

Minutes of the
4th Programming Committee Meeting
of the
INTERREG VI-A ROMANIA-HUNGARY
PROGRAMME

Date: March 22nd, 2022
- online meeting -



Partnership for a better future



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME	INSTITUTION
Dan BĂLĂNESCU	Managing Authority (2014-2020) - Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDPWA), Romania
Nikoletta HORVÁTH	National Authority (2014-2020) - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary
Anna-Monika MODZELEWSKA	European Commission (COM) - DG Regional and Urban Policy
Radu NECȘULIU	Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDPWA), Romania
H.E. Gabriel ȘOPANDĂ	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Embassy of Romania in Budapest), Romania
Vlad POPESCU	
Roxana MIHAI	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Romania
Andrei LUCACI	Timiș County Council
Gabriela CHIRICHEU	Arad County Council
Ilie BOLOJAN	Bihar County Council
Oana NICULA	
Ionuț SĂRAC	
István Tamás JANKÓ-SZÉP	Satu Mare County Council
Iulia GUGIU	Ministry of European Investments and Projects, Romania
Bianca BOȘOANĂ	Regional Development Agency – North-West Region, Romania



Interreg

Romania-Hungary

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION



GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA



HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

Marius Valentin NICULAE	Regional Development Agency – West Region, Romania
Mihai Sorin PASCU	Association for the Promotion of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Banat and Crişana „Excelsior”
Dóra DÉKÁNY	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary
Szilvia HUJBERT	
Tamás MOLNÁR	
András STEFANIK	
Adrienn FUTÓ dr.	
Richárd GÖNCZI	Széchenyi Programme Office Consulting and Service Nonprofit Limited Liability Company, Hungary
Péter CSIBI	Prime Minister’s Office, Hungary
Béla HEGYESI	Ministry of Finance, Hungary
Illés ÚSZ	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Council
Zsuzsa MIHALIK	Hajdú-Bihar County Council
Bence DIÓSZEGI-SZABÓ	
Anikó NAGY-SZÖLLŐSI	Békés County Council
Eszter Anna CSÓKÁSI	Csongrád-Csanád County Council
Zoltán NÓGRÁDI	
Lajos BARCSA	Association of Cities with County Rights
László KÖRMÖCZI	CSEMETE Nature and Environment Protection Association
Livia BANU	BRECO
Monica ARDELEAN	

Cosmin CHIRILĂ	Joint Secretariat (JS)
Monica TEREAN	
Lavinia CHIRILĂ	
Cristina VESA	
Carmen CHIRILĂ	
Marius OLARIU	
Nóra SEBESI	Info Point (IP)
Viktor FEKETE	
Éva VIDOVENYECZ	
Gloria ZAGAGLIONI	External experts (Urbasofia)
Dr Pietro ELISEI	
Marius ȘTEFĂNICĂ	



AGENDA

-4th Meeting of the PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE – Decision on Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme

22nd of March, 2022

Online meeting

EET	CET	
10 ⁴⁵ -11 ⁰⁰	09 ⁴⁵ -10 ⁰⁰	Joining the on-line platform
11 ⁰⁰ - 11 ¹⁵	10 ⁰⁰ - 10 ¹⁵	Opening and welcome speech
11 ¹⁵ -12 ⁴⁵	10 ¹⁵ -11 ⁴⁵	<p>Operations of Strategic Importance (OSIs)</p> <p>PC voting members will present shortly the OSI proposals, submitted to be included in Appendix 3 to the Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme.</p> <p>PC decision on Appendix 3 - <i>List of planned operations of strategic importance with a timetable</i></p>
12 ⁴⁵ -13 ⁴⁵	11 ⁴⁵ -12 ⁴⁵	Break
13 ⁴⁵ -14 ¹⁵	12 ⁴⁵ -13 ¹⁵	<p>Programme's Performance Framework</p> <p>The programming consultants will present the document and adjust it during the discussions, if the case</p> <p>PC decision on the <i>Programme's Performance Framework</i></p>
14 ¹⁵ -14 ³⁰	13 ¹⁵ -13 ³⁰	<p>Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme</p> <p>The programming consultants will present the document and adjust it during the discussions, if the case</p> <p>PC decision on the <i>Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme</i></p>
14 ³⁰ -15 ⁰⁰	13 ³⁰ -14 ⁰⁰	Conclusions and closure of the meeting

Quorum at the meeting

Romanian delegation		Hungarian delegation	
No. of institutions attending the meeting	8	No. of institutions attending the meeting	8
No. of institutions delegating their votes	0	No. institutions delegating their votes	0

List of the delegated votes:

Not the case.

Welcome speech, introduction of the Programming Committee (PC) members and presentation of the Agenda

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU welcomed the participants to the 4th PC meeting and thanked the PC members for their hard work and efficient collaboration in reaching a consensus. He highlighted that the deadline for submitting the Interreg Programme (IP) to the COM is April 2nd, 2022, expressed his confidence in the success of the meeting and declared the meeting open. He invited the COM's representative to give a welcome speech.

Ms Anna-Monika MODZELEWSKA greeted the participants, acknowledged the difficulties that the PC had faced because of the pandemic situation and stressed the importance of the IP's adoption during the meeting. She also highlighted that the changing environment, like the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, would result in more changes in programmes, since the COM is trying to tackle the challenges created in the EU by the high number of refugees fleeing Ukraine. She also mentioned that, as the SFC was fully operational, the IP could be submitted at any time. According to the procedures, within one month after the submission, the COM would send a letter including all observations based on the policy and regulatory framework requirements, from all the services involved in the programme's review process. Based on those observations, the programme authorities would decide on the inclusion of such revisions and amendments in the IP. Ms **MODZELEWSKA** closed by wishing all participants a fruitful meeting.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked **Ms MODZELEWSKA** for her intervention and gave the floor to **Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH** who also addressed the participants a few words on behalf of Hungary, the participating Member State. She greeted the COM's representative, as well as the other participants, and expressed her hope for future personal meetings being more effective and that consensus would be reached and the IP's submission deadline would be met.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked **Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH** and gave the floor to **Mr Radu NECSULIU**, the representative of the Romania Member State, substitute of **Mr Zsolt MATUZ**, Secretary of State within MDPWA. **Mr NECSULIU** acknowledged the importance

of reaching an agreement on the IP content during the meeting and stressed that a flexible approach in the future would be essential.

Upon **Mr BĂLĂNESCU**'s request, **Mrs Monica TEREAN** verified the quorum, in line with PC Rules of Procedures (RoP) provisions¹. She also mentioned that, besides the voting members, observers from both countries were attending the meeting as well.

Further on, **Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU** proposed the re-arrangement of the topics on the agenda, namely to discuss first the IP document and then the rest of the topics (the performance framework and OSIs list), and asked the PC members to approve the proposed modification. As no objections were raised in that regard, the proposal was considered approved.

The modified Agenda of the 4th PC meeting was approved, no supplementary topics were added.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU proposed the participants to start the meeting with a presentation delivered by the programming expert in relation to the modifications made in the content of the IP. He invited **Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI** to present the main changes brought to the Interreg Programme.

Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI took the floor, showing that, as compared to the previous version approved by the PC members in September 2021, the main modifications were related to the followings:

- ✓ The financial allocations on specific objectives and the related output and result indicators according to the proposed Performance Framework;
- ✓ The Performance Framework and related methodology², based on the Programme's Intervention Logics;
- ✓ The indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention;
- ✓ Section 3 of the IP - *Financing plan*;
- ✓ The implementing provisions regarding Programme authorities and setting up the Joint Secretariat;
- ✓ Appendix 3 – *List of planned operations of strategic importance with a timetable*³ as a result of the OSIs' collection process (11 OSI ideas listed).

¹ The PC meets the quorum if 6 of the representatives of the counties (3 RO and 3 HU), 2 national level representatives (1 RO and 1 HU) and the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration (2014-2020 MA), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade are represented

² Deliverable under the services contract *Technical assistance for the elaboration of the future Interreg Programme Romania-Hungary 2021-2027 (including the realisation of SEA)*

³ Deliverable under the services contract *Technical assistance for the elaboration of the future Interreg Programme Romania-Hungary 2021-2027 (including the realisation of SEA)*

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked the expert for the presentation and asked the members to share their remarks regarding the presented modifications.

Mr Radu NECSULIU took the floor and presented the amendment to section 7.2 *Setting up the Joint Secretariat* by copying the proposed text into the chatbox. Thus, based on the agreement reached at high level between the Member States, the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration mentioned that the existing content of chapter 7.2 should be replaced with the following amendment:

In accordance with Article 46 (2) of Regulation (EU) 1059/2021, the Managing Authority (MA), after consultation with the Member States, sets up a Joint Secretariat (JS) assisting the MA and the Monitoring Committee (MC) in carrying out their respective functions.

