Revised EUSAIR Action Plan

(Pillar 2 – Topic 2.5, from 9 April 2024)

## Topic 2.5 – Green energy

The leading objective is confronting global climate change while accelerating the transition towards decarbonised energy systems in the Adriatic-Ionian Region, enhancing security of energy supply and delivery, granting affordable and equitable energy access for all consumers. Priorities are enacting the energy goals of The European Green Deal, REPowerEU and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The decarbonisation of the energy systems and the transition towards net-zero carbon economies will entail large-scale deployment of renewable energy sources and other low-carbon energy options, improved energy efficiency, increased electrification and eventually the development and use of hydrogen fuels. Energy technology innovation and digitalisation will be key drivers.

New market structures and technologies that are developed and deployed would imply a new organisation of the energy systems. In the past energy systems were based on long-distance energy networks and concentrated energy supply while the future will see more distributed and local energy production and delivery. During the past few years, active consumers such as prosumers, energy communities and demand-side participants have emerged that contribute to more efficient decentralised markets and networks management. For these market participants to become an integrated part of the energy system, any development of energy infrastructures should take them involved and into account. The transition towards decarbonised energy systems might require new forms of governance of the transition. Cooperation in the development and implementation of National Energy and Climate Plans is foreseen. An intent of this Topic is to exchange experiences and consultation between and among countries from the Adriatic-Ionian Region on the governance for the energy transition and public acceptance. Ad-hoc analyses and studies can be foreseen. Pillar 3 and Pillar 5 might have a role and contribute.

**Global objectives.** The commitment to tackling global climate change and other environmental challenges is this generation’s defining task. It is a new growth strategy that aims at transforming EU Member States and EU candidate countries into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. This green strategy also aims to protect, conserve, and enhance the Adriatic-Ionian Region’s natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of its citizens from environmentally related risks and impacts. At the same time the transition should be just and inclusive. It must put people first, and pay attention to the local communities, industries and workers who will face the greatest challenges. Since it will bring substantial change, active public participation and confidence in the energy transition is paramount if policies are to work and be accepted.

**EUSAIR objectives.** It is assumed that the Adriatic-Ionian Region should develop a collective ability to transform its economy and societies to follow a more sustainable energy path. Delivering substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions is a challenge. It will require massive public investment and increased effort to direct private capital towards climate and environmental action, while avoiding lock-in into unsustainable practices. The Adriatic-Ionian Region should be able to coordinate and promote its efforts towards building a coherent financial public-private system that supports sustainable solutions. These investments should also be an opportunity to put the Adriatic-Ionian Region firmly on a new path of sustainable and inclusive growth while enhancing security of energy supply and delivery and ensuring affordable energy access and equity. Energy efficiency improvements should be considered with a view to enhancing security of supply and to achieving a better degree of energy independence and to protect the environment.

**Specific objectives of the Topic**

In light of the above objectives, challenges and opportunities, the activities under this Topic aim at

* increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix across the Adriatic-Ionian Region;
* improving and enhancing energy efficiency of the economies of the Adriatic-Ionian Region, through better energy use and management and thus reducing the energy intensity, in terms of the energy required for GDP unit;
* introducing and deployinghydrogen in the energy mix and increasing cooperation on advanced energy technologies in the Adriatic-Ionian Region;
* promoting better cohesion through the development of energy communities in the Adriatic-Ionian Region;
* ensuring affordable energy supply by fighting energy poverty and protecting energy consumers.

### 2.5.1 EUSAIR specificities opportunities & challenges

Linked to the above objectives, the Adriatic-Ionian Region faces a number of specific challenges and opportunities which the Action Plan aims to address.

