECKIE SPECIALIST HOSPITAL IN OSTROŁĘKA	independent public healthcare facilities	Leader	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Ostrołęka
83	MINSK REGIONAL CLINICAL MATERNITY HOUSE	Businesses	Partner	Security	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
84	MAZOWIECKI SZPITAL WOJEWÓDZKI IM. ŚW. JANA PAWŁA II W SIEDLCACH SPÓŁKA Z OGRANICZONĄ ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚCIĄ	regional local government organisational units	Leader	Security	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Siedlce
85	LUBELSKI PARK NAUKOWO - TECHNOLOGICZNY SPÓŁKA AKCYJNA	Businesses	A project with no partners	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin
86	PUBLIC ORGANISATION ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS AND FIENDS - DAWN OF HOPE	foundations	Partner	Security	Ukraine	TERNOPIŁ	Kremenets

ID	Name of beneficiary	Legal form	Role on the project	Thematic Objective	Country	Region	City/town
87	"KROK ZA KROKIEM" DISABLED CHILDREN SUPPORT ASSOCIATION IN ZAMOŚĆ	associations	Leader	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Zamość
88	TOMASZOWSKI DISTRICT	district-level local government organisational units	Leader	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Tomaszów Lubelski
89	THE HEALTH CARE FACILITY "ZHABINKA CENTRAL DISTRICT HOSPITAL"	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Belarus	BREST	Zhabinka
90	CHERVONOGRAD DISTRICT COUNCIL	State Treasury	Partner	Security	Ukraine	LVIV	Chervonoh rad
91	INDEPENDENT PUBLIC HEALTH CARE CENTRE IN HRUBIESZÓW	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Hrubieszów
92	INDEPENDENT PUBLIC HEALTH CARE CENTRE IN TOMASZÓW LUBELSKI	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Tomaszów Lubelski
93	EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF THE LENINSKY DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OF THE CITY OF BREST	local government communities	Partner	Security	Belarus	BREST	Brest
94	"WSPÓLNY ŚWIAT" ASSOCIATION FOR THE SUPPORT OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS AND CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS WITH RELATED DISORDERS	associations	Leader	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Biała Podlaska
95	REGIONAL SPECIALIST HOSPITAL IN BIAŁA PODLASKA	independent public healthcare facilities	Leader	Security	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Biała Podlaska
96	BREST REGIONAL CLINICAL HOSPITAL	independent public healthcare facilities	Partner	Security	Belarus	BREST	Brest
97	STATE INSTITUTION OF CULTURE "MASTY COUNTY LIBRARY"	district-level local government organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Belarus	GRODNO	Mosty
98	MASTY RAION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	state organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Belarus	GRODNO	Mosty
99	CITY OF OSTROŁĘKA	local government communities	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Ostrołęka
100	JOINT STOCK COMPANY "UKRAINIAN RAILWAYS"	Businesses	A project with no partners	Accessibility	Ukraine	KIEV	Kiev
101	PODKARPACKIE REGIONAL ROADS ADMINISTRATION	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
102	ROAD SERVICE IN LVIV REGION	state organisational units	Leader	Accessibility	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
103	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION "BELARUSSIAN TRANSPORT UNION"	associations	Partner	Accessibility	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
104	PINSK CITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	state organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Belarus	BREST	Pinsk
105	AGENCY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CARPATHIAN REGION "FORZA"	associations	Leader	Accessibility	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhgorod
106	Department for international cooperation and Innovations of Uzhhorod city council	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhgorod
107	THE ROAD MAINTENANCE COMPANY IN BREST	Businesses	Leader	Accessibility	Belarus	BREST	Brest
108	BIAŁA PODLASKA CITY MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Biała Podlaska