For a smooth transition to the next programming period, the implementation structures will act as anchors for a successful implementation. Therefore, building on existing strengths, the JS for 2021-2027 Interreg VI-A Romania - Hungary Programme, is set up on the basis of the existing JS of the Interreg V-A Romania - Hungary Programme.

The JS will be set up within the framework of the Oradea Regional Office for Cross Border Cooperation (BRECO), located in the Programme Area. The structural and implementation arrangements within the hosting organisation will be kept.

The JS will be financed from the Technical Assistance of the Programme. Taking into account the good programme partnership approach, all JS members have been selected in a transparent way with the involvement of both Member States and are bilingual/trilingual, possessing representative linguistic competence and relevant programme area knowledge. Additional staff will be selected respecting the same principles.

The JS will work in close cooperation with the MA assisting in all programme coordination and implementation tasks and supporting the MC in monitoring the implementation of the Programme. Furthermore, the JS will provide support to potential beneficiaries by providing them information about funding opportunities and will assist all beneficiaries and partners in the implementation of operations.

For the successful implementation of the Programme, the JS will coordinate with the Programme Authorities (see section 7.1) and the bodies carrying out management and control and audit tasks, as follows:

- Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration in Romania;*
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Hungary;*
- Info Points, hosted in Hungary, by the Széchenyi Programme Office (SzPO);*
- First Level Control Unit in Romania, hosted by Oradea Regional Office for Cross Border Cooperation (BRECO);*

- First Level Control Unit in Hungary, hosted by the Széchenyi Programme Office (SzPO)

As no participant expressed the intention to intervene in relation to the topic above, i.e. the content of the IP, **Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU** asked the programming expert to modify the relevant section in the IP and continued with the next topic on the Agenda, the Performance Framework, already presented by **Mrs ZAGAGLIONI** in the context of main modifications of the IP and asked the participants for comments/recommendations on the subject.

Mr István JANKÓ-SZÉP considered that the Performance Framework should be finalised only after a decision on the OSIs was taken.

No other comments/observations were made in relation to the proposed Performance Framework.

Mrs. Eszter CSÓKÁSI asked for a few minutes in order to have sufficient time to study the proposed text copied into the chatbox, which was not shared in advance with any of the PC members. Upon **Mrs Eszter CSÓKÁSI's** request (made in chat box), **Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU** proposed a 5 minutes break so that all participants to be able to read the modified section 7.2 and the programming expert could prepare and integrate the text into the Programme document.

After the break, **Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI** confirmed she modified the content of the IP accordingly.

Mrs Eszter CSÓKÁSI kindly asked that, in the future, textual modifications to be sent to PC members in advance so that they could be properly analysed and discussed.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked **Mrs CSÓKÁSI** for her comment and referred to the procedure of the Programming Committee. He highlighted, that comments can be sent to the JS prior to the meeting, but also during the meeting if any participant deems it necessary. Moving onto the next (third) item on the agenda, OSIs proposals, **Mr BĂLĂNESCU** gave the floor to **Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI** to deliver her presentation and invited those PC members who had submitted a project idea to introduce their proposals afterwards, in maximum 5 minutes.

Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI presented the indicative list of 11 OSI proposals received. Altogether 3 initiatives were submitted under PO2, 6 initiatives under PO4 and 2 initiatives under ISO1. According to the timeline foreseen in relation to the OSIs, the contracting is expected by the end of 2024, and the implementation period is expected for 2025-2027. She remarked that the current total budget of the proposals exceeds the allocated 50% ERDF from the Programme budget, which is an issue to be solved.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked **Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI** for the presentation and asked the JS to proceed with moderating the PC members' presentation of their project ideas.

Mrs Monica TEREAN took the floor and suggested to follow alphabetical order. She called **Mrs. Gabriela CHIRICHEU** to present the proposal of Arad County.

Mrs Gabriela CHIRICHEU mentioned that the Romanian counties have a proposal regarding the OSIs exceeding the maximum allocated budget. Based on their joint agreement, the Romanian counties would prefer to list only 8 OSI projects instead of 11.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked for the proposal and suggested to keep the discussion at the end of the session. Furthermore, he invited **Mrs CHIRICHEU** to present the Arad County's OSI proposal.

Mrs Gabriela CHIRICHEU summarised that their initiative aims at modernising the surgical unit (containing 11 wards) in the county hospital, and to endow the departments with up-to-date equipment, aiming to make robotic surgery services available in the county.

