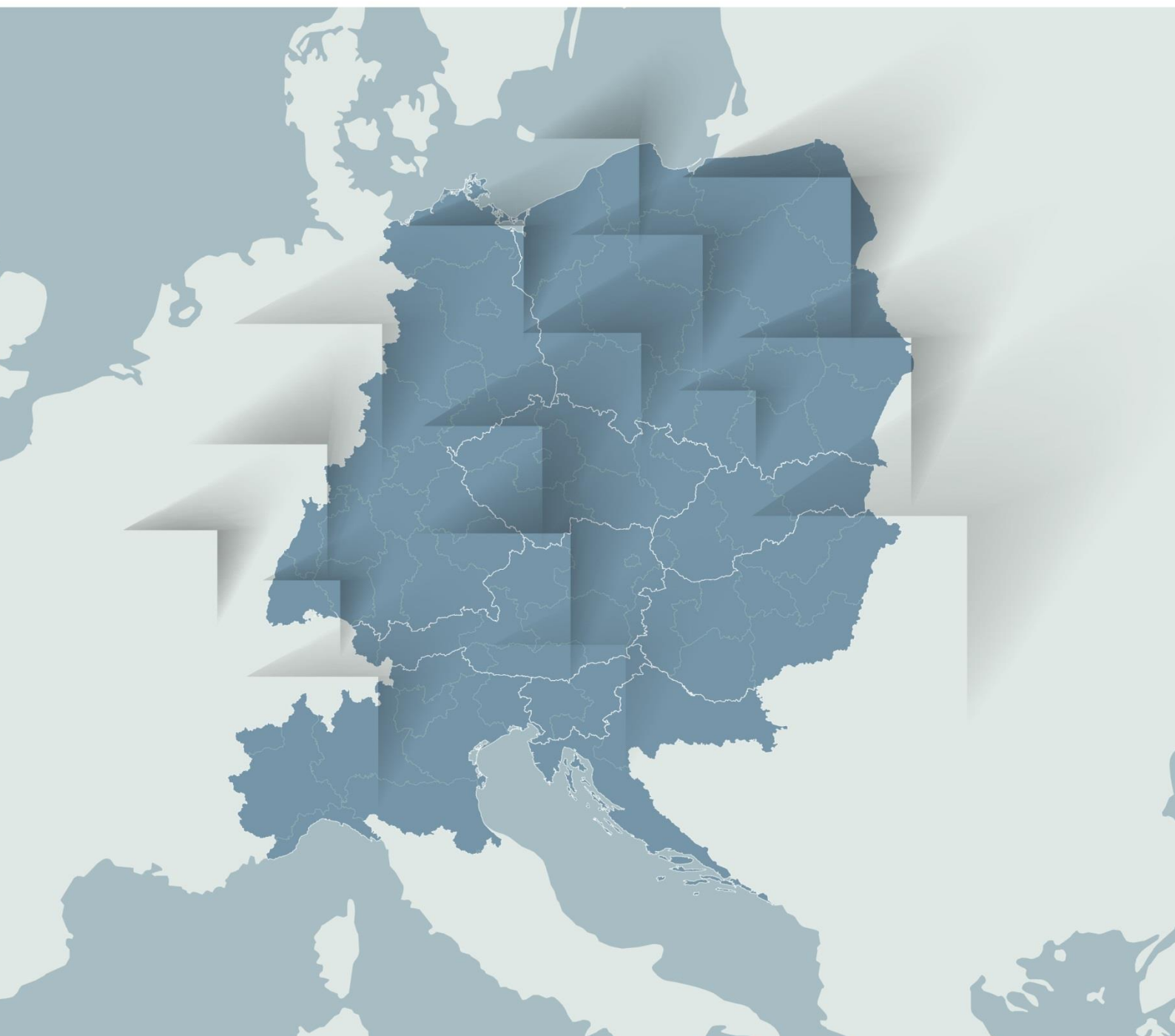


APPLICATION MANUAL THIRD CALL ANNEX I

Programme specific objectives
and thematic focus of the third call



Priority axis 1 - *Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive*

SO 1.1	To improve sustainable linkages among actors of the innovation systems for strengthening regional innovation capacity in central Europe
Challenges	<p>Central Europe faces crucial disparities concerning regional innovation. “Islands of innovation”, located around agglomerations or in western intermediate areas, have been established with well performing innovation systems characterised by strong links between its actors. However, several, mostly rural and peripheral regions/areas are characterised by a low level of R&D and weak linkages resulting in insufficient technology transfer and problems to access R&D-results and financing of innovation, especially for SMEs. The dynamism of regions and their connections through networks are opportunities in the frame of the globalisation process (Territorial Agenda 2020).</p> <p>Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) (thematic focus of the third call), are a powerful instrument for place-based, innovation-driven growth. They aim to prioritise public research and innovation investments through a bottom-up approach for the economic transformation of regions, building on regional competitive advantages and facilitating market opportunities in new inter-regional and European value chains¹. Main challenges for the implementation of RIS3 are, among others, to reform research and innovation systems, increase cooperation across regions and leverage research and innovation in less developed and industrial transition regions.</p> <p>There is a high and mostly unexploited potential of transnational cooperation for supporting the implementation of RIS3 among central European regions, by focusing on the topics/sectors of common interest beyond regional and national borders².