Opportunities:

* Exploiting the potential of renewable energy sources in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Specifically, solar energy, onshore and offshore wind power hydropower and possibly geothermal energy are expected to make a substantial share in the future electricity mix. Furthermore, advanced biofuels would have a role in transport and other use.
* Providing the economies of the Adriatic-Ionian Region (in several cases with significantly lower GDP per capita than the EU overage) with opportunities for international investors in the green energy sector, while ensuring that transparent and reliable regulatory frameworks are in place.
* Making the transition to a renewable-based energy supply and to high energy efficiency driven by domestic resources can enable countries to capture increasing shares of the energy value added chain within the Adriatic-Ionian Region, progressively build domestic technological capacity and turn the energy system into a driver of clean economic growth, and social cohesion.
* Accelerating the deployment of renewables energies in the Adriatic-Ionian Region and increasing energy efficiency are a cost-effective strategy to reduce dependency on energy imports and improve the security of supply. At the same time, expanded electrification of the energy system with renewable energy sources would allow the phasing out of coal uses as well as avoiding further investments in redundant natural gas infrastructure, which would be at high risk of becoming stranded if the Adriatic-Ionian Region is to meet the goals of The European Green Deal.

Challenges:

* Regulatory (complex, lengthy administrative procedures, integration in spatial plans, inefficient coordination of renewable energy sources regulations between countries), political (possible instabilities), financial (fossil fuel subsidies, investment security), technical (grid integration restrictions, lack of functional power exchanges), socio-economic and environmental barriers to the deployment of renewable energy sources.
* High energy intensity of a number of EUSAIR participating countries. Reducing energy intensity is the challenge.
* High share of greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector per GDP unit in some countries from the Adriatic-Ionian Region. High dependency of energy sectors on fossil fuels (i.e. lignite) and hydropower (affected by impacts due climate change and potential conflicts with Water Framework and Habitats Directives).
* Accelerating the transition towards a net-zero carbon economy to decarbonise the energy systems while promoting security of energy supply and delivery, energy affordability and access. Coping with the cost of energy transition to low-carbon technologies and stranded costs emerging form the phasing out of coal-using facilities and producing areas.
* Dealing with the more vulnerable energy customers (due to the possibility of increasing energy prices) in cooperation with Pillar 5.

Further challenges:

* Creating an energy technology innovation facility or hub for the Adriatic-Ionian Region with contribution and cooperation from all the EUSAIR participating countries while exploiting existing capabilities.
* Ensuring fair supply of strategic materials and critical components for the energy transition.
* Promoting the creation of new industrial players in the Adriatic-Ionian Region to design and construct green facilities and supply energy efficient systems.
* Providing energy supply and delivery with security and resilience against cybersecurity threats.

### 2.5.2 Relevant policy frameworks

This Topic connects to a wide range of EU and national policies related to green energy, energy transition and many other fields:

* A Renovation Wave for Europe Strategy: Greening our Buildings, Creating Jobs, Improving Lives [COM(2020)662 final]
* An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans [COM(2020) 641 final]
* Directive on Energy Efficiency [(EU) 2018/2002]
* Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings [(EU) 2018/844]
* Directive on the Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources [(EU) 2018/2001]
* European Investment Bank (EIB) Guidelines for (Energy) Project Financing and Risk Assessment
* Fit for 55 Package: Clean Energy for All Europeans Package
* REPowerEU Plan [COM(2022) 230 final]
* The Energy Community Treaty [2006/500/EC]
* A Europe fit for the digital age

Other relevant policy framework include:

* Critical Raw Materials Resilience: Charting a Path towards greater Security and Sustainability [COM(2020) 474 final]
* Regulation Establishing the Framework for Achieving Climate Neutrality [(EU) 2021/1119]
* Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Action to Confront Climate Change [(EU) 2018/1999]
* The European Green Deal [COM (2019) 640 final]
* The Paris Protocol – A blueprint for tackling global climate change beyond 2020 [COM/2015/081 final]

### 2.5.3 Indicative key stakeholders

The implementation of this Topic needs to draw on the engagement of a wide range of players, including:

* Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM)
* Energy Community (EnC)
* European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)
* UN Conference of the Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change
* Local and regional authorities
* Local energy agencies networks
* Local environmental associations (e.g. Friends of the Earth)
* Local public and private energy communities
* Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF)

Other relevant stakeholders are:

* Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII)
* Adriatic and Ionian Interregional Group at the Committee of the Regions
* Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)
* Covenant of Mayors
* European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and Environment (FEDARENE)
* International Energy Agency (IEA)
* International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)
* National Associations for Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency
* National energy RDI agencies
* National regulatory agencies
* Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)
* REScoop.eu (European Federation of Citizen Energy Cooperatives)
* United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
* Relevant EU and other funds managing authorities.

### 2.5.4 Support to horizontal and cross cutting topics

Activities under this Topic contribute actively to the horizontal and cross-cutting topics of the Action Plan.

**Horizontal topics:**

* **Enlargement.** The shared commitment to large-scale development and deployment of renewable energies and energy efficiency is a key element for the integration of EU candidate countries into the common energy market. Net-zero carbon energy systems by the year 2050 are the ultimate goal while the national energy systems should be organised accordingly. The National Energy and Climate Plans represent a step forward in the process of EU enlargement which is followed by candidate countries The enactment of activities under the Topic Green Energy would provide a clear contribution.
* **Capacity building.** The activities as foreseen under the present Topic are requiring adequategovernance and organisation of the energy system to involve the relevant players from administrations and industry. In particular, the large-scale deployment of renewable energies and energy efficiency are demanding information, initiatives and implementation at local scale within a meshed and distributed energy system where new types and forms of capacity building are at its background. Energy communities for the deployment and use renewable energies and energy efficiency are representing a promising advancement.
* **Innovation and research.** The activities which are proposed under this Topic have their ground on energy technology innovation and technology advancements are expected. Cooperation and collaboration on energy technology innovation and research and demonstration will be promoted while EUSAIR participating countries are invited to share information and practice on their best cases and experiences regarding the deployment of renewable energies and energy efficiency.

**Cross-cutting topics**:

* **Circular economy.** The promotion of green energy is a direct contribution to the transition towards a circular economy. Connecting system models/initiatives (such as Climate-KIC) to support implementation of circular economy in EUSAIR participating countries and value chain development are expected under the present Topic. In particular, circular economy and its principles are a driver for energy efficiency through the life cycle of goods, appliances, and industrial equipment. Clear synergistic interactions are expected.
* **Green rural development.** The large-scale deployment of renewable energies would contribute to green rural development activities. Supporting smart community/village and energy communities in rural areas would increase self-sufficiency, attractiveness, and sustainable development of the rural areas (also using experiences made in other Macro Regions). The development of advanced second-generation technologies for the energy use of biomass might represent a valuable asset for some rural areas depending on local circumstances and eventual economic and environmental benefits.
* **Digitalisation.** It is assumed that the transition towards green energy and a net-zero carbon economy according to the long-form perspective and commitments can find a driver in the digital transition and progressive digitalisation of the energy system. Viceversa the energy transition will promote further digitalisation in the economy and extended use of artificial intelligence. Applications of artificial intelligence and blockchain are envisaged. Artificial intelligence will be a key instrument in the operation, management and maintenance of remote renewable energy systems while artificial intelligence would also entail a new generation of energy efficient applications and arrangements in the residential, transport, industrial and services sectors.