Mrs Monica TEREAN thanked **Mrs CHIRICHEU** for her presentation, and called the representative of Békés County to introduce their strategic proposal idea.

Mrs Anikó NAGY-SZÖLLŐSI explained that Békés County Council, too, together with Arad County Council and Békés County Central Hospital, submitted a proposal in the field of healthcare. The project's main elements would include procurement of equipment, modernisation, refurbishment and exchange of experience, with the objective of creating an up-to-date, more resilient emergency, basic and advanced level health care system in response to the Covid-19 situation.

Mrs Monica TEREAN thanked **Mrs NAGY-SZÖLLŐSI** for her words, and asked Bihor County to make its presentation.

Mr Ilie BOLOJAN explained that Bihor county's project addresses a cultural need: today the Hungarian and Romanian theatres are operating in the very same building and thus are challenged by a lack of space. Hence, the project proposes to build a cultural centre that will function as a hub, and will host events in new concert halls (3 large and 2 smaller ones), and attract anyone who wishes to be involved in cultural activities. The estimated value of the project is approximately 15 million EUR, and the feasibility study is already in progress, expected to be finished by the fall of 2022, together with the technical designs.

Mrs Monica TEREAN noted that this is a very interesting project, and thanked for the presentation. She then proposed to continue with the representative of Csongrád-Csanád County.

Mrs Eszter CSÓKÁSI started by stating that Csongrád-Csanád county does not have its own strategic project, as they believe this is a cooperation programme meant for joint

projects. Thus, the county is partner in 3 projects, two of them lead by Timiș county, with an allocation of 3.82 million EUR ERDF and 2.5 million EUR ERDF for Csongrád-Csanád county. The third joint project was submitted under ISO1, and sees Csongrád-Csanád county as lead partner. The initiative strives to prepare the technical documentation of a direct railway between Szeged and Timisoara, bridging the 120 km long distance between the two county capitals. Acting as economic and university hubs, these cities are still without a direct public transport connection, leaving travellers with a journey of 6 hours, making it difficult to plan effective joint projects, e.g. in the field of higher education and health care. Consequently, with this strategic proposal the county wishes to take the first step towards creating a much-needed direct railway line between the county capitals.

Mrs Monica TEREAN thanked **Mrs CSÓKÁSI** for her presentation, and called on Hajdú-Bihar County to proceed.

Mrs Zsuzsa MIHALIK presented the proposal submitted under PO2, to be led by Hajdú-Bihar Development Agency. The project is worth 2 million EUR and aims to involve five settlements on the Hungarian and one on the Romanian side with previous successful cooperation experience, but they welcome further interested partners, if the case. The objective addresses the topic of renewable energy and wants to exploit and develop existing geothermal roots in order to incorporate them in the heating system of project partners' local administration buildings.

Mrs Monica TEREAN thanked for the interesting idea, and asked the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania to summarise their idea.

Mrs Roxana MIHAI stated that the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania, in understanding with the Hungarian partners, plans to implement 2 very important strategic proposals, especially in light of the current situation in Ukraine. One project addresses emergency situations under PO2 and has a budget of 8.75 million EUR ERDF, financing actions to prevent and manage certain emergency challenges in the eligible area, e.g. floods, forest fires, search and rescue in hostile environments, CBRN. The main expected results include joint action plans, joint intervention curricula and training facilities, achieved in the course of 36 months. The second project, worth 3.5 million EUR ERDF, addresses ISO1 on the topic of criminality and migration, affecting the entire eligible area on both sides of the border. The partnership set out to raise awareness on these issues in the programme area, including information on illegal migration and related European legislation. The infrastructural element will focus on developing training facilities in both member states.

Mrs Monica TEREAN thanked for the presentation, and gave the word to Satu Mare county.

Mr István JANKÓ-SZÉP explained that the OSI proposed by the president of Satu Mare County Council is based on an existing cooperation between the twin cities of Satu Mare

and Nyíregyháza, supported by an EGTC. The project strives to create the right components of the cultural institutions in the two cities and two counties, and thus proposes the refurbishment of some important buildings with monument values, one in Satu Mare and one in Nyíregyháza. The former will develop the building hosting the museum of fine arts, the philharmonic orchestra and the theatre; furthermore, it wishes to create a mixed cultural hub. The latter intends to include a building of a similar venue, to host important cultural activities. Consequently, the cultural offers of the two cities will be interlinked and become more attractive, creating important added value for the area.