</p> <p>Successful RIS3 implementation benefits significantly from integrated approaches and bottom-up coordination. Therefore, a holistic approach to sectoral development that seeks to understand multiple and inter-connected needs of the various actors is required. Current limitations have become evident that see innovation only as the final stage of a pure technological process. RIS3 can help reducing fragmentation through innovative practices such as open innovation processes across borders, co-creation and cross-sectorial collaborations, e.g. between the creative sector and science.</p> <p>Since innovation and technology development are the result of a complex set of relationships among key actors of the regional innovation systems (within RIS3), stronger links within and between regions as well as a critical mass of innovative actors are required (especially applying a triple or quadruple helix context) for improving innovation capacity. This shall further enhance knowledge and technology transfer between key players of the innovation systems in order to bring innovation closer to the market and will consequently contribute to innovation-driven growth at regional level and reduce disparities.</p> <p>In this context, an innovation system is to be understood as “<i>the network of institutions in the public and private sectors whose activities and interactions initiate, import, modify and diffuse new technologies</i>” (cf. Freeman, 1987). Actors of the innovation system include stakeholders from the research and business sectors, policy makers and public authorities.</p>

¹ Communication from the Commission “Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions: Strategies for resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth” COM(2017) 376 final.

² A prospective comparative analysis of the national Smart Specialization Strategies in Central Europe (technopolis group, 2016) available at http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/81824/S3-CE_160926_report.pdf/491bbef6-7610-4960-a74c-b58a57a0c9f4

SO 1.1	To improve sustainable linkages among actors of the innovation systems for strengthening regional innovation capacity in central Europe
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation will help to strengthen regional innovation capacities, thereby contributing to a better bottom-up implementation of <u>regional smart specialisation strategies</u> (thematic focus of the third call) resulting from a transnational coordination within industrial sectors that are technology priority areas in central Europe. This shall be achieved through transnational and internationalised regional networks and clusters fostering technology transfer and the development and implementation of new services supporting innovation in businesses. Sustainable linkages between regional ecosystems along smart specialisation priority areas will contribute to increasing the regions' competitiveness and resilience. Increased cooperation between RIS3 key actors will improve access to research results, thus stimulating further investment in innovation.</p> <p><u>The main result envisaged</u> can be summarised as: <i>“Increased and more sustainable linkages of actors in the innovation systems achieved through transnational cooperation strengthening the innovation capacity within central European regions”.</i></p>
Supported actions	<p>The supported actions will contribute to strengthening the regional innovation capacity of central Europe through connecting different actors of the innovation systems within and across different regions and sectors.</p> <p><u>Thematic focus of the third call</u></p> <p>Within the third call, the supported actions shall make use of transnational cooperation for the <u>bottom up implementation of RIS3 strategies</u>, targeting industrial sectors of the technology priority areas of relevance for central European regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy and environment • Public health, medicine and life sciences • Agro- and bio-economy • Advanced materials and nanotechnology • Transport and mobility • Advanced manufacturing systems • ICT and electronics. <p>Where relevant, actions are encouraged to address more than one sector under broader headings, such as circular economy.</p> <p>Transnational cooperation for supporting RIS3 implementation involves sharing of knowledge, coordinating and exploiting synergies with RIS3 initiatives in other countries and regions. It aims at access to wider business and knowledge networks, getting necessary research capacity, reaching out to other markets, expanding business opportunities, combining complementary strengths, and joining global value chains.</p> <p>Emphasis should be put on triple and quadruple helix approaches by strengthening the participation and involvement of public and civil society actors (in particular RIS3 key actors). Actions should also foster innovative practices such as open innovation and co-creation (e.g. involving the creative sector) as well as bringing innovation closer to the market (e.g. innovative financing mechanisms for market introduction and leverage of innovation). The establishment of links with financing institutions will ease the access of enterprises to the financing of innovation.</p> <p>All supported actions have to clearly support the bottom-up implementation of smart specialisation strategies in central European regions.</p> <p>Examples of actions supported under SO 1.1 within the third call are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fostering the transnational integration of the implementation of RIS3 considering e.g. transnational value chains and knowledge networks

SO 1.1	To improve sustainable linkages among actors of the innovation systems for strengthening regional innovation capacity in central Europe
Supported actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthening regional innovation eco-systems through improving their internal and external (transnational) networks, collaborative schemes to support R&I investment, joint innovation support services etc. – Building transnational links and strategic collaborations between key RIS3 actors (in particular triple helix or quadruple relationships) in regions sharing common challenges, thus exploiting co-specialisation opportunities (e.g. joint strategies and actions, policy tools etc.) – Enhancing innovative practices such as open innovation and co-creation approaches involving e.g. the creative sector (<i>please note that overlaps with SO 3.2 targeting cultural and creative industries have to be avoided</i>) – Bringing innovation closer to the market and facilitating the access to financing of innovation by e.g. fostering the links with finance institutions and develop financing mechanisms for market introduction and leverage of innovation
SO 1.2	To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions
Challenges	<p>Demographic change and migration issues are affecting the labour market throughout central Europe. This is particularly evident in regions with shrinking populations and related brain drain effects (peripheral and rural areas) thus deteriorating their competitiveness (Territorial Agenda 2020). Peripheral regions/areas are to be understood as marginalised or badly accessible territories offering poor job opportunities and suffering from out-migration.</p> <p>The ratio “number of SMEs/1,000 inhabitants” is strongly diverging within central Europe. This reflects disparities in the regional attitude to entrepreneurship (ÖIR et al, 2012), understood as the “mind-set and process to create and develop economic activity by blending risk-taking, creativity and/or innovation with sound management, within a new or an existing organisation”. In order to mitigate these disparities there is the need for improving technological competences and management skills of employees of the public and private sector, especially in SMEs as well as entrepreneurs. This should be done through integration into wider local and regional strategies.</p> <p>The topic of social innovation including social entrepreneurship (thematic focus of the third call) is of high relevance, however its implementation process within central Europe still remains challenging. Social innovations comprise new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations³. The growth of social innovation in Europe is hampered by insufficient knowledge of the sector, limited support of grass roots and social entrepreneurship activities, poor diffusion and little scale-up of good practices, and poor methods of impact evaluation⁴.</p>

³ Open Book of Social Innovation (Murray et. al, 2010) available at <https://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/The-Open-Book-of-Social-Innovationg.pdf>