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109	PODLASKIE REGIONAL ROADS ADMINISTRATION IN BIAŁYSTOK	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
110	PUBLIC UNITARY ENTERPRISE OF MOTORWAY ROADS "BRESTAUTODOR"	State Treasury	Leader	Accessibility	Belarus	BREST	Brest
111	GRÓDEK MUNICIPALITY	state organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	PODLASKIE	Gródek
112	THE MUNICIPAL UNITARY ENTERPRISE DESIGN, REPAIR & CONSTRUCTION "GRODNOOBLDORSTROJ" IN GRODNO	Businesses	Partner	Accessibility	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
113	BIAŁOSTOCKI DISTRICT	state organisational units	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
114	NOWY DWÓR MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	PODLASKIE	Nowy Dwór
115	SEJNEŃSKI DISTRICT	local government communities	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	PODLASKIE	Sejny
116	ROAD MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT OF LVIV REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
117	NYZHANKOVYCHI VILLAGE COUNCIL LVIV REGION	industry and professional organisations not registered in the National Court Register	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	LVIV	Nyzhankovychi
118	PRZEMYSKI DISTRICT	district-level local government organisational units	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Przemysł
119	LVIV REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION	State Treasury	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
120	BIELANY MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Bielany-Żytki
121	MANEVICHY DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	VOLYN	Manevichy
122	VOLYN REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
123	MUNICIPAL UNITARY COMPANY FOR DESIGNING, MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND CONSTRUCTION OF LOCAL ROADS FOR VEHICLES "BRIESTOBLDOSTROJ"	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Belarus	BREST	Brest
124	BIALSKI DISTRICT	local government communities	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Biała Podlaska
125	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF LUTSK CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
126	CITY OF CHEŁM	local government communities	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Chełm
127	ROSSOSZ MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Rossosz
128	MILANÓW MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Milanów
129	WISZNICE MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Wisznice
130	SOSNÓWKA MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Sosnówka



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131	PARCZEWSKI DISTRICT	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Parczew
132	JABŁOŃ MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Jabłoń
133	ZNAMIENKA RURAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Belarus	BREST	Znamienka
134	ZABRODY VILLAGE COUNCIL OF RATNE DISTRICT IN VOLYNKA OBLAST	local government communities	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	VOLYN	Zabrody
135	SOKAL DISTRICT COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Accessibility	Ukraine	LVIV	Sokal
136	ZAMOJSKI DISTRICT	local government communities	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Zamość
137	LUBELSKIE VOIVODESHIP	regional local government organisational units	Leader	Accessibility	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin
138	CITY OF RZESZÓW MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
139	"PRO CARPATHIA" PODKARPACIE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION ASSOCIATION	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
140	KOLOCHAVA VILLAGE COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Kolochava
141	NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ASSOCIATION OF BEEKEEPER "CARPATHIAN ECO-APIARY"	foundations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Kosiv
142	VOLYN OBLAST COUNCIL	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
143	NATIONAL NATURAL PARK "SKOLIVSKI BESKYDY"	state organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Skole
144	CIESZANÓW MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Cieszanów
145	VOLYN OBLAST BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND	foundations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
146	"HORYZONTY" ASSOCIATION FOR TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AND TRANSFER	associations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
147	INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT OF CARPATHIAN REGION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhhorod
148	REPUBLICAN BIOLOGICAL RESERVE "DNIEPRA-SOŽSKI"	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GOMEL	Gomel
149	STATE NATURE PROTECTIVE SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH INSTITUTION "POLESIA STATE RADIATION-ECOLOGICAL RESERVE"	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GOMEL	Khoiniki
150	PODLASIE HERITAGE ASSOCIATION	associations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Puchły
151	GREEN CROSS BELARUS	associations	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	MINSK	Minsk
152	SOKÓŁKA MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Sokółka
153	GRODNO DISTRICT UNIT OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION TOURISM-SPORT NATIONAL ASSOCIATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
154	STATE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION "THE POLESIE AGRARIAN ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF BELARUS"	universities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Brest

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155	"EKO-BUG SPÓŁKA Z OGRANICZONĄ ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚCIĄ"	Businesses	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Kobylany
156	MUNICIPAL UNITARY MULTIPLE PRODUCTIVE ENTERPRISE OF COMMUNAL-HOUSING ECONOMY "ZHABINKOVSKOE ZHKCH"	Businesses	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Zhabinka
157	DEPARTAMENT FOR EDUCATION OF KAMENETS DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Kamenets
158	HAJNOWSKI DISTRICT	district-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Hajnówka
159	NGO "LOCAL AGENCY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF KAMYANKA-BUZKA DISTRICT"	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Dobrotvir
160	"LOKALNA GRUPA DZIAŁANIA - TYGIEL DOLINY BUGU" ASSOCIATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Drohiczyn
161	LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL FUND "NATURE RESERVES OF BREST REGION"	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Byaroza
162	STATE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT "SCHOOL NO. 3, PINSK"	universities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Pinsk
163	II SECONDARY SCHOOL WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING OF BELARUSIAN LANGUAGE IN HAJNOWKA	universities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Hajnówka
164	BIĄŁOWIEŻA NATIONAL PARK	state organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białowieża
165	THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OF PINSK CITY COUNCIL	universities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Brest
166	DRAHIČIN DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Drohiczyn
167	DROHICZYN MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Drohiczyn
168	BERYOZA DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Byaroza
169	STATE UNITARY MANUFACTURING ENTERPRISE "HOUSING AND COMMUNAL SERVICES ?F BERYOZA"	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Byaroza
170	KUŹNICA MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Kuźnica
171	VYSHNIA COLLEGE OF LVIV NATIONAL AGRARIAN UNIVERSITY	universities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Vyshnia
172	AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION SCHOOL COMPLEX IN NOWOSIELCE	universities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Nowosielce
173	BORYSLAV CITY COUNCIL	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Boryslav
174	SANOK MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Sanok
175	ZHYDACHIV RAYON COUNCIL	district-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Zhidachiv
176	ZHYDACHIV CITY COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Zhidachiv
177	SANOCKI DISTRICT	district-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Sanok

