A1.1. Report on current flagships and developed implementation formats

Annexe 1

EUSAIR Strategic project "Support to Development and Implementation of Strategic Implementation Formats – SP4EUSAIR"

October 2024

Contents:

1 State of the art

1.1 Pillar 1 Blue Sustainable Economy

1.1.1 Current state and implementation formats developed

Table 1 Pillar 1 Implementation Format Overview

Implementation format	
AIM-FRISH - Evaluating freshness and authenticity with real-time non-destructive methods to increase the value-added of Adriatic Ionian microregion-produced fish	
Description	The project aims to assess fish freshness and predict shelf life for Adriatic-Ionian Region fish using non-destructive methods and portable devices. It combines sensory, chemical, and microbiological analyses to enhance quality, safety, and market competitiveness while maximizing fish product value.
Flagships	• 1.1. Fostering quadruple helix ties in the field of marine and maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies for advancing innovation, business development, and business adaptation in the blue bioeconomy • 1.2. Promoting sustainability, diversification, and competitiveness in the fisheries sector through education, research and development, administrative, technological, and marketing actions, including the promotion of initiatives on marketing standards and healthy nutritional habits
Actions	• 1.1.1. Building Adriatic-Ionian Region innovation ecosystems that will promote research and innovation networks in green and blue technologies • 1.2.1. Sustainable, resilient, and competitive fisheries in the Adriatic-Ionian Region
Status	The project proposal has been submitted to the First Call for Proposals of the Interreg IPA Adrion Programme 2021 – 2027. The proposal did not pass the Admissibility and Eligibility Check phase and it will be resubmitted to the next Call
AMOS – Developing a cost-effective observatory system, tailored to the needs of Aquacultures with remote access, real-time data, and forecast capabilities	
Description	The project seeks to develop a cost-effective marine observatory system for aquaculture, featuring remote access, real-time data transmission, and forecasting capabilities. It will involve analysing existing systems, defining requirements, designing a unified architecture, and implementing the system to enhance monitoring, drive innovation, and integrate with aquaculture management.
Flagships	• 1.1. Fostering quadruple helix ties in the field of marine and maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies for advancing innovation, business development, and business adaptation in the blue bioeconomy • 1.2. Promoting sustainability, diversification, and competitiveness in the fisheries sector through education, research and development, administrative, technological, and marketing actions, including the promotion of initiatives on marketing standards and healthy nutritional habits
Actions	• 1.1.1. Building Adriatic-Ionian Region innovation ecosystems that will promote research and innovation networks in green and blue technologies • 1.2.2. Sustainable, resilient, and competitive aquaculture in the Adriatic-Ionian region aims
Status	The project proposal will be submitted to the next Call for Proposals of the Interreg IPA Adrion Programme 2021 – 2027.
EURYNOME – The Effects of anthropogenic pressures and climate change in the nutritional and commercial value of two small pelagic fish species of importance to ADRION region fisheries: Biodiversity and energy flow from the Ecosystem to the final product	

Implementation format	
Description	The project investigates how climate variability impacts the diet and nutritional properties of key fish species, which are vital for marine energy and essential fatty acids. It aims to forecast effects on fisheries, enhance processing efficiency, promote sustainable practices, and advance ecological understanding.
Flagships	• 1.2. Promoting sustainability, diversification, and competitiveness in the fisheries sector through education, research and development, administrative, technological, and marketing actions, including the promotion of initiatives on marketing standards and healthy nutritional habits
Actions	n/a[1]
Status	The project proposal will be submitted to the next Call for Proposals of the Interreg IPA Adrion Programme 2021 – 2027.
FishTourAIR – Fishing tourism and ichthyotourism diversification activities in the Adriatic-Ionian Region	
Description	The project aims to enhance fishing and ichthyotourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Region by addressing infrastructure, legal, and safety aspects across marine and freshwater environments. It will also assess training needs, broaden the tourism context, and improve operational capabilities, infrastructure, and legislative frameworks to support and diversify these activities.
Flagships	• 1.2. Promoting sustainability, diversification, and competitiveness in the fisheries sector through education, research and development, administrative, technological, and marketing actions, including the promotion of initiatives on marketing standards and healthy nutritional habits
Actions	• 1.2.1. Sustainable, resilient, and competitive fisheries in the Adriatic-Ionian Region
Status	The project proposal will be submitted to the next Call for Proposals of the Interreg IPA Adrion Programme 2021 – 2027.
SeaSusPack – Sustainable packaging of fish and seafood based on marine bioresources	
Description	The project aims to revolutionize fish and seafood packaging for the EU market by developing eco-friendly, biodegradable materials derived from marine bioresources, improving product quality, and extending shelf life. It focuses on supporting Blue Growth objectives, enhancing food safety, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration to drive sustainability and operational efficiency in the seafood industry.
Flagships	• 1.1. Fostering quadruple helix ties in the field of marine and maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies for advancing innovation, business development, and business adaptation in the blue bioeconomy • 1.2. Promoting sustainability, diversification, and competitiveness in the fisheries sector through education, research and development, administrative, technological, and marketing actions, including the promotion of initiatives on marketing standards and healthy nutritional habits
Actions	• 1.1.1. Building Adriatic-Ionian Region innovation ecosystems that will promote research and innovation networks in green and blue technologies • 1.2.1. Sustainable, resilient, and competitive fisheries in the Adriatic-Ionian Region • 1.2.2. Sustainable, resilient, and competitive aquaculture in the Adriatic-Ionian region aims
Status	The project proposal has been submitted to the First Call for Proposals of the Interreg IPA Adrion Programme 2021 – 2027. The proposal did not pass the Admissibility and Eligibility Check phase and it will be resubmitted to the next Call.