Mrs Monica TEREAN thanked for the introduction of this cultural project, and invited the representative of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County to present their proposal.

Mr Illés ÚSZ confirmed the long-lasting cooperation existing between the 2 counties, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Satu Mare County. He mentioned that cooperation and the concrete project would be set up in the field of energy (related to EU Directive 1.2), especially green energy supply to be applied in the greatest possible area to reduce the price of energy and assess, create the potential of renewable energy. The potentials in the 2 counties are quite similar and they would intend to involve local organisations of national competence. Based on previous negotiations, it seems they will receive support. He added that, beyond assessing potentials in the area, they would include a pilot project as well to provide green energy at a very affordable price for non-profit organisations and municipalities.

Mrs Monica TEREAN gave the floor to Timiș County Council.

Mr Andrei LUCACI mentioned that he is going to present the 2 projects submitted by Timiș County as lead partner. The first one - *Huniade Castle enhancing the role of culture, sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation in the cross-border area*, is focused on creating a cultural circuit and common platform in the 2 counties. He added that culture had been highly affected by the pandemic therefore they targeted 2 cultural sights to be supported by the project, the Huniade Castle in Timisoara, Romania (which is currently listed in The National Register of Historic Monuments, and will be proposed to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage list) and the Návay mansion in Óföldsák, Hungary. The construction of the castle has been deteriorated by nature and due to anthropological factors (e.g. uneven settlements, soil and roof seepage, lack of maintenance, etc.), therefore restoration works will be pursued, including: preserving the historical character of the monument; defining the museum concept; designing an integrated visiting circuit; elaborating a cultural promoting strategy through an integrated cultural platform on regional level; growth of tourism; use of common touristic brands.

The second proposal of Timiș county is related to equal access to health in the 2 counties. They plan to create, through the project, an integrated cross-border health circuit including a common platform for health and personalised diagnosis services. In Timiș County an integrative medical centre would be established combining the 2 types of medical care (increasing the range of medical services, reaching fewer side effects and holistic treating of the body and soul simultaneously), which will lead to the creation of a circuit, individualised diagnosis, a treatment plan, classical and homeopathic healing, and a place for relaxation. In Csongrád-Csanád county the project would cover the renovation works of Dr. Bugyi István Hospital to reach spa treatment (with available thermal water) for patients with reduced mobility.

Mrs Monica TEREAN thanked everyone for their contribution and concluded that all 11 OSI projects that have been presented were submitted to JS accompanied by compliance letters from the Hungarian counties involved as partners. She gave the floor to **Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU**. He thanked everybody for the contributions made and concluded that a wide range of ideas would enhance the cross-border character of the programme and the wise spending of the Funds. He referred to a remark from the chat (made by Békés County Council) whether the beneficiary would want to have the original title of their proposal back (there was a former renaming of the title in the list proposed by the expert). **Mr BĂLĂNESCU** asked Békés to write it in the chat window if they wanted to use the previous title thus it would be amended accordingly.

Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI confirmed that it was not really a renaming but rather a simplification to shorten the title because in Annex 3 there is a limited number of characters allowed.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU commented that the Békés County Council would like to have the previous title and asked again to have the list amended accordingly. He also asked if there were any other comments from the members in connection with the indicative list of planned operations (Appendix 3).

Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH informed everybody that the national consultation meeting with the HU delegates had been held. They welcome that the 50% allocation dedicated to operations of strategic importance had been included in the draft documents. Nevertheless, they would also like to include the sentence used in the approved OSI Concept and Methodology (for the selection of operations of strategic importance) related to 'balanced impact' of the entire programme area shall be taken into consideration through funding. Deriving from that principle, they also propose to include the name of the partner/participating counties in Appendix 3, in order to see the balanced impact through funding in advance and reach a balanced status quo in the end.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked the comments and asked **Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH** to write the sentence in the chat for everybody to see and indicate where to insert that within

the text. He added that all the other comments/suggestions made by the presenters of the county councils had been noted and would be discussed at the end. Then, he gave the floor to the Békés County Council.