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178	NATIONAL PARK "VERKHOVYNA"	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Verkhnij Yaseniv
179	HUCUL BREEDERS AND ENTHUSIASTS ASSOCIATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rudawka Rymanowska
180	PODKARPACIE REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
181	DOBROMYL CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Dobromyl
182	ZAGÓRZ MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Zagórz
183	CITY COUNCIL SCHIDNICA	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Skhidnycia
184	SOLINA MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Polańczyk
185	USTYLUG CITY COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Ustylug
186	LUDWIN MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Ludwin
187	CITY OF TOMASZÓW LUBELSKI/MARSHAL JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI PRIMARY SCHOOL NO. 2A	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Tomaszów Lubelski
188	ROZTOCZE LOCAL TOURISM ORGANISATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Tomaszów Lubelski
189	ZHOVKVA TOWN COUNCIL	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Zhovkva
190	CHERVONOGRAD CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Chervonohrad
191	KSIĘŻPOL MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Księżpol
192	DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF LVIVSKA OBLAST STATE ADMINISTRATION	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
193	ROZTOCZE NATIONAL PARK	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Zwierzyniec
194	JAWOROWSKI NATURAL NATIONAL PARK	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Ivano-Frankove
195	ZAMOŚĆ MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Zamość
196	VOLYN REGIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
197	KIVERTSI CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Kivertsi
198	J.I. KRASZEWSKI MUSEUM IN ROMANÓW	district-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Romanów
199	VOLYN REGIONAL CHARITABLE FUND "POLISSYA"	foundations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
200	REGIONAL MUSEUM IN STALOWA WOLA	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Stalowa Wola
201	NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION "VOLYN REGIONAL INITIATIVES CENTRE"	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
202	RIVNE VILLAGE COUNCIL	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	RIVNE	Rivne

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203	RUDA-HUTA MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Ruda-Huta
204	LUBLIN MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin
205	KOSIV TOWN COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Kosiv
206	CIVIC ORGANIZATION "PRYKARPATSKA INFORMATIONAL CORPORATION"	associations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Ivano-Frankivsk
207	LUBELSKA REGIONAL VETERINARY CHAMBER	associations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin
208	PODKARPACKA REGIONAL VETERINARY CHAMBER	associations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Przemyśl
209	STEPAN GZHYTSKYI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND BIOTECHNOLOGIES LVIV	universities	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
210	HRUBIESZÓW MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Hrubieszów
211	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF VOLODYMYR-VOLYNSKYI CITY COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Volodymyr-Volynsky
212	EASTERN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY IN PRZEMYŚL	universities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Przemyśl
213	NGO "LINIA102.UA"	associations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
214	WEST UKRAINIAN RESOURCE CENTER	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
215	MUNICIPAL INSTITUTION LOCAL ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF PERECHYN	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Perechyn
216	LEZAJSK MUNICIPALITY CULTURE CENTRE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Leżajsk
217	PERECHYN CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Perechyn
218	DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE OF LUTSK CITY COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
219	FREDERIC CHOPIN LUTSK MUSIC SCHOOL	state schools	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
220	WOLA UHRUSKA MUNICIPALITY/J. I. KRASZEWSKI PRIMARY SCHOOL IN WOLA UHRUSKA	state schools	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Wola Uhruska
221	AGENCY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CROSSBORDER COOPERATION "TRANSCARPATIA"	regional local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhgorod
222	EASTERN BORDERLAND MUSEUM IN LUBACZÓW	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Lubaczów
223	VYNOHRADIV DISTRICT COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Vynohradiv
224	DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF RIVNE CITY COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	RIVNE	Rivne
225	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION "AGENCY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY"	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	RIVNE	Rivne