### 2.5.5 Action 2.5.1 – Cooperation in deployment of renewable energy sources in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

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| **Action 2.5.1** | Description of the Action | | | | |
| Name of the Action | **Cooperation in deployment of renewable energy sources in the Adriatic-Ionian Region** | | | | |
| What are the envisaged activities? | * Master Plan 2026 of Energy and Energy Networks for the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Activity as under Action 2.4.1 * Convening a EUSAIR Conference for Cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian Region to Confront Global Climate Change Challenge. Cooperating in the development and implementation of National Energy and Climate Plans with a view at decarbonising the energy system, energy security and sustainability. Activity cross-cutting the entire Topic 2.5. * Preparing a Renewable Energy Roadmap for the Adriatic-Ionian Region while mapping the renewable energy potential, identifying implementation challenges and barriers to renewable energy sources. * Promoting the use of renewable energies in the residential, transport, industry and services sectors. * Integrating and managing renewable energy energies into existing energy systems and cooperating for the establishment of a comprehensive investment and regulatory framework. * Supporting and creating energy communities according to the EU directives and regulations. Promoting cooperation and exchange of experiences amongst energy communities as well as through macroregional networking and best practice sharing. * Cooperating on projects of biomass refineries for production of advanced biofuels with a view at net-zero carbon emissions. * Cooperation envisaged and new projects would include:  1. Supporting alignment of countries from the Adriatic-Ionian Region with the EU Acquis related to the decarbonisation of the energy systems in the framework of the Energy Community. 2. Cooperating on low-carbon and de-carbonised district heating solutions as well projects for desalination of sea water. 3. Cooperating in fund-raising and joint regional project proposals on renewable energy sources. 4. Exploring opportunities offered by European initiatives (such as the ‘coal regions in transition’, Western Balkan Economic and Investment Plan, European Climate Pact) for encouraging best practice sharing, capacity building and cooperation during the phasing - out of coal - fuelled power plants and process industry. 5. Implementing the project for ‘Harnessing Offshore Renewable Energy Potential in the Adriatic and Ionian Sea’. | | | | |
| Which challenges and opportunities is this Action addressing? | * The Adriatic-Ionian Region is promising in terms of potential of renewable energy sources. * High share of greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector per GDP unit in a number of countries from the Adriatic-Ionian Region. High dependency of energy sectors on fossil fuels (i.e. lignite) and hydropower (affected by impacts due to climate change and potential conflicts with Water Framework and Habitats Directives). | | | | |
| What are the expected results/targets of the Action? | * Increased share of renewable energy in the EUSAIR energy mix. * Large-scale deployment into the Adriatic-Ionian Region of photovoltaics, wind power, advanced biofuels, geothermal energy in addition to hydropower. | | | | |
| EUSAIR Flagships and strategic projects | / | | | | |
| Indicators | Indicator name | Common Indicator name and code, if relevant | Baseline value and year | Target value and year | Data source |
| How to measure the EUSAIR activities under this Action? | OI: EUSAIR Conference on Climate Change | RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders | Concept (2023) | 1(2025) | TSG2 |
| RI: Aim of the Conference is at presenting problems, options and solutions on how to confront the climate change issue for the Adriatic and Ionian Region while developing harmonised positions and approaches. Cross-cutting aspects with Topic 2.4, all aspects of Topic 2.5 and Pillar 3 are relevant for the horizontal topic of EU enlargement. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | Concept (2023) | 1 (2025) | TSG2 |
| OI: Renewable Energy Roadmap for the Adriatic and Ionian Region – study completed. | RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed | Concept (2023) | 1(2025) | TSG2 |
| RI: Focus of the renewable Energy Roadmap is at opportunities for progress and prospects of renewable energies in the Region. Options for streamlining siting and operation are defined. Result is needed to cope with the horizontal topic of EU enlargement. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | Concept (2023) | 1 (2025) | TSG2 |
| OI: Development of project for biomass refinery for biofuel production. | RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders | 0(2023) | 1(2026) | TSG2 |
|  | RI. Second generation and advanced use of biomass would have a role within the expanded energy production and use of renewable energies in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Biorefineries appear at the technological frontier. | RCO116  Jointly developed solutions | 0(2023) | 1(2027) | TSG2 |