Mrs Anikó NAGY-SZÖLLŐSI commented that the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania had said that the project would cover all RO and HU counties, however, no compliance letter was requested from Békés County. She asked what the situation was in case of other counties.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU gave the floor to **Mrs Roxana MIHAI** who replied that they requested and obtained compliance letters from the counties in which the planned investments would be implemented. The other counties will participate in soft activities. The curricula to be developed within the project will, of course, be used by all partners but the investment will not concern all partners, that is the reason for not asking compliance letters from each county. The investment will be in Csongrád-Csanád County and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County from the HU side.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU gave the floor to **Mr. Ilie BOLOJAN**, president of the Bihor County Council. He noted that the number of projects on the HU side does not exceed the estimated figures, while on the RO side there are several projects, whose total budget goes beyond the pre-allocated amount. During the cooperation, a couple of principles have been followed and respected, of which one was the balanced impact among the 8 counties ensuring a reasonable sharing of funds. The other one was good cooperation (mostly among County Council of Bihor, Town Hall of Oradea, Hajdú-Bihar County Council, Town Hall in Debrecen). Therefore, they wish to cooperate with Hajdú-Bihar County Council. Since all 4 RO counties have submitted projects covering the pre-allocated amount, all the projects of the 8 counties would be included in the indicative list because today the price and implementation increases cannot be dealt with. So, they suggested to include projects forwarded by the county councils on both sides of the border in the indicative list, which do have cross-border impact.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU confirmed the balanced sharing of funds as regards strategic projects. He agreed that price increases will influence the implementation and mentioned that the MA proposes a 'flexible' approach, meaning that the current list of 11 OSI ideas is indicative. According to the Procedure, they will be examined and evaluated by the MC, who will finally approve the OSI projects that will be implemented. He highlighted and asked that the meeting minutes shall include what the county councils stated, and that it is not the prerogative of the PC at the moment to get the final list. He gave the floor to **Mrs Zsuzsa MIHALIK**. She indicated that there might be some misunderstandings on the issue of compliance letters and referred back to **Mrs MIHAI's** former words. However, it is true that they have not received any request from the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania and did not send compliance letters, neither the police forces, nor the disaster management authority in Hajdú-Bihar County.

Mrs Livia Banu intervened to make some clarifications. She referred to the provisions of the *OSIs Concept and Methodology*, where it is mentioned that, the PC voting members approve the indicative list of OSIs to be listed in the programme as Appendix 3, by checking the strategic relevance and by respecting the compliance with relevant development strategies.

In order to clarify this aspect, **Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU** asked the JS to present the compliance letters received for the 2 project ideas submitted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania.

Mrs Monica TEREAN replied that the JS provided the whole package to the PC with the invitation to the meeting, therefore the documentation is available. She asked the confirmation of **Mrs. MIHAI** that the compliance letter for the emergency situation project was issued by Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Council.

Mrs Roxana MIHAI confirmed that for the emergency situation project they received the compliance letter issued by Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Council and the County Disaster Management Directorate from the same county will be a partner but all the emergency departments will use all the common procedures. In the other project (police), they have the declaration of consent from Csongrád-Csanád County Municipality, the partners will be the Police Education and Training Centre and Csongrád-Csanád County Police Headquarters. In both cases, the letters of compliance are from the county councils.

Mrs Monica TEREAN asked if she was right in the sense that they were talking about the particular letter from the Csongrád-Csanád County Assembly issued to the Csongrád-Csanád Police Headquarters. **Mrs. Roxana MIHAI** confirmed.

Mrs Livia Banu intervened and said that she previously wanted to make it clear what the exact tasks of the PC are, she did not want to add remarks regarding the compliance letters. According to the rules, the PC is responsible for checking the strategic relevance and inspecting compliance with relevant strategies in case of project ideas included in the indicative list.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU asked if it is correct that in case of the project of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania compliance letters issued by the HU counties are available.

Mrs Monica TEREAN confirmed it.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU asked **Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH** to read the sentence that should be included in the Programme, or Performance Framework Document and asked to put the phrase in the chatbox.

Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH suggested to put in the Appendix 3 the following sentence with regard to the 50% allocation: "The entire procedure shall ensure the balanced impact through funding in the programme area covering the 8 counties."

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU asked **Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI** to put the above-mentioned sentence in Appendix 3.

Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI first put the consolidated version of the phrase in the chatbox "The timeline for implementation for selected and funded projects will be indicatively within the following frame: 2023-2027. The total budget allocated to OSI will not exceed 50% ERDF funds of total programme allocation. The entire procedure shall ensure the balanced impact through funding in the programme area covering the 8 counties." and asked for confirmation relating to the modification.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU highlighted that according to the suggestion of the National Authority the counties should also be named in Appendix 3 and suggested that, if there are no other observations, than the necessary modification should be completed in the relevant document by the external experts. Then asked if there is anyone against this proposal. Nobody was against the proposal.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU gave the floor to **Mrs Eszter CSÓKÁSI**.