Source: Revised EUSAIR Action Plan, TSGI1 Strategic Project Implementation document, in-depth interview

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[1] Information is not available.

Out of the five selected strategic projects, two were submitted to the Interreg IPA Adrion programme calls. However, these proposals were rejected during the Admissibility and Eligibility Check phase. The PC also noted that the projects were overly focused on scientific research and technological innovations, which did not align well with the practical, region-specific criteria of the Interreg IPA Adrion programme. Additionally, they received advice from consultants to consider additional funding sources beyond Interreg IPA Adrion, but PC believes that other calls might not fully address the needs of the macro-region as effectively.

Consequently, the plan for the upcoming period (2024-2027) is to refine the two rejected proposals to enhance their alignment with funding requirements and the Programme expectations and resubmit them in the upcoming calls, as well as to develop proposals for the remaining three strategic projects. This approach aims to foster collaboration among Adriatic-Ionian countries and ensure that the strategic projects are more applicable and relevant to the region's needs.

Greek representatives of Pillar 1 continue to develop and advance the Pillar's objectives by assembling a dedicated team of stakeholders in blue technology, aquaculture, and fishery. This team, consisting of members from administration, project management, academia, and research, aims to access macro-regional data to collaboratively discuss and work on projects, offering advice and assistance throughout the development process. In addition, if relevant, the stakeholders will propose and discuss their own projects with the TSG1, and then seek interested collaborators.

Besides the mono-pillar projects, three cross-pillar projects were developed in cooperation with other TSGs to address interconnected strategic priorities and enhance integrated regional development. However, representatives from Pillar 1 were not actively involved in this process and consequently did not receive updates or feedback on their progress. The list includes the following projects:

- **BLUECULTURE** – Development of Macro-Regional Cluster on BlueCulture Technologies and creation of International Competence Centre (Pillars 1 and 4). Within Pillar 1 is developed under Flagship 1.1 Fostering quadruple helix ties in the field of marine and maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies for advancing innovation, business development, and business adaptation in the blue bioeconomy (Action 1.1.1 Building Adriatic-Ionian Region innovation ecosystems that will promote research and innovation networks in green and blue technologies). Also, the project was presented at 18th TSG1 meeting held on December 12th 2023

- **WAI-TP: WATERBORNE** – Adriatic-Ionian Technology Platform (Pillars 1 and 2 Transport). Within Pillar 1 is developed under Flagships 1.1 Fostering quadruple helix ties in the field of marine and maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies for advancing innovation, business development, and business adaptation in the blue bioeconomy (Action 1.1.1 Building Adriatic-Ionian Region innovation ecosystems that will promote research and innovation networks in green and blue technologies) and 1.3 Bolstering capacity building and efficient coordination of planning and local development activities for improving marine and maritime governance and blue growth services (Action 1.3.1. Institutional capacity to harmonise standards and regulations to improve sustainable governance and use of maritime and marine resources).

- **ICZM&MSP** – Establishment a Community for the sustainable management of maritime activities in the AIR. Using high quality research to strengthen dialogues and institutional capacities for effective implementation of MSP/ICZM in support of inclusive and sustainable growth in the AIR. (Pillars 1 and 3). Within Pillar 1 is developed under Flagship 1.3 Bolstering capacity building and efficient coordination of planning and local development activities for improving marine and maritime governance and blue growth services (Action 1.3.1. Institutional capacity to harmonise standards and regulations to improve sustainable governance and use of maritime and marine resources).

