

**Citizens' Summary  
of the Annual Implementation  
Report 2021**



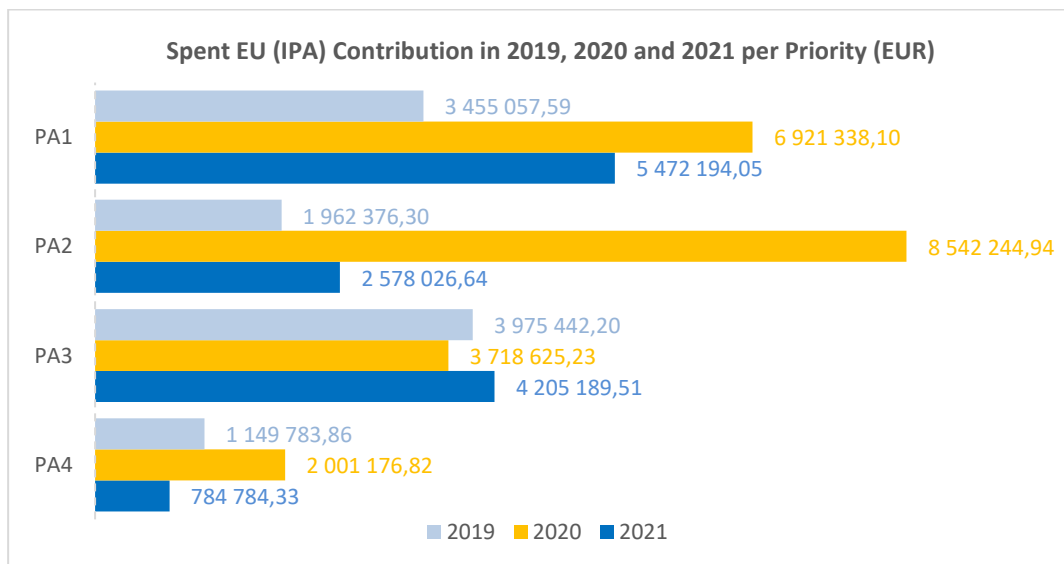
**The Annual Implementation Report (AIR) of the Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia for 2021 provides detailed insight into the programme’s operation between 1 January and 31 December 2021. The Citizens’ Summary is a brief overview of this report.**

The programme bodies – the Managing Authority/MA (Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade), the Serbian National Authority/NA (Serbian Ministry of EU Integration), the Joint Secretariat of the programme/JS, the Joint Secretariat Antenna/JS Antenna, the First Level Control/FLC in Hungary and in Serbia, and the European Commission representative and the Desk Officer in charge of the programme – contributed to the significant progress of the programme implementation in 2021.

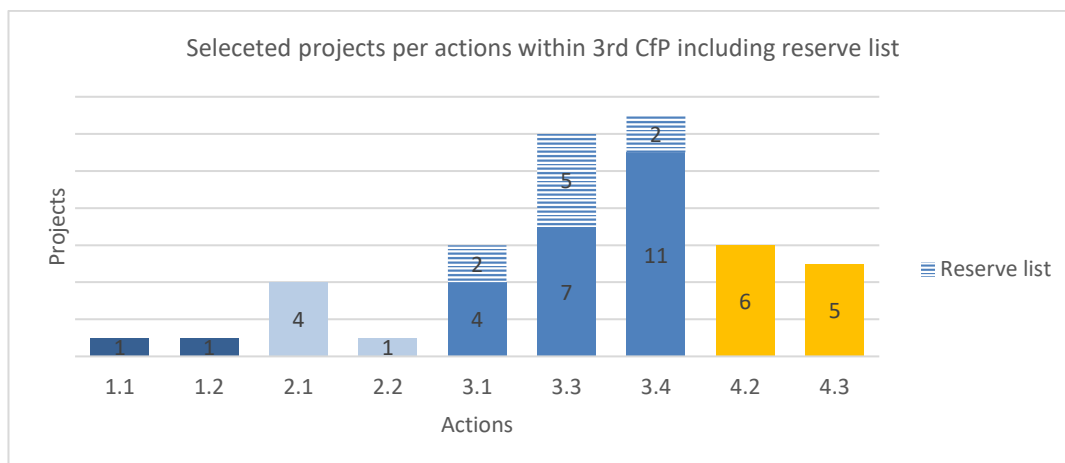
2021 was the second year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it influenced the implementation, the programme and the projects remained quite active. Besides the project implementation and project closures, the main tasks were the programming of the next financing period and the development of the new monitoring system including data migration from the previous one.