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226	STATE PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY IN CHEŁM	universities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Chełm
227	BROSHNIV-OSADSKA AMALGAMATED HROMADA	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Broshniv-Osad
228	PRECARPATHIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY NAMED AFTER VASYL STEFANYK	universities	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Ivano-Frankivsk
229	BORYS VOZNYTCKYJ LVIV NATIONAL ART GALLERY	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
230	INSTITUTE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT	associations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
231	PRO ARTE ET HISTORIA FOUNDATION	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Krasiczyn
232	LOCAL TOURISM ORGANISATION IN PRZEMYŚL	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Przemyśl
233	ASSOCIATION "LVIV TOURIST BOARD" (LTB)	associations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
234	MOUNTAINS GUIDES ASSOCIATION "ROVIN"	associations	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
235	RZESZOW DISTRICT	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
236	COMMUNAL ENTERPRISE "UZHGOROD RAYON AGENCY OF DEVELOPMENT"	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Ukraine	CHERNIVTSI	Storozhnitsa
237	BIRTH OF VIRGIN MARY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HOŁUBLA	Catholic Church	Partner	Heritage	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Paprotnia
238	DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING OF LVIV REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
239	ST. JADWIGA ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MOKOBODY	Catholic Church	Partner	Heritage	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Mokobody
240	CITY CULTURE, SPORTS AND RECREATION CENTRE IN KLESZCZELE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Kleszczele
241	IDEOLOGY, CULTURE AND YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF MALARITA DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	
242	BIĄŁOWIEŻA FOREST EUROREGION LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ASSOCIATION	associations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Hajnówka
243	HAJNÓWKA CULTURE CENTRE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Hajnówka
244	DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN PRUZHANY	state organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Brest
245	STATE INSTITUTION OF CULTURE "KHOINIKI REGIONAL MUSEUM OF LOCAL LORE"	state organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	GOMEL	Khoiniki
246	UNIVERSITY OF BIAŁYSTOK	universities	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
247	YANKA KUPALA STATE UNIVERSITY OF GRODNO	universities	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
248	"TEATR LATARNIA" FOUNDATION	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
249	STATE INSTITUTION OF ADDITIONAL EDUCATION "CHILDREN AND YOUTH CREATIVITY CENTER OF BARYSAU REGION"	state organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	MINSK	Barysau
250	DIGITAL CULTURE INSTITUTE FOUNDATION	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin

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251	LOCAL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION "BREST FORTRESS DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION"	foundations	Leader	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Brest
252	SAPOTSKIN RURAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Sapotskin
253	PŁASKA MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Płaska
254	STATE INSTITUTION OF CULTURE "GRODNO REGIONAL CULTURAL AND INFORMATION CENTER"	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
255	TERNOPIL CITY COUNCIL	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	TERNOPIL	Ternopil
256	M. KONOPNICKA PUBLIC LIBRARY IN SUWAŁKI	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Suwałki
257	UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY	universities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
258	SYNKOVICHY RURAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
259	SUPRAŚL MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Supraśl
260	SUWAŁKI MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Suwałki
261	SUWAŁKI MUNICIPALITY READING AND CULTURE CENTRE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Krzywe
262	ASHMIANY DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	district-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Ashmiany
263	THE SECTOR OF CULTURE OF MOSTY REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	district-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
264	MOSTY REGIONAL CENTER OF CRAFTS	other social or professional organisations	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Mosty
265	CULTURE CENTRE IN CZARNA BIAŁOSTOCKA	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Czarna Białostocka
266	BREST STATE A.S. PUSHKIN UNIVERSITY	universities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Brest
267	BIAŁYSTOK FUNCTIONAL AREA ASSOCIATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
268	VILEYKA DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	MINSK	Vilejka
269	MUNICIPAL CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM CENTRE IN KORYCIN	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Korycin
270	GRODNO STATE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno
271	PODLASIE MUSEUM IN BIAŁYSTOK	state organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Białystok
272	SPORTS AND TOURISM DEPT. OF GRODNO CITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Grodno