Mrs Eszter CSÓKÁSI remarked that the indicative budget of the counties OSI proposals cannot be found in the table. In her opinion in order to ensure the balanced impact of the projects in all the 8 counties, it would be necessary to ensure the balance in the budget of the counties as well. For this reason, she suggested to complete the table with the allocated ERDF by each partner. In this way, the balance allocation can be followed up financially as well.

Mrs Monica TEREAN informed everybody that JS tried to collect this data, but does not have information relating to the budget of partners.

Mrs Eszter CSÓKÁSI can provide information relating to Csongrád-Csanád County partnership and still propose to indicate a detailed ERDF allocation by counties.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU promised to turn back to this proposal with an answer and gave the floor to the representative of the DG Regio, **Mrs Anna MODZELEWSKA**.

Mrs Anna MODZELEWSKA informed everybody from legal point of view that the obligatory content of Appendix 3 refers only to the list of planned operations with a timetable. There is no specific reference to the budget. Also reminded everybody of the cross-border character of the projects as the most important aspect. The proper impact in many cases can be achieved by a not equally distributed budget.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU asked if everybody has a detailed budget already, defined by partners. Until everybody put the comments in the chatbox he gave the floor to **Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH**.

Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH asked **Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI** if she tries to insert the abbreviation of counties in Appendix 3 in the meantime.

Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH asked the programming expert to share Appendix 3 – *List of planned operations of strategic importance with a timetable* for the participants could see the amendment proposed by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, namely: 'The entire procedure shall ensure the balanced impact through funding in the programme area covering the 8 counties.'

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU noticed that most of the PC members having submitted a strategic project idea had no project budget broken down per partner, in accordance with the OSI methodology, which offered such flexibility. Further, **Mr BĂLĂNESCU** mentioned that all open aspects were discussed/tackled during the meeting and those agreed upon were inserted in the Interreg Programme. Consequently, he proposed the participants to vote on the documents as a whole, i.e. the Interreg Programme as modified during the meeting with the 2 amendments inserted – the one requested by the Romanian Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration in relation to section 7.2 on setting up the Joint Secretariat within BRECO, and the one requested by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, regarding the balanced impact on the entire Programme Area through financing, to be included in Appendix 3, as well as the insertion of information regarding each OSI's territorial coverage, as specified in the submitted fiches. He underlined that he was seeking consensus in approving the whole package, including the Interreg Programme to be submitted to COM by April 2nd, 2022.

Mr BĂLĂNESCU expressed his confidence that the arguments presented during the meeting in relation to Appendix 3, namely to keep all the 11 OSIs, were convincing and that the Bihor County Council's proposal, supported by all Romanian county councils, to have only 8 projects included in Appendix 3, be mentioned in the related minutes of the PC meeting. Further, **Mr BĂLĂNESCU** asked if there were any votes against the proposed approach.

Mr Ionuț SĂRAC intervened and expressed Bihor County Council's vote against the proposed approach.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU noticed that **Mr István Tamás JANKÓ-SZÉP** also voted against, so no consensus could be reached. He also clarified for **Ms Eszter Anna CSÓKÁSI** that the proposal was to vote as a whole on all documents submitted for PC approval, and also announced that Békés County Council requested a short break.

Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH intervened asking about the Performance Framework, which she didn't recall to have been tackled.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU explained that the Performance Framework was part of the presentation made by the programming expert at the beginning of the meeting and, as no comments were made in relation to the Performance Framework by the PC members, it was considered that the document had been agreed as such. Nevertheless, if there were observations/recommendations on the document, they could be tackled on the spot.

Mrs Gloria ZAGAGLIONI clarified that the Performance Framework was presented as part of the Interreg Programme modifications (as compared to the previously approved version).

Mrs Nikoletta HORVÁTH summed up the result of Hungarian part consultations on the subject, i.e. the observation that the OSIs budgets exceeded the established 50% allocation of the total ERDF Programme budget, but such an approach could be accepted for the time being, in order to set the Performance Framework and indicators, but a disclaimer should be made, either in the IP or in the minutes, to clarify that the future Monitoring Committee would have the right and power to establish specific rules in the Calls for proposals and decide upon the selection criteria and allocation for the OSIs.

As no consensus was reached in relation to Mr BĂLĂNESCU's proposal, a 15 minutes break was proposed.