⁴ Empowering people, driving change: Social innovation in the European Union (bepa - Bureau of European policy advisers, 2011), available at <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/13402/attachments/1/translations>

SO 1.2	To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions
Challenges	<p>Furthermore, important current (unemployment) and new (migration) social challenges need to be tackled in order to improve the integration of vulnerable/disadvantaged target groups by supporting the development of human capital and social economy in central Europe. This is of particular relevance in remote areas and disadvantaged regions. In this context, social entrepreneurs have an important role as innovators, drivers of social inclusion and as operators in the social economy creating a positive social impact. Social entrepreneurs can drive social innovation and transformation in various fields including education, health, environment and enterprise development.</p> <p>In this context social entrepreneurship is to be understood as the “use of the techniques by start-up companies and other entrepreneurs to develop, fund and implement solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues”⁵.</p>
Expected results	<p>By stimulating mutual exchange and learning, transnational cooperation will help to foster social innovation (thematic focus of the third call) by targeting the integration of migrants and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups into society and the labour market. Thus it will contribute to increasing regional competitiveness and supporting social inclusion, especially in regions facing social challenges.</p> <p>Joint approaches developed transnationally will further support social entrepreneurship by building technological and managerial competences as well as promoting entrepreneurial mind sets and initiatives creating positive social effects. Social entrepreneurs can drive social innovation and transformation in various fields including education, health, environment and enterprise development.</p> <p>This will allow for meeting social needs and will further improve the capacities of regions to manage new challenges such as those deriving from demographic change, migration and brain drain.</p> <p><u>The main result envisaged</u> can be summarised as: “Improved capacities of the public and private sector for skills development of employees and entrepreneurial competences achieved through transnational cooperation driving economic and social innovation in central European regions”.</p>
Supported actions	<p>The supported actions will contribute to advancing economic and social innovation in central Europe, where there is a favourable innovation climate in several regions while at the same time many peripheral regions/areas are lagging behind and/or are facing social challenges in terms of missing or not sufficiently qualified labour force.</p> <p><u>Thematic focus of the third call</u></p> <p>The supported actions shall target at transnational level social innovation and the integration of disadvantaged groups and regions. More specifically, actions are expected to develop and implement bottom-up social innovation practices creating and strengthening support infrastructure, services and schemes, to foster innovation of social policies and aim for a better integration of disadvantaged groups (including migrants) into the society and labour market. Furthermore, actions should foster social entrepreneurship (including entrepreneurship of migrants and entrepreneurship creating positive social effects) through improvement of entrepreneurial mind sets, stressing the social dimension and development of related skills. Actions should thereby consider specific challenges deriving from demographic change such as migration, brain drain, shrinking regions as well as linked to social segregation.</p>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_entrepreneurship

SO 1.2	To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions
Supported actions	<p>All supported actions have to clearly foster social innovation in central European regions.</p> <p>Examples of actions supported under SO 1.2 within the third call are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing and implementing bottom-up social innovation practices creating and strengthening support infrastructure, services and schemes (e.g. mentoring, community-owned initiatives, services of general interest) – Developing and implementing strategies and related tools (e.g. services for labour market orientation, mentoring and accompanying schemes) for the integration of disadvantaged groups (including migrants) into the labour market – Developing, piloting and implementing specific support services and trainings for prospective entrepreneurs with a migrant background, to equip them with specific skills and competences to implement their business idea (e.g. legal aspects, business planning, etc.) – Supporting innovation of social policies in order to develop solutions that will better meet the needs of the disadvantaged groups (e.g. tackling policy-related challenges by identifying concrete obstacles in policy implementation, identifying and exchanging best practices, testing new paths and coordination measures among relevant actors, enhancing actors' capacities for policy improvements and coordination, etc.) – Developing and implementing strategies and tools for improving social innovation initiatives as well as entrepreneurial competences for social entrepreneurship aiming to create positive social effects