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273	EDUCATION, SPORT AND TOURISM DIVISION OF SHCHUCHYN DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	GRODNO	Shchuchyn
274	THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL KOVEL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Kovel
275	SZCZUCZYN MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODLASKIE	Szczuczyn
276	SMOLIN ANDRUSZEWSKI FOUNDATION	foundations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
277	NADVIRNA CITY COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	
278	MIEJSCE PIASTOWE MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Miejsce Piastowe
279	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE KHUST TOWN COUNCIL	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Khust
280	LESKO MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Lesko
281	BOGUCHWAŁA MUNICIPALITY	local government communities	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Boguchwał a
282	ROZVADIV VILLAGE COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Rozvadiv
283	CITY CULTURE CENTRE IN BOGUCHWAŁA	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Boguchwał a
284	LION SOCIETY	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
285	DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, SPORT, YOUTH AND FAMILY OF THE UZHGOROD CITY COUNCIL	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhhorod
286	TRANSCARPATHIAN FILM COMMISSION	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhhorod
287	ART EXHIBITIONS OFFICE	district-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Szufnarowa
288	PODKARPACKIE VOIVODESHIP/PODKARPACKIE VOIVODESHIP MARSHAL'S OFFICE	regional local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów
289	FOUNDATION "AID TO POLES IN THE EAST"	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Warsaw
290	THE CENTER FOR POLISH CULTURE AND EUROPEAN DIALOGUE IN IVANO-FRANKIVSK	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Ivano-Frankivsk
291	THE ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIANS IN POLAND	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Warsaw
292	CARITAS-SPES - LVIV ARCHDIOCESE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH	foundations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
293	UKRAINIAN HOUSE FOUNDATION IN PRZEMYŚL	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Przemyśl
294	DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND RESORTS OF LVIV REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
295	NGO "SOCIAL CENTER "ETALON"	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Ivano-Frankivsk
296	CENTRE FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Novyi Rozdil
297	PODKARPACKIE VOIVODESHIP	authorities, government administration bodies	Partner	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Rzeszów

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298	COMMUNAL INSTITUTION OF LVIV REGIONAL COUNCIL "ADMINISTRATION OF HISTORICAL-CULTURAL RESERVE "TUSTAN"	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
299	KOSIV DISTRICT COUNCIL	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	IVANO-FRANKIVSK	Kosiv
300	ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH IN SKOLE	Catholic Church	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Skole
301	CONGREGATION OF SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL	Catholic Church	Leader	Heritage	Poland	PODKARPACKIE	Miejsce Piastowe
302	PUBLIC INSTITUTION "PALACE OF THE CULTURE IN CITY LUTSK"	political parties	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	VOLYN	Lutsk
303	FATHER WŁ. SKIERKOWSKI REGIONAL KURPIE CULTURE CENTRE IN MYSZYNEC	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Myszyniec
304	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION "CURIA OF LVIV ARCHDIOCESE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH" IN UKRAINE	Catholic Church	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Lviv
305	PETER OF ALCÁNTARA AND ANTHONY OF PADUA ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN WĘGRÓW	Catholic Church	Leader	Heritage	Poland	MAZOWIECKIE	Węgrów
306	INTERREGIONAL CENTRE OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Perechyn
307	EASTERN BORDERLAND MEMORY AND HERITAGE INSTITUTION ASSOCIATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin
308	FOLK MOVEMENT ORGANISERS ASSOCIATION	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Lublin
309	CREATIVE UNION «NIVROKU»	associations	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	TERNOPIIL	Ternopil
310	MIKOLAIV DISTRICT COUNCIL OF LVIV REGION	regional local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	MYKOLAIV	Mykolaiv
311	ŁĘCZYŃSKI DISTRICT	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Łęczna
312	COMMUNAL ENTERPRISE "TRANSCARPATHIAN REGIONAL ACADEMIC UKRAINIAN DRAMA THEATRE NAMED AFTER BROTHERS YURI AUGUSTINE AND EUGENE SHEREHIY" OF TRANSCARPATHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL	Businesses	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA	Uzhhorod
313	BIAŁOPOLE MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Białopole
314	DOROHUSK MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Dorohusk-Osada
315	ŻMUDŹ MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Żmudź
316	WOJSŁAWICE MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Wojsławice
317	KAMIEŃ MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Kamień
318	LESNIOWICE MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Leśniowice



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319	ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL ACTION GROUP "ZIEMIA CHEŁMSKA"	associations	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Chełm
320	TUCZNA MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	A project with no partners	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Tuczna
321	MUNICIPAL CULTURE CENTRE	municipality-level local government organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Księżpol
322	CHERVONOGRADSKIY NARODNIY DIM	local government communities	Partner	Heritage	Ukraine	LVIV	Chervonoh rad
323	DEPARTMENT FOR IDEOLOGICAL WORK, CULTURE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS OF LIACHAVIČY RAION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	state organisational units	Partner	Heritage	Belarus	BREST	Liachavičy
324	PUCHACZÓW MUNICIPALITY	municipality-level local government organisational units	Leader	Heritage	Poland	LUBELSKIE	Puchaczów

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