### 2.5.6 Action 2.5.2 – Improving energy efficiency in the through action and cooperation

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| **Action 2.5.2** | Description of the Action | | | | |
| Name of the Action | **Improving energy efficiency in the Adriatic-Ionian Region through action and cooperation** | | | | |
| What are the envisaged activities? | * Master Plan 2026 on Energy and Energy Networks for the Adriatic and Ionian Region. Activity as under Action 2.4.1. * Convening a EUSAIR Conference for Cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian Region to Confront Global Climate Change Challenge. Activity as under Action 2.5.1. * Organising permanent EUSAIR Forum on Energy Efficiency for the Adriatic-Ionian Region to promote and foster macroregional cooperation in all efficient energy uses, energy efficient housing and industrial processes, energy efficient public buildings and services, energy efficient mobility. This would include cooperation on: * Public lighting, telemetering and monitoring energy delivery and use, energy-efficient city planning; * Domotics, heat pumps, energy-efficient heating and cooling for buildings and residential purposes; * Shared recommendations and standards to combine energy efficiency measures with applications of renewable energies for residential purposes and services sector; * Electric vehicles, low-carbon fuels and hydrogen for transport and mobility. Activity cross-cutting with Topic 2.2 and Topic 2.3. * Strengthening macroregional cooperation on energy programmes and plans. This would include: * Addressing administrative, legal and financial barriers to speed up a renovation of public and private buildings, including cooperation and sharing of best practices in designing innovative financing schemes. * Cooperating in the development and implementation of national energy end-use building and industry renovation strategies. * Supporting macroregional networking, best practice sharing, capacity building and project development with energy efficiency. * Developing and implementing energy communities to empower local stakeholders by improving their capacities in exploiting renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency on a local scale. Energy communities will rely upon bottom-up approaches including engagement of enterprises and enhanced mutual trust of local authorities and citizens who want to create instruments aimed at boosting the energy transition. Activity will be shared by Action 2.5.1 and Action 2.5.2. * Creating and harmonising through the Adriatic-Ionian Region instruments aimed at fighting energy poverty and ensuring continuing and sustainable access to energy for the isolated communities and vulnerable consumers groups notably, the elders and disabled consumers, persons under medical care requiring constant electricity supply, the poor, populations impacted by natural disasters (e.g. floods and earthquakes). Cooperation with Pillar 5 – Improved Social Cohesion is foreseen to these aims | | | | |
| Which challenges and opportunities is this Action addressing? | * High energy intensity of the EUSAIR economies. Reducing energy intensity is the real challenge. * Regulatory, political, financial, technical, socio-economic and environmental barriers to the deployment of energy efficient technologies and their acceptance. | | | | |
| What are the expected results/targets of the Action? | * Increased energy efficiency of the EUSAIR economies, through better operation and introduction and implementation of energy efficiency practices and standards. * Alignment of energy use efficiency through the Western Balkan Region to the EU average standards. | | | | |
| EUSAIR Flagships and strategic projects | / | | | | |
| Indicators | Indicator name | Common Indicator name and code, if relevant | Baseline value and year | Target value and year | Data source |
| How to measure the EUSAIR activities under this Action? | OI: Master Plan 2026 on Energy and Energy Networks for the Adriatic and Ionian Region. | RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed | Master Plan 2023 | 1(2026) | TSG2 |
| RI: The EUSAIR Master Plan 2026 on Energy would update and upgrade the 2023 Master Plan on Energy Networks for the Adriatic and Ionian Region with a view at it’s the EU enlargement as foreseen by a key horizontal topic of the strategy. Time horizons are the years 2030 and 2050. Activity is cross-cutting the entire Topic 2.4 and Topic 2.5 of the EUSAIR Action Plan. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | Master Plan 2023 | 1 (2026) | TSG2 |
| OI: EUSAIR Forum on energy efficiency. | RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders | 0’(2023) | 3(2027) | TSG2 |
| RI: Improved efficiency through the entire energy system is key to align countries with the average EU energy efficiency standards while preparing for the EU enlargement according to a horizontal topic of the Strategy. The Forum will focus on solutions, shared practice and procedures. Pilot projects would be launched. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | 0(2023) | 1 (2027) | TSG2 |
| OI: Establishment of energy community in the Western Balkan Region. | RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders | 0(2023) | 2(2027) | TSG2 |
|  | RI: Energy communities for energy efficiency and renewable energy sources are foreseen by new EU directives and financial support. The activity will contribute to the alignment of countries from the Western Balkan Region to the best practice adopted by EU member states according to the horizontal topic of EU enlargement. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | 0(2023) | 2 (2027) | TSG2 |

