

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

Annex 04: Table on the justification for selection or non-selection of thematic objectives

Thematic objective (TO)	Challenges	Needs	Justification
1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Concentration of R&D on a few growth poles – Low level of R&D activities in rural/ peripheral regions – Brain drain occurrences and deterioration of competitiveness and risk of unemployment – On-going labour market transformation – Disparities in education and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved framework for innovation – Economic specialisation based on regional potentials – Enhanced technology transfer between research, education and business – Improved skills and knowledge in the field of innovation throughout central Europe – Stronger links and networks between regions and innovation actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is an uneven distribution of R&D activities over central Europe, significant R&D activities in urban and intermediate regions serve as seed-bed and anchor of innovation in central Europe. – There is a high potential for mobilisation of synergies between business and research and investments in product and process innovations but linkages are not sufficiently established. – The better linkage of advanced regions will support the competitiveness of transnational and regional clusters in central Europe against changes in world market conditions and the inclusion of horizontal challenges (e.g. globalisation, gender issues). – The improvement of framework conditions for R&D and innovation will support the characteristics of the CENTRAL EUROPE programme area being a potential destination for foreign investments and capital flows. – The fostering of links between business and research increases competitiveness and decreases the risk of brain drain in the CENTRAL EUROPE programme area. – The improvement of skills and knowledge of human capital and of entrepreneurs is an important factor for increased innovation capacity in the CENTRAL EUROPE programme area. – The promotion of innovation potentials in rural regions encourages impulses for a sustainable and balanced territorial development and will foster economic and social cohesion. – The promotion of skills and competences in peripheral and shrinking regions - being targeted from long-term (demographic) transformation processes - may reduce the increasing lagging behind of peripheral, badly accessible regions. – Fostering additional knowledge and skills in the field of economic and social innovation (with a specific focus on SMEs) will increase the entrepreneurial spirit within the regions and improve the endogenous economic potential thus reducing out-migration in peripheral regions.

Thematic objective (TO)	Challenges	Needs	Justification
2. enhancing access to and use and quality of information and communication technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Significantly uneven distribution of ICT-availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tackled sectoral and spatial inequalities in the terms of access to high-speed internet and the development of IT (adaption) 	<p>TO was NOT selected, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of relevance for transnational cooperation programme - the budget size of the programme will not allow for the necessary infrastructure support – Complementarity with other CSF funds/demarcation from other CSF funds - ICT enhancement and quality improvement will be a major objective and task in ERDF and EAFRD, which will be better suited to support infrastructure investments – The support of use of ICT will be regarded as horizontal objective within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, as TO1, TO4 and TO7 in their implementation will rely on ICT and thus will contribute to indirectly support this objective
3. enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of competences and skills within SMEs in terms of innovative products and services – Differences in entrepreneurial culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved industrial networks due to increasing embeddedness of regions into global capital flows – Increased numbers of green employment forms, creative industries and co-operative SMEs 	<p>TO was NOT selected, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SMEs are tackled through other selected Thematic objectives as specific target groups in the field of innovation, low-carbon economy (green employment forms), environment and culture, etc. – The importance of SMEs for the central Europe area has been recognised, and SMEs have been identified as e.g. regional innovation motors, due to the fact that in some regions SMEs show high levels of innovation; on the other hand also deficits and weaknesses have been identified such as a lack of availability of a sufficiently trained workforce; however it became evident within the analysis, that challenges for SMEs can be tackled within other TOs (in particular TO1). TO1 targets especially an enhancement of SME interactions at transnational level and aims to stimulate innovation and competences of SMEs. – National specific challenges for SMEs are better tackled through ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF.
4. supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High dependency on fossil fuels – Low gross inland consumption of renewable energy – Still increasing energy consumption – Inefficient energy use especially in the housing and the public sector – Not efficiently exploited potential of renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved energy efficiency in all sectors (public and private) – Reduced increase of the energy consumption – Increased use of the existing renewable energy potentials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a need for increase of renewable energy production, especially in eastern central Europe. – Efficient use of energy can contribute to decreasing central Europe's energy import dependence and mitigating climate change. – The promotion of endogenous resources and energy technologies is a high potential but capacities are often limited. – The sectors housing, public services and transport are among the biggest energy consumers - especially in urban areas. Their energy use is still wasteful in many regions in central Europe. – Potential new green jobs contribute to increase the competitiveness of regions and to reduce unemployment. – The implementation of low-carbon strategies supports the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and of central Europe's existing dependency on fossil energy. – The use of available knowledge on renewable energy of some central