The meeting was resumed with Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU's proposal to vote on the following documents: the Interreg Programme as amended by the Romanian Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration in relation to section 7.2, and by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in relation to Appendix 3 (wording and county coverage per OSI), and the related Programme's Performance Framework. Mr BĂLĂNESCU asked if there were any votes against the documents submitted for approval and invited the participants to use the chatbox option of the meeting in order to express their votes. He also mentioned that, according to the Rules of Procedures, a 2/3 majority was necessary to adopt a decision.

Ms Eszter Anna CSÓKÁSI intervened, specifying that some members of the Hungarian delegation were having technical problems. Consequently, Mrs Monica TEREAN called all PC voting members. Except for the Hungarian Ministry of Finance, which asked for a short waiting time, all PC voting members were present.

Mr István Tamás JANKÓ-SZÉP took the floor and suggested that the Bihor County Council's proposal on a revised Appendix 3 should also be submitted to the vote.

The same proposal was made, in chat, by Mrs Gabriela CHIRICHEU.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked for Mr JANKÓ-SZÉP's intervention and replied that the proposal would be further discussed if the case.

Upon the representative of the Hungarian Ministry of Finance rejoining the meeting (so that all 16 voting members were present), Mr BĂLĂNESCU, after clarifying for Csongrád-Csanád County Council's representative that no budget amount could be mentioned in Appendix 3, as the majority of the OSI had not decided yet the project budget distribution among partners, he resumed the voting procedure, asking again the participants if there were any votes against the documents submitted for approval, as presented during the meeting.

Mrs Monica TEREAN recalled to the participants that, in order to pass a decision, a 2/3 majority was necessary. As all 16 institutions with voting rights were present at the meeting, 11 votes would be necessary for a valid PC decision. Following the voting procedure, in chat, 5 votes were expressed against the proposed documents, i.e. Arad County Council, Bihor County Council, Satu Mare County Council, Timiș county Council and Békés County Council. Consequently, the proposed documents – *Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme⁴*, (including Appendix 3 – *List of planned operations of strategic importance with a timetable*), as amended during the meeting, and the *Output and Results Indicators and Performance framework Methodology* – were approved.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked the participants and expressed his confidence in a successful Programme.

Mr Ionuț SĂRAC wanted to know if there were any abstains in relation to the voting process/documents submitted for approval and the **Head of JS** stated that no such option had been expressed in the chat. However, she invited the participants to mention if there were any PC voting members who abstained. As no answer was received, the **Chair** re-confirmed the voting result and underlined that the PC Decision will enter into force as of the date of the 4th PC meeting, i.e. the 22nd of March, 2022.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked again the participants for the support and cooperation, mentioned that he would have liked to meet them all in person, and invited them to address some closing words if wanted.

Ms Anna-Monika MODZELEWSKA took the floor, appreciated the efforts made to have the IP approved by the PC, but also noticed that the number of votes against was high. She mentioned that, after the IP being assessed by the relevant departments within COM, a dedicated session should be organized in order to discuss, besides other observations on the document, the OSI proposals. **Ms MODZELEWSKA** underlined that, by the time of IP approval by the COM, the strategic ideas should be more developed, including in terms of the envisaged budget, as there was very little information delivered by the OSIs promoters during the meeting. Considering the amount allocated to OSIs, it would be necessary for the COM to have as much information as possible on the subject, before approving the programme document.

She ensured the participants of all her support, as programme's desk officer, in the negotiation process.

Mr Dan BĂLĂNESCU thanked the COM's representative for the intervention and undertook, on behalf of all parties involved in the programming process, to make all necessary efforts for having the best possible version of the IP approved by the COM.

⁴ Deliverable under the services contract *Technical assistance for the elaboration of the future Interreg Programme Romania-Hungary 2021-2027 (including the realisation of SEA)*

The Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme, as amended during the meeting, and the Output and Results Indicators and Performance framework Methodology have been approved by the PC voting members. The related PC Decision (Decision no.13) will enter into force as of the 22nd of March 2022. The approved IP is going to be submitted to the COM by April 2nd, 2022, in view of approval.

Synthesis of the 4th PC meeting

During the 4th PC meeting the following decision was made:

Decision no 13, dated 22nd of March 2022, approving the content of the:

Output and Results Indicators and Performance framework Methodology, in the form presented by the programming expert, and

Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme, as amended during the meeting

The Decision has been passed by the majority of votes (2/3 of the votes expressed), in line with PC RoP