### 2.5.7 Action 2.5.3 – Promoting advancements on energy technologies and hydrogen economy

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| **Action 2.5.3** | Description of the Action | | | | |
| Name of the Action | **Promoting advancements on energy technologies and hydrogen economy** | | | | |
| What are the envisaged activities? | * Strengthening cooperation on advanced energy technologies, energy technology innovation and R&D while promoting effort towards the establishment of an energy technology innovation facility or hub for the Adriatic-Ionian Region, notably for the Western Balkans Region. * Advancing electricity storage, fuel cells, superconductivity, artificial intelligence uses through the energy systems. * Promoting and developing carbon capture sequestration (CCS) and carbon use (CCUS) to decarbonise carbon fuels. * Promoting hydrogen production and use through different technologies and systems, and prospects for green hydrogen. * Developing alternative low-carbon and zero-carbon fuels for transport, as well as hydrogen transport and storage, hydrogen use in the main energy, transport and consuming sectors. Activity partially cross-cutting with Topic 2.2 and Topic 2.3). This would include:  1. Preparing a **H**ydrogen **P**roduction and **D**eployment **R**oad-**M**ap for the Adriatic-Ionian Region with focus on opportunities, roadblocks, potential industry players and R&D needs; 2. Building hydrogen logistics, transport and storage; 3. Deploying hydrogen fuels, synthetic methane and e-fuels use in the transport and main energy-consuming sectors; 4. Developing of integrated hydrogen systems while including advanced biofuels and ammonia fuels. 5. Supporting the North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley project as well as other hydrogen projects as an open-ended hydrogen valley to test and demonstrate feasibility of hydrogen economy and technology;  * Projects for exploiting advanced digitalisation techniques and artificial in the energy systems. * Cooperating on advanced nuclear fission power and nuclear fusion, including R&D and new technologies for secure exploitation of nuclear energy with a view at new generation nuclear power plants and small modular reactors (SMRS) while entering prospects for nuclear fusion. | | | | |
| Which challenges and opportunities is this Action addressing? | Accelerating the transition towards a net-zero carbon economy to decarbonise and the energy system while promoting security of energy supply and delivery and energy affordability and access. | | | | |
| What are the expected results/targets of the Action? | Increased share of hydrogen in the EUSAIR energy mix and increased technology innovation and RDI cooperation in the EUSAIR on advanced energy technologies. | | | | |
| EUSAIR Flagships and strategic projects | / | | | | |
| Indicators | Indicator name | Common Indicator name and code, if relevant | Baseline value and year | Target value and year | Data source |
| How to measure the EUSAIR activities under this Action? | OI: Created energy technology innovation hub with focus on the Western Balkan Region. | RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed | 0(2023) | 1(2027) | TSG2 |
| RI: Countries notably from the Western Balkan Region lack capacity to innovate key energy technologies (including energy storage, carbon capture and storage systems, fuel cells and so forth) and to deploy the best solutions. The energy technology innovation hub and new cooperation agreements would fill the gap. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | 0(2023) | 1 (2027) | TSG2 |
| OI: North-Adriatic Hydrogen Valley supported and outreach action completed. | RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders | Definition (2023) | 1(2026) | TSG2 |
| RI: The North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley as well as other hydrogen valley through the Adriatic and Ionian Region are proposed for an outreach action with a view at the proposed European Bank on Hydrogen. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | Definition (2023) | (2026) | TSG2 |
| OI: Advanced digitalisation of the energy system - . two pilot projects on digitalisation and artificial intelligence for the energy system developed. | RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders | Concept (2023) | 2(2027) | TSG2 |
|  | RI: Digitalisation and artificial intelligence are cross-cutting topics for the EUSAIR. Two pilot projects on advanced digitalisation techniques and applications will be designed and implemented according to a cooperative approach involving interested EUSAIR participating Countries. | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations | 0(2023) | 2(2027) | TSG2 |