1.2 Pillar 2 Connecting the Region – Transport

1.2.1 Current state and implementation formats developed

Table 2 Pillar 2 (Transport) Implementation Formats Overview

Implementation formats	
Adriatic Ionian Region Master Plan for Transport	
Description	Master Plan is designed to enhance transport interconnectivity in the Adriatic-Ionian Region, aligning with the EU's Single European Transport Area policies, enlargement goals, and Cooperation with Neighbouring Countries. It aims to identify and support macro-regionally significant projects, focusing on creating a competitive, resource-efficient transport system that emphasizes maritime transport and green, multimodal accessibility. The Master Plan provides a long-term strategy and vision for the development of the transport system in the Adriatic-Ionian region until 2030, shared among the EUSAIR Countries. The EUSAIR Master Plan of Transport comprises seven volumes, each addressing a mode of transport.
Flagships	• 2.1. The Adriatic-Ionian multi-modal corridors
Actions	• 2.1.1. Improving and harmonising traffic monitoring and management by expanding the use of vessel traffic monitoring and information system (VTMIS) • 2.1.2. Improvement of the interoperability of IT systems and solutions in ports including the development and/or improvement of the Port Community System (PCS) • 2.1.3. Monitoring emissions, water quality and air quality

Implementation formats	
	• 2.2.1. Support the implementation of ICT infrastructure at nodes and along logistics chains, as well as systems interoperability in the Adriatic-Ionian Region • 2.2.2. Upgrade of the network to provide continued and interoperable international rail links between countries, also by elaborating integrated planning for infrastructure developments and defining joint roadmaps for investments • 2.2.3. Increase rail and road transport capacity and quality (remove missing links and bottlenecks; complete rail reforms) in Strategy countries and upgrade the rail and road network of the region to TEN-T standards • 2.3.1. Boost the uptake of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) initiatives especially in urban nodes with strong urbanisation trends, including co-design of solutions for local mobility • 2.3.2. Promote the diffusion of integrated fare and single ticketing solutions • 2.3.3. Support the realisation of cycling lanes and networks and other measures for the promotion of cycling mobility
Status	Given the TSG's lack of financial resources for implementing specific transport projects, Pillar 2 (Transport) leveraged the Facility Point project for technical assistance. This support enabled the preparation of feasibility studies for three key projects: Multimodal Corridor VIII, Blue Motorways projects, and Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Tour. These studies aimed to enhance the attractiveness of these projects for funding from both private investors and public bodies.
GraSP Study - Green and Smart Ports Study	
Description	The GraSP Study supports the EU's climate neutrality goal by 2050 through the development of Green and Smart Ports, crucial for reducing transport emissions as outlined in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and the Fit for 55 package. It aims to enhance stakeholders' capacity to implement sustainable practices and smart technologies in ports.
Flagships	• 2.1. The Adriatic-Ionian multi-modal corridors
Actions	n/a
Status	The study, providing recommendations for the TSG members, ETC programme managing authorities, regional and local authorities, and the port sector industry to develop and implement the Green and Smart Ports Project, has been developed.

Source: Revised EUSAIR Action Plan, TSG2 Strategic Project Implementation document, in-depth interview

The PC stated that the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) and National Bodies are central to the achievement of the Master Plan's vision. They facilitate the alignment of large-scale infrastructure projects with the strategic objectives outlined in the Master Plan, ensuring that investments are coherent with both national and regional priorities. The Pillar 2 TSG2 on Transport members were included in the national programming phase, allowing them to align the national infrastructural investment programmes with the Master Plan vision. In addition, Pillar 2 TSG2 on Transport regularly collaborates with the Managing Bodies of WBIF, who are always invited to TSG meetings. The WBIF Transport Community included Pillar 2 (Transport) on its list and regularly monitors them.

In cooperation with other TSGs, two cross-pillar projects were proposed within the Facility Point Plus project. The project developed in cooperation with TSG4, aimed at enhancing transport accessibility and tourism along the Adriatic-Ionian cycling routes, was not funded and later developed as a mono-pillar project. The project developed in cooperation with

TSG1, which focused on energy and economic aspects, was not pursued, and the allocated funds were returned to the European Commission. Currently, there are no active cross-pillar projects.