The JS approved 25 final project reports, while 6 other projects finished their activities and started preparing the final documentations. As for project implementation, the JS coordinated the approval and elaboration of 7 addenda, considered and approved 51 other project changes.

The most tangible part of the progress is the 107 approved project reports covering the reimbursement of EUR 15 359 345.92 IPA EU contribution. It can be stated that 2020 was the peak in terms of reported and reimbursed expenditures. Therefore, in line with the nature of programme’s life cycle the amount approved in 2021 is a decrease compared to the previous period. Please find below the comparative breakdown.



Although no more calls for proposals were launched in the 2014-2020 period, certain projects were selected for financing from the reserve list within the assessment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals’ applications. Considering the remaining and recovered amounts from the concluded cooperations, altogether 9 projects were selected by the JMC from the reserve list. Based on the selection method, all projects applied within PA3. The breakdown of selected projects is as follows:



Concerning the operation of the Joint Monitoring Committee, due to the pandemic situation, it did not have sessions in person, but had one online meeting in November. Written procedure was proven as an efficient tool for decision-making. In 2021 there were 4 written procedures concluded that altogether resulted in 7 decisions. Besides the selection of the reserve list projects and the connecting non-substantial reallocation between priority axes, the most essential decisions were made on the approval of the respective annual implementation report, approval of project modifications, approval of TA changes and the inception report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase programme evaluation.

Having in mind the pandemic circumstances, event organisation was not in focus in 2021. Since the projects of the last call were already on-going, Information Days or LB Seminars were not scheduled for this period.. Naturally, the European Cooperation Day is always a crucial occasion of the year, but in 2021 it had to be cancelled once again.

On the programme’s operational side, sound and timely measures enabled that 2021 to be a successful year despite of difficulties. The following tasks of the reported year can be considered as the most important ones:

- Project monitoring, administrative and technical assistance to projects, coordination of project implementation and project closures;
- Contracting and start of implementation of reserve list projects;
- Information and communication activities;
- Audit and FLC measures;
- Coordination and elaboration of programme planning for period 2021-2027;
- Further development and operation of the new electronic monitoring system, data migration between the two systems.

As mentioned, there were 25 final project reports approved in 2021, but altogether 50 projects of the three calls had on-going activities in this year. In 2020, this value was 40. Comparing the two years, it means that 2020 was the peak in terms of reimbursing expenditures, while 2021 was the peak year of implementing project activities.

Concerning the outputs of these project activities, indicators could help us see their achievements. Although there are unchanged values such as the 50 000 inhabitants benefited from flood protection



measures (since the respective projects were already concluded), the most important data shows us that despite of the pandemic, the projects could achieve a great progress in 2021.

Another 7 km bicycle path was constructed, 58 km railway line was planned and authorised, additional 80 thousand visits could be realised in supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions. More than 250 additional events hosted professionals and the public, the users of the developed online communication tools significantly increased, further 46 organisations participated in knowledge platforms and 54 enterprises cooperated with research institutions.





Having in mind the above results let's take a closer look on two outstanding cooperation from the two ends of the spectrum: a construction focused project of strategic importance and a people-to-people partnership dealing with handicapped youth.

The **BABECA** project – with a budget of EUR 8,699,538 out of which the EU co-financing makes up EUR 7,294,607– is of strategic importance as a project on flood hazard prevention and water management.



The project partners – Public Water Management Company "Vode Vojvodine" Novi Sad in cooperation with the Lower Danube Valley Water Directorate of Baja and the European Affairs Fund of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina – have had extensive expertise in water management and flood hazard prevention.

The project activities contributed to the improvement of the functioning of the Baja-Bezdan Canal. In Serbia, the Bezdan lock and Šebešfok lock and sluice have been reconstructed and rehabilitated, whereas in Hungary, facilities for the extraction of driftwood and ramps for vessels were built on three locations. Also, a 5600 meter long section of the Baja-Bezdan Canal was dredged.

Although only bottlenecks and critical parts of the canal were dredged, the total length of canal involved in the development was 44.8 km. The activities contributed to protection of flood hazard of the whole target territory improving the social conditions of inhabitants of 10 settlements (more than 60 000 hectares) in the border region.

The arrangement of the Baja-Bezdan Canal has multiple significance such as easier navigation, reduced flood hazard and better living conditions on both sides of the border. The economy of the Lower Danube region in Hungary and the Upper Danube region in Serbia have been revived.



**SoundDancePaint** is a project from the other end of the spectrum. 'Cross-Border Sound, Dance and Paint for Children with Disabilities' is a cooperation implemented by the United Way Foundation (Hungary) and Elementary and Secondary Boarding School 'Milan Petrović' (Serbia). The project was financed by a modest sum of EUR 120,621, which was supported by an amount of EUR 102,570 contribution by the European Union.