Priority axis 1	
Main target groups	Individuals and/or organisations positively affected by the activities and results of an operation, though not necessarily being directly involved in the operation, are: enterprises (with a specific focus on SMEs) and their employees, entrepreneurs, cluster organisations, the public sector, intermediaries, private and public research institutions, R&D facilities, centres of R&D excellence, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups including migrants. Additionally all public and private actors dealing with RIS3 implementation, social and economic innovation as well as all population groups which are affected by the issue
Beneficiaries ⁶	All legal personalities that can contribute to increasing economic and social innovation and entrepreneurial capacity. They comprise amongst others: local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce, enterprises (including SMEs), cluster organisations, universities, associations, technology transfer institutions, research institutions, centres of R&D excellence, NGOs, social enterprises, innovation agencies, business incubators, cluster management bodies, financing institutions, education and training organisations as well as social partners and labour-market institutions.
Specific territories targeted	The supported actions can be implemented throughout the whole programme cooperation area: Emphasis shall be put on regions having deficiencies in their innovation system (e.g. peripheral and structurally weak regions/areas, regions facing industrial decline etc.) or having a shortage of skills and entrepreneurship (e.g. shrinking regions) for which their connection to and learning from more advanced regions will be targeted. Simultaneously, regions with a higher innovation performance will be further strengthened through internationalisation opening up for new development opportunities, intensifying of the entrepreneurial attitude and improving technological and managerial skills. Actions will thereby need to consider the specific territorial characteristics and RIS3 priorities of the respective targeted regions.

⁶ project partners benefitting from programme funds and implementing activities within the project

Priority axis 2 - *Cooperating on low-carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE*

SO 2.1	To develop and implement solutions for increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructures
Challenges	<p>Most central European regions show high energy consumption and a low degree of energy efficiency of buildings and infrastructure which are the main contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. The efficient use of energy can make an important contribution to achieving a low-carbon economy and combating climate change. It will also contribute to decreasing central Europe's energy import dependence and will in many cases imply positive effects on air quality.</p> <p>Increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructure (i.e. infrastructure owned by the public and/or for public use) is a priority given the large potential for fossil fuel energy savings as well as for spreading approaches to other sectors thus having a multiplying effect.</p> <p>Despite some central European regions being quite advanced in terms of energy saving technologies, there is the need for increasing the overall capacity of the public sector for implementing measures to reduce CO₂ emissions of public infrastructure. In particular, public infrastructure owners and operators often lack the necessary expertise (i.e. methods and technologies) for reducing energy consumption and/or replacing the consumption of fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.</p>
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation will help to reduce know-how disparities and increase capacities of the public sector and related entities for improving the energy efficiency of public infrastructures and ultimately reducing their energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. This shall be achieved through strengthening competences as well as developing and implementing strategies, management approaches and financing schemes which will serve as seedbed for achieving higher energy efficiency. This will consequently leverage further investment such as the renovation and the upgrading of the energy efficiency level of public infrastructure. Furthermore, the usage of renewable energy in public infrastructures will be fostered through identifying potentials, testing innovative solutions and preparing follow-up investments.</p> <p>The <u>main result</u> envisaged can be summarised as: <i>“Improved capacities of the public sector and related entities for increased energy efficiency and renewable energy use in public infrastructures in central Europe achieved through transnational cooperation”</i>.</p>
Supported actions	<p>The supported actions shall contribute to strengthening capacities of the public sector for improving energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable energy in public infrastructure. In the programme context, improving capacities is understood primarily as creating an enabling environment through improving the policy, legal and institutional frameworks as well as through developing human resources and strengthening managerial systems.</p> <p>Actions shall be based on transnational cooperation in order to build competences, accomplish strategies and management approaches for improving energy efficiency in public infrastructures. Further, actions shall be linked to testing and implementing solutions in terms of novel energy saving technologies as well as to increasing renewable energy shares in consumption.</p> <p>Innovative energy services, incentives and financing schemes will contribute to facilitating the implementation of energy efficiency measures.</