The following cross-pillar projects have been developed:

- **WAI-TP: WATERBORNE -** Adriatic-Ionian Technology Platform (Pillars 1 and 2 Transport). Within Pillar 2 is developed under Flagship 2.4 Development and operation of logistics for direct LNG use as clean fuel for the Adriatic-Ionian region. The project has been developed only at the ideation phase and submitted to Facility Point Plus call on April 10th 2019.

- **ADRIONCYCLETOUR** - ADRiatic IONian CYCLE route for sustainable TOURism (Pillars 2 – Transport – and 4). Within Pillar 2 is developed under Flagship 2.1 The Adriatic-Ionian multi-modal corridors component Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Routes (Action 2.3.3. Support the realisation of cycling lanes and networks and other measures for the promotion of cycling mobility).

1.3 Pillar 2 Connecting the Region - Energy

1.3.1 Current state and implementation formats developed

Table 3 Pillar 2 (Energy) Implementation Formats Overview

Implementation formats	
EUSAIR MPE – Master Plan of Energy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region	
Description	The Master Plan aims to develop a long-term energy strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region by focusing on the integration of electricity and natural gas systems and promoting clean fuels for transport. It prioritizes projects, identifies synergies, and addresses gaps to support energy cooperation and decarbonization in the Region.
Flagship	• 2.2. Power networks and market for a green Adriatic-Ionian Region
Action	• 2.5.1. Cooperation in deployment of renewable energy sources in the Adriatic-Ionian Region
Status	The proposed EUSAIR Master Plan of Energy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region should be completed and delivered by the year 2027. Preparatory work would be performed during the years 2025 and 2026.
EUSAIR AP - Action Plan (Road Map) towards a EUSAIR Power Exchange and Natural Gas Trading Hub	
Description	The Action Plan aims to enhance cooperation in the power and natural gas sectors of the Adriatic-Ionian Region by analyzing market dynamics and proposing efficient mechanisms. It focuses on harmonizing national markets and integrating low-carbon energy resources to boost cost competitiveness and sustainability.
Flagship	• 2.2. Power networks and market for a green Adriatic-Ionian Region
Action	• 2.5.2. Improving energy efficiency in the Adriatic-Ionian Region through action and cooperation supports
Status	The proposed Road Map 2026 for Energy Market Integration in the Adriatic and Ionian Region should be completed and delivered by the year 2026. Preparatory work would be performed during the year 2025.

Source: Revised EUSAIR Action Plan, TSG2 on Energy Strategic Project Implementation document, in-depth interview

In addition, beyond the EUSAIR Master Plan on Energy and the EUSAIR Action Plan (Road Map) for Energy Market Integration, the PCs are mentioning and stressing the importance of other strategic priority projects which were discussed by the Standing Members while receiving a broad support.

These priority projects include:

- **The EUSAIR Conference on Confronting the Global Climate Challenge** (Activity within Action 2.5.1 of the *Revised EUSAIR Action Plan*) aims at coordinating and strengthening the position of the EUSAIR participating countries before the recurrent COP of the UN and other international events regarding the fight against climate change. The EUSAIR Conference on Confronting the Global Climate Challenge would build upon the National Plans for Energy and Climate and other documents on long-term energy policies by EUSAIR participating countries. EUSAIR Conference on Confronting the Global Climate Challenge is to be first convened during late Spring 2025. Depending upon its outcomes the EUSAIR Conference might be repeated every two years or so.

- **Renewable Energy Road Map for the Adriatic-Ionian Region** (Activity within Action 2.5.1 of the *Revised EUSAIR Action Plan*) aims at presenting actions, projects and measures to accelerate and facilitate the development and deployment of renewable energy sources through the Region. Actions refer to the time horizons 2030 and 2050 with a view at the goals proposed by the European Union. Road Map will be possibly developed and completed by end 2026.

- **EUSAIR Forum on Energy Efficiency** (Activity within Action 2.5.2 of the *Revised EUSAIR Action Plan*) aims at promoting action and measures to improve energy efficiency while mobilizing relevant actors and stakeholders. Focus is foreseen on the residential and housing sector, industry and service sectors and transport. The Forum on Energy Efficiency would be first convened towards the end of year 2027 while preparatory work would develop along the year 2026.

- **Hydrogen Production and Deployment Road Map (Hydrogen Production and Deployment Valley from the Western Balkans Region**) (Activity within Action 2.5.3 of the *Revised EUSAIR Action Plan*) aims to provide means, technologies and practical solutions for the production, delivery and use of hydrogen and hydrogen-derived fuels by enhanced cooperation of countries from the Western Balkans area. In this context, it is assumed that the design of a Hydrogen Valley for the Western Balkans Region would represent a key element and investment for the energy transition. Such a Hydrogen Valley would require an unprecedented degree of cooperation between and

amongst Western Balkans countries towards shared goals. The design of the proposed Hydrogen Production and Deployment Valley should be ready by the year 2026.

The TSG2 on Energy discussed the financing, noting that some require substantial funding. The PC stated that one of the major problems is that most of the projects prepared by the countries are insufficiently detailed and cannot be funded due to a lack of clear definitions, as well as cost benefit analyses. Therefore, the role of the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is crucial in this context. As stated in the survey, a list of EUSAIR-labelled projects and measure on Energy Networks has been submitted and approved by the European Investment Bank. Also, the TSG2 on Energy proposed to the European Investment Bank to establish a facility that would provide financial services to the Region. Although it found the concept interesting, suggesting it could become a branch of the Bank, offering support to EUSAIR participating countries, this idea has not made any further progress. It is now suggested that the Marche Region of Italy as the Project Leader of EUSAIR Project no. 2 may wish to support and try to advance the idea.

In addition to the mono-pillar projects, one cross-pillar project has been developed in cooperation with TSG4:

- **STETAI** - Sustainable Tourism through Environmental Energy Technologies in Buildings of High Architectural Interest (Pillar 2 Energy – 4). Within Pillar 2 is developed under Flagship 2.2 Power networks and market for a green Adriatic-Ionian Region.

However, the TSG2 on Energy Standing Members were not involved directly in the process.

1.4 Pillar 3 Environmental Quality

1.4.1 Current state and implementation formats developed

Within Pillar 3, a total of 14 projects (mono-pillar) were developed out of which four were funded. The following table provides an overview of the projects[2] that have been developed but not yet funded, detailing their scope, goals, anticipated impacts, and contribution to flagship, topics, and actions.

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[2] In the table, eight out of the 10 projects are presented, as no information was available for the remaining projects in the provided documentation. *According to the Revised Action Plan the projects NEATNESS – cleaN thE AdriaTic aND thE ionian sea from the plaSticS and ICZM and MSP - To promote a sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP also to contribute CRF on ICZM of Barcelona convention were also developed as mono-pillar projects but no further information was provided.*

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Table 4 Pillar 3 Implementation Formats Overview

Implementation formats	
ASOSCoP - The Adriatic-Ionian Regional Contingency Plan for Emergency Oil Spills in the Adriatic Sea	
Description	The project aims to mitigate the risk of natural disasters like oil spills by implementing a comprehensive Contingency Plan and establishing a framework for mutual assistance among EUSAIR countries. It focuses on enhancing regional capacity for pollution prevention, preparedness, and response while raising awareness and defining operational procedures for stakeholders
Flagship	• 3.1 Development and implementation of Adriatic-Ionian sub/regional oil spill contingency plan
Action	• 3.1.2 Reduction of the pollution of the sea and inland/transition waters
Status	Recommended for funding – Interreg IPA Adrion
3MPS - Monitoring and management of marine protected species	
Description	The project addresses biodiversity threats in the Adriatic-Ionian region by establishing networks for the protection and monitoring of marine species, particularly sea turtles and cetaceans, and enhancing knowledge about the impacts of marine litter and microplastics. It aims to implement concrete measures for marine litter disposal and prevention, create a monitoring network to assess impacts on threatened species and adopt regional management measures to protect marine biodiversity.
Flagship	• 3.2 Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP also to contribute CRF on ICZM of Barcelona Convention and the monitoring and management of marine protected areas
Action	• 3.1.1 Enhancing marine and coastal biodiversity
Status	n/a
PET HAB ECO - Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystem	
Description	The project aims to establish green corridors in the Adriatic-Ionian region to enhance ecological connectivity and safeguard natural habitats. It focuses on protecting terrestrial ecosystems, conserving large carnivore populations, and promoting sustainable tourism practices to improve regional quality of life.
Flagship	• 3.2 Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems
Action	• 3.2.2 Conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats: Support for implementation and enforcement of the Agreement of the Conservation of African - Euroasian migratory waterbirds (AEWA) • 3.2.3 Improve interaction between anthropic and natural ecosystems and habitats
Status	Recommended for funding – Interreg IPA Adrion
Bio-Shelters: Botanical Gardens as Biodiversity Shelters and Nurseries	
Description	The project aims to establish and expand a network of Botanical Gardens across EUSAIR countries to preserve biodiversity through in-situ and ex-situ conservation methods. It focuses on creating protected natural areas, establishing seed banks for endangered species, and promoting sustainable reforestation and botanical tourism while enhancing educational opportunities and public awareness about climate change impacts.
Flagship	• 3.2 Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems
Actions	• 3.2.3 Improve interaction between anthropic and natural ecosystems and habitats
Status	Adopted on the last TSG3 meeting
FOREST READAPT + SEC-DIV-CONIFERS - Renewal of the adoption of coppice forest in a drastically changing environment - Secure diversity through a holistic approach for the most threatened Mediterranean conifer ecosystems: combining genetic, physiology, biodiversity indexes, germination, and restoration	
Description	The project aims to protect forest biodiversity and address adaptation challenges by analysing the genetic diversity of coppice and seedling forests. It focuses on assessing resilience to climate and environmental changes, identifying local adaptation differences, and formulating sustainable management guidelines for