The aim of the project is the development of disadvantaged children with disabilities in the cities of Baja and Novi Sad, using a new methodology and improved activities based on the results of a previous project. The target group consists of mentally disabled children and young people living and studying in the two institutions, in three age groups: kindergarten, elementary school and mixed older age groups.

The entire project is based on the use of the Soundbeam Therapeutic Music device, which is improved with new outputs, like dance and drawing. According to previous experiences, these therapeutic elements can significantly accelerate the development of the target group and thus, their integration into society. During the activities, joint concerts and camps were organized, as well as a study visit for the target group and their development pedagogues.

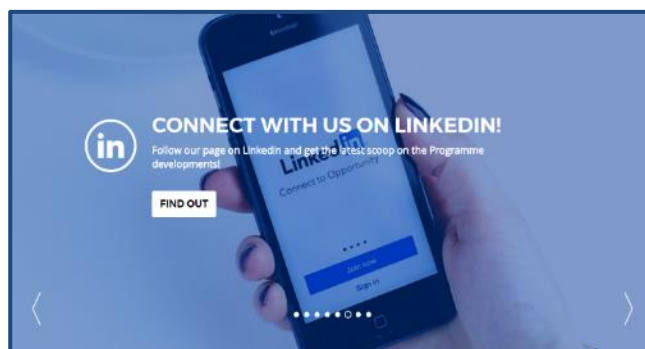
A conference for professionals to introduce the Soundbeam equipment and to share their experiences they gained during the therapeutic work was also part of the cooperation. Children with disabilities will had the opportunity to present their learned skills on 6 different occasions such as musical, community and cultural events.



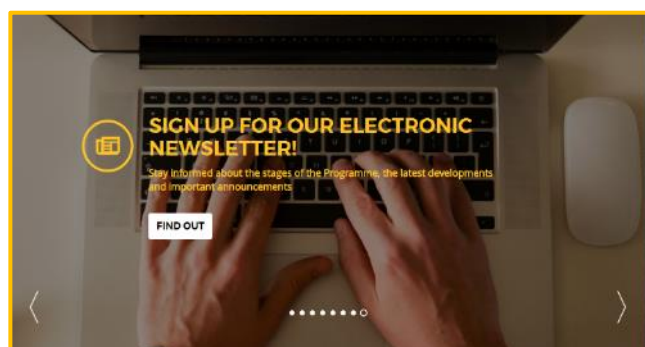


The programme's website [www.interreg-ipa-husrb.com](http://www.interreg-ipa-husrb.com) remained the main communication hub of the programme towards the general public, the beneficiaries and other programme's stakeholders. It features information related to the calls for proposals, results of the calls, selected projects, the [summaries of the contracted projects](#) and the programme-related and EU-level news.

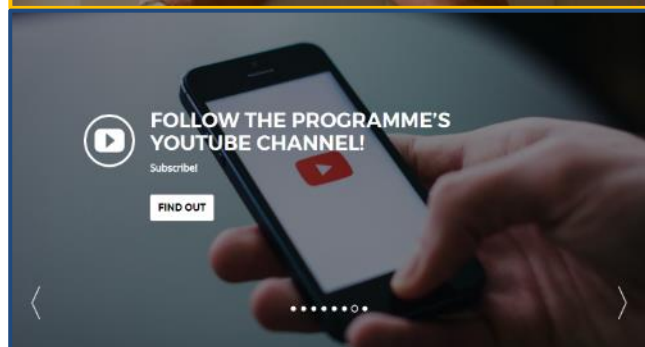
Additionally, the website contains the photo and video content and [the infographics about the programme](#) and [the infographics about project implementation](#) that depict complex processes and information in a visual way that is easy to understand.



The [programme's Facebook page](#) and [programme's page on LinkedIn](#) featured all programme- and project-related news and announcements, tips for the applicants and beneficiaries, the regional and the European-level news relevant to the Programme. The programme's social media surfaces, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, were continuously updated throughout 2021 with various programme related information and advices.



The [programme's YouTube channel](#) continued to be a video content-sharing platform in 2021, as well. In addition to the programme-related content, it also featured videos related to the project launching events and achieved results.



[Programme's newsletter](#) issue was distributed in 2021 as well, featuring the planning of the new financing period and inviting the public to consult its content.

**DISCLAIMER:**

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary–Serbia, hosted by the Széchenyi Program Office Nonprofit LLC. and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.