## 2.6 Indicative list of relevant funding sources

Activities can be implemented through public and private investment or both. Private investment has a key role in the large transport and energy projects which will contribute to the economic development of the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Conditions should be created to make private funding and national and international investment possible and facilitated.

With regard to public investment the EUSAIR participating countries can use the following EU funding mechanisms and instruments during the years 2021-27:

Relevant EU Cohesion Policy objectives: PO2- a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, energy communities, climate change mitigation and adaptation and risk prevention and management, PO1 - a more competitive and more competent Europe by promoting innovative and intelligent economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity and PO3 - a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility, supporting the digital and green transition of the transport sector while continuing to improve connectivity and traffic safety.

Relevant IPA Programming Framework window: all windows, specifically window 3: Green agenda and sustainable connectivity.

**Applicable to EU Member States**

* The ERDF and Cohesion Fund,
* The ESF+ ,
* The EAFRD,
* The EMFAF,
* Just transition mechanism,
* Interreg Programmes of EUSAIR participating countries: Croatia-Italy, Croatia-Slovenia, Greece-Italy, Italy-Slovenia,
* ERDF Regional and Sectoral mainstream programs, which include specific objectives of the 5 EU Policy Objectives related to Pillar 2- Transport and Energy.

**Applicable to EU Member States in cooperation with EU candidate countries**

* Life (which supports the environment, biodiversity, and nature through awareness-raising campaigns, studies, evaluation, training, workshops, and networking),
* Horizon (which supports the development of skills, technology transfer, and innovation in the sectors and clusters on digitalization, innovation systems, energy communities, and environment),
* Erasmus + (to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional, and personal development of people in the fields of education and training of youth, thereby contributing to sustainable growth, quality jobs, and social cohesion),
* Digital Europe Programme
* Invest in the EU Programme (which supports employment, youth, and SMEs along with economic, social, and territorial cohesion).
* EU funding mechanisms: Connecting Europe Facility for Transport and for Energy Efficiency and RePower EU plan through EIB funding aimed at reducing Europe's dependence on fossil fuel and accelerating the transition to green energy
* Relevant Interreg transnational and CBC programmes 2021-27:
* IPA Adrion transnational Programme, Euro med and Next Med 2021-27
* South Adriatic (Italy-Albania-Montenegro), Greece-Albania, Greece-North Macedonia, Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro, Croatia-Serbia,

**Applicable to the EU candidate countries:**

* The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) specific objectives and thematic priorities related to Pillar 2- Transport and Energy
* 6 IPA cross-border programs among Western Balkan countries: [Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro](https://cbibplus.eu/bosnia-and-herzegovina-montenegro/), [Montenegro – Albania](https://cbibplus.eu/montenegro-albania/),  [North Macedonia – Albania](https://cbibplus.eu/north-macedonia-albania/), [Serbia – Bosnia and Herzegovina](https://cbibplus.eu/serbia-bosnia-and-herzegovina/), [Serbia – Montenegro](https://cbibplus.eu/serbia-montenegro/), [Serbia – North Macedonia](https://cbibplus.eu/serbia-north-macedonia/)

The Western Balkans Investment Framework- WBIF can also strongly contribute to the Green Agenda, clean energy and sustainable transport in the Western Balkans, as well as to green, sustainable development and economic growth.