Implementation formats	
	coppice forests. The project aims to safeguard biodiversity in Mediterranean conifer ecosystems essential for carnivore habitats by integrating genetic, epigenetic, biodiversity, physiological, and germination studies. It focuses on conducting a SWOT analysis, assessing genetic and physiological traits, and developing conservation guidelines while contributing to policy recommendations for sustainable habitat protection in transboundary areas
Flagship	• 3.2 Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems
Action	• 3.2.3 Improve interaction between anthropic and natural ecosystems and habitats
Status	Adopted on the last TSG3 meeting
COFI-MAR – Towards the long-term in-situ conservation, sustainable fisheries, and improving the marine environments in the Adriatic-Ionian region	
Description	The project addresses environmental challenges by focusing on biodiversity preservation, pollution elimination, climate change mitigation, and sustainable mobility. It prioritizes in-situ conservation of threatened species, habitat protection, and sustainable fisheries while developing a robust framework for climate mitigation and adaptation and using key performance indicators to monitor progress in ecosystem restoration and pollution mitigation.
Flagship	• 3.3 Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP also to contribute CRF on ICZM of Barcelona Convention and the monitoring and management of marine protected areas
Actions	• 3.1.2 Reduction of the pollution of the sea and inland/transition waters
Status	n/a
Security and safety of blue and green infrastructure as a key factor of sustainability of the blue and green corridors regarding climate changes	
Description	The project aims to directly indicate the impact of Climate changes on Blue and Green Infrastructure to prevent and reduce negative impacts and to ensure the Safety and Security of Blue and Green Infrastructure as a key factor of sustainability of the Blue and Green Corridors, through the use of existing and the collection of missing knowledge, cross-border cooperation, building capacity and awareness raising.
Flagship	• 3.2 Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP also to contribute CRF on ICZM of Barcelona Convention and the monitoring and management of marine protected areas
Actions	• 3.1.1 Enhancing marine and coastal biodiversity
Status	Proposed to TSG3.

Source: Revised EUSAIR Action Plan, TSG 3 Strategic Project Implementation Document, in-depth interview

Although all projects were submitted for funding to various sources (Interreg programmes, LIFE, DG ECHO direct funding, and DG ECHO centralized funding), only four were approved:

- **NAMIRS - North Adriatic Maritime Incident Response System** that adopts a holistic approach to marine pollution incident management, at sea and onshore and will contribute to the prevention of and protection from the effects of maritime disasters in the North Adriatic Sea. (Flagship 3.1 Development and implementation of Adriatic-Ionian sub/regional oil spill contingency plan, Action 3.1.2 Reduction of the pollution of the sea and inland waters, DG ECHO – Union Civil Protection Mechanism)

- **TETI - Strengthen cooperation to support the development of trans-boundary marine protected areas in the Adriatic Ionian Region** (Flagship 3.3

Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP also to contribute CRF on ICZM of Barcelona Convention and the monitoring and management of marine protected areas, Interreg IPA Adrion)

- **4PETHABECO - Strengthening cooperation to address socio-environmental challenges of EUSAIR flagship PET HAB ECO** (Flagship 3.2 Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems – PET HAB ECO, Interreg IPA Adrion)

- **ASAP – Adriatic Sensitive Areas Protection mechanisms**, which represent the extraction of NAMIRS project (Flagship 3.1 Implementation of Adriatic – Ionian Sub/Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan – ASOSCoP, Interreg IPA Adrion).

In addition to mono-pillar projects, two cross-pillar projects were developed within the pillar, that were designed to address issues relevant to both sectors.

In coordination with other TSGs the following projects have been developed:

- **ICZM&MSP** – Establishment a Community for the sustainable management of maritime activities in the AIR. Using high quality research to strengthen dialogues and institutional capacities for effective implementation of MSP/ICZM in support of inclusive and sustainable growth in the AIR (Pillars 1 and 3). Within Pillar 3 is developed under Flagship 3.3 Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP also to contribute CRF on ICZM of Barcelona Convention and the monitoring and management of marine protected areas (Action 3.1.1 Enhancing marine and coastal biodiversity).

- **ADRIONet -** Managing Tourism Flows in Protected Areas (Pillars 3 and 4).

1.5 Pillar 4 Sustainable Tourism

1.5.1 Current state and implementation formats developed

Table 5 Pillar 4 Implementation Formats Overview

Implementation formats	
LIVING THE SEA 4.0 - Digitalisation of the cultural heritage of fishing traditions and fish industry for the creation of virtual	
Description	The project aims to diversify tourism in the EUSAIR region by digitally preserving and showcasing its fishery heritage, enhancing existing attractions and creating new ones through interactive technologies. It focuses on promoting accessible tourism for various groups and establishing a network of year-round accessible destinations to boost tourist attraction and sustain tourism during low seasons.
Flagship	• 4.5 Development of the network of sustainable tourism businesses and clusters, green mapping for the AI region - supporting development and market access for responsible and sustainable tourism destinations (management) and micro/SME operations in the EUSAIR region
Action	• 4.2.1 Promotion of sustainable and smart tourism management and services

Implementation formats	
Status	Submitted for funding but didn't pass due to the admissibility/eligibility reasons
ProDestAir Strategy (MIQS) - Adriatic-Ionian Strategy and Solutions for Smart Integrated Destination Management based on Multiple Intelligence Systems	
Description	The project aims to improve destination management in the Adriatic-Ionian region through a Smart Integrated Destination Management approach. It addresses key challenges such as crisis management and tourism adaptability and seeks to establish a replicable open-innovation standard to enhance economic diversity and sustainability while mitigating environmental, social, and cultural impacts.
Flagship	• 4.5 Development of the network of sustainable tourism businesses and clusters, green mapping for the AI region - supporting development and market access for responsible and sustainable tourism destinations (management) and micro/SME operations in the EUSAIR region
Action	• 4.2.1 Promotion of sustainable and smart tourism management and services
Status	Developed but not submitted for funding
AIR Cultural Routes - Adriatic-Ionian Region Cultural Routes Tourism Governance Model: An Opportunity for the EUSAIR Area	
Description	The project aims to create an innovative governance model for Cultural and Tourist Routes across EUSAIR countries by developing a unified methodology, integrating local development models, and implementing a pilot Cultural and Tourist Route. Key elements include establishing "paths of excellence" and "Heritage Interpretation Centres," with expected outcomes involving new governance methods, product development and enhanced cultural tourism through sustainable practices and regional cooperation.
Flagship	• 4.4 Development of sustainable and thematic cultural routes/connecting cultural routes in EUSAIR
Action	• 4.1.1 Collaborative governance and sustainable innovation in tourism destination • 4.1.2 Promoting the use of smart and sustainable indicators for tourism
Status	Developed but not submitted for funding
CruiseAir - Destination Management Plan's preparation for Cruise destinations within the Adriatic-Ionian Region	
Description	The project aims to develop Destination Management Plans for sustainable tourism across Cruise, River, and Lake destinations in the AIR region. It focuses on extending the tourism season year-round, addressing market dynamics and community needs, and promoting sustainable growth through stakeholder engagement, congestion management, and tourism product diversification.
Flagship	• 4.3 Expanding the tourist season to all-year round
Actions	• 4.1.1 Collaborative governance and sustainable innovation in tourism destinations • 4.1.2 Promoting the use of smart and sustainable indicators for tourism
Status	Developed but not submitted for funding
CultTourAIR - Survey on cultural tourism demand in the Adriatic-Ionian Region	
Description	The project aims to improve cultural tourism statistics in the Adriatic-Ionian Region by collecting detailed data on visitor profiles, preferences, and expenditures at cultural attractions and events. It seeks to support sustainable management decisions and enhance marketing strategies through a unified framework for monitoring tourism demand, assessing economic impacts, and evaluating sustainability issues.
Flagship	• 4.1 Research and development for the improvement of SME's performance and growth diversification
Actions	• 4.1.1 Collaborative governance and sustainable innovation in tourism destinations
Status	Developed but not submitted for funding
DES_AIR - Integrated Sustainable Management of Tourism Destination in AIR	
Description	The project aims to advance education in sustainable destination management to enhance the competitiveness of EUSAIR countries by driving smart specialization and diversifying tourism offerings. It focuses on developing tools and pilot actions for human capital development, fostering collaboration among SMEs, research

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	institutions, and higher education institutions, and upgrading tourism practices to improve sustainability and regional branding.	
Flagship	• 4.2 Training and skills in the field of tourism businesses (vocational and entrepreneurial skills)	
Action	• 4.2.2 Knowledge and skills for the future	
Status	Developed but not submitted for funding	
TG AIR - Green Mapping for the Adriatic-Ionian Region - Supporting Development and Market Access for Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Destinations and Micro/SME Operations in the EUSAIR Region		
Description	The project aims to enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of Micro and SME tourism operations in the Adriatic-Ionian region through ICT-based innovation and knowledge networking. It focuses on empowering local entities with training on environmentally and socially responsible practices, establishing a Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Knowledge Alliance, and launching the Travel Green Adriatic-Ionian Region Portal and App to promote ecotourism and improve regional visibility.	
Flagship	• 4.5 Development of the network of sustainable tourism businesses and clusters, green mapping for the AI region - supporting development and market access for responsible and sustainable tourism destinations (management) and micro/SME operations in the EUSAIR region	
Actions	• 4.2.1 Promotion of sustainable and smart tourism management and services	
Status	Developed but not submitted for funding	

Sources: Revised EUSAIR Action Plan, TSG 4 Strategic Project Implementation document, in-depth interview

PCs stated that the development process predominantly focused on aligning with objectives of the Interreg Adrion programme, with no consideration given to other funding programmes. Furthermore, as earlier mentioned, seven projects were developed, of which only one was submitted for funding but did not pass the Admissibility and Eligibility Check phase.

In addition to the mono-pillar projects, within Pillar 4, cross-pillar projects were also developed through collaborative efforts involving TSGs from different pillars. When TSG members agreed upon common goals and priorities, a consultant was hired to further project development, with the responsibility of identifying potential partners and stakeholders and presenting the project ideas to the TSG members for approval. Even though Pillar coordinators were not aware of the established rules and procedures for cross-pillar projects development, defined within Facility Point Plus project (document How to apply for the Facility Point Plus support for macro-regional projects development – Guidance note, 2019), significant progress was achieved through proactive engagement and dialogue. A collaborative environment was cultivated through cross-pillar meetings, workshops, roundtables, and consultations, leading to the successful development of four cross-pillar projects that are well-aligned with the broader goals of the EUSAIR initiative.

The following cross-pillar projects were developed:

- **ADRIONCYCLETOUR** - ADRiatic IONian CYCLE route for sustainable TOURism (Pillars 2 Transport - and 4). Within Pillar 4 is developed under Flagship 4.3

Expanding the tourist season to all-year-round and Actions 4.1.1 Collaborative governance and sustainable innovation in tourism destinations and 4.1.2 Promoting the use of smart and sustainable indicators for tourism.

- **ADRIONe**t - Managing Tourism Flows in Protected Areas (Pillars 3 and 4). Within Pillar 4 is developed under Flagship 4.2 Training and skills in the field of tourism businesses (vocational and entrepreneurial skills) and Action 4.2.1 Promotion of sustainable and smart tourism management and services.

- **BLUECULTURE** - Development of Macro-Regional Cluster on BlueCulture Technologies and creation of International Competence Center (Pillars 1 and 4). Within Pillar 4 is developed under Flagship 4.5 Development of the network of sustainable tourism businesses and clusters; green mapping for the AI region – supporting development and market access for responsible and sustainable tourism destinations (management) and micro/SME operations in the EUSAIR region (Action 4.1.3 Promoting the green and digital transition in tourism strategies).

- **STETAI -** Sustainable Tourism through Environmental Energy Technologies in Buildings of High Architectural Interest (Pillars 2 Energy - and 4). Within Pillar 4 is developed under Flagship 4.5 Development of the network of sustainable tourism businesses and clusters; green mapping for the AI region – supporting development and market access for responsible and sustainable tourism destinations (management) and micro/SME operations in the EUSAIR region (Action 4.1.3 Promoting the green and digital transition in tourism strategies).