Thematic objective (TO)	Challenges	Needs	Justification
			<p>European regions is a great potential for lagging regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is the need for increasing the capacity of the public sector for energy efficiency measures – Promoting more environment friendly and sustainable low-CO₂ urban transport systems contributes to tackle air quality problems (including high concentrations of particulate matters and ozone) and fosters the regional quality of life as well as economic conditions especially around urban nodes.
5. promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Extent of the vegetation period & more often occurrence of extreme weather events – Increase in mean and maximum air temperatures – The Czech Republic, Austria and Slovakia are most vulnerable to water dependency – Southern and Eastern European regions are most affected in terms of agriculture, forestry & summer tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transformed water management systems due to on-going desertification & increasing danger of aridity – Adaptation and risk prevention mechanisms – Increased retention capacities of landscapes (risk management for floods) 	<p>TO was NOT selected, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Climate Change adaptation is rather an issue of geographically limited initiatives and actions. Therefore these challenges will be more effectively tackled within national, Cross-Border Cooperation programmes or Euro-Regions (see e.g. flood prevention infrastructure). – Major challenges and needs can be targeted in a transnational way through other TOs, such as measures for climate change mitigation in terms of the shift towards a low-carbon economy (TO4) or in relation to adaptation and risk prevention measures which will be considered through sustainable management of natural heritage and resources, addressing also resource efficiency (TO6).
6. protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Natural/semi-natural environment under pressure – Natural and cultural heritage endangered through unsustainable use – Air, water and soil pollution – Conflicting land use – High level of land consumption & fragmentation – Urban sprawl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Careful use of natural and cultural heritage and resources while maintaining an intact environment – Improved quality of life in urban areas – Reduced land consumption & prevention of further landscape fragmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The richness of central Europe's natural and cultural resources needs to be preserved and their management improved – The sustainable use of natural and cultural resources serves as important location factor but they are often not sufficiently used. – Pressures on natural and cultural resources endanger the use potentials. – Transnational cooperation can help to coordinate sustainable management of natural and cultural resources. – Natural and cultural heritage sites are not sufficiently linked. – The environmental challenges of air, water and soil pollution, climate, land consumption and land use conflicts and negative spill-over effects in agglomeration areas are development barriers. – Negative external effects of urban areas (agglomeration disadvantages, resulting in e.g. low air quality, etc.) are a major challenge for central Europe's environment and quality of life of urban residents.
7. promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low accessibility of peripheral regions – New MS transport systems suffer from reduced public transport services – Stronger reliance on individual transport leading to social and environmental problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tackle regional accessibility disparities – Improve accessibility of cities & regions outside the metropolitan areas and TEN-T corridors – Promote environmentally friendly and intelligent public transport systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weak regional and local accessibility exists outside of central Europe's agglomerations. – There is a notable accessibility gap between peripheral rural regions and economic centres and to the TEN-T network – Disparities in multimodal accessibility lower the competitiveness of many regions in central Europe.

Thematic objective (TO)	Challenges	Needs	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Exhausted public transport infrastructure capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Focusing on public transport & multi-modal transport systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The promotion of the quality of rural-urban connections (as well as regiopolises and surrounding areas) may reduce the gap between peripheral areas and centres. – Better regional accessibility contributes to increase the involvement of peripheral regions into the development process and to reduce regional shrinkage. – The implementation of environment-friendly and low-carbon freight transport systems and logistics will contribute to the 2020 targets of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and increase in energy efficiency. – Increasing transport volumes reinforce the need for environmental-friendly and low-carbon freight transport systems. – Disparities exist in multimodal accessibility for freight transport in central Europe.
8. promoting employment and supporting labour mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Unemployment rates increased massively in some regions, particularly in Italy and Hungary – Transformation of labour markets due to globalisation/division (Eastern Hungarian, Eastern Slovakian and Western Polish regions show highest vulnerability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Considering specific geopolitical situation after EU-enlargement & cross-border connections – Supported alternative employment forms – Considered increased flexibility, adaptability and dynamic development of employment – Measures against (youth) unemployment and low activity rates – Support of labour market improvements – Targeting new demands for locations & new challenges for the regional labour market (including training systems) 	<p>TO was NOT selected, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complementarity with other CSF funds/demarcation from other CSF funds, the challenges and needs will more effectively be addressed through the ESF. – The challenges of employment are deemed as horizontal issue within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, thus the support of specific sectors and targeting the strengthening of competences and skills (as covered within TO1, TO4 and TO7, e.g. renewable energy, eco-innovation, smart specialisation) will contribute to improve their economic performance. – Labour markets are strongly determined by national legislation, thus a transnational cooperation programme will have rather limited leverage compared to nationally/regionally determined CSF Funds.
9. promoting social inclusion and combating poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Spatial diversity of income per capita – Clear east-west divide in social services (health, children, elderly) – Diversity of shrinking and growing regions exists in geographically minor distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Resolved economic disparities and reduced segregation – Tackle challenges due to ageing society – Increased efficient social integration and co-operative networks – Secured local and regional basic services – Tackled challenge of increasing (risk of) poverty – Prevent spatial polarisation & ensure gender equality and non-discrimination – Improved situation of ethnicities, minorities, diversified cultures 	<p>TO was not selected, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complementarity with other CSF funds/demarcation from other CSF funds, the challenges and needs will more effectively be addressed through the ESF. – Social policy issues are strongly determined by national policies, thus a transnational cooperation programme will have rather limited leverage compared to nationally/regionally determined CSF Funds. – The needs identified - although international in character may not be effectively addressed through a transnational cooperation programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – e.g. Services of General Economic Interest will call for investment support, which may not be covered by TNC budgets. – The issue of equal opportunities and non-discrimination will be regarded as horizontal issue to all TOs selected within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and implemented through the selection and monitoring of operations.

Thematic objective (TO)	Challenges	Needs	Justification
10. investing in education, skills and lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Varying educational levels and quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased participation in education - Improved lifelong learning & guidance - Reduced depopulation tendencies in peripheral regions 	<p>TO was not selected, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementarity with other CSF funds/demarcation from other CSF funds, the challenges and needs will more effectively be addressed through the ESF as well as ERDF and EAFRD, where education and training is to be implemented as horizontal objective - Major challenges, as e.g. in the field of education are targeted through interventions within TO1 such as in the field of strengthening competences and skills for economic and social innovation.
11. enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low level of cooperation between public entities & public participation - Low level of e-administration in some regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focusing on a cross-sectoral approach to connect the different levels of administrations - Increased efficiency of the public sector - Enhanced level of self-government administration - Increased co-operations on institutional, political and administrative level 	<p>TO was not selected, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major challenges or the need to enhance institutional capacity is targeted as an important horizontal issue within all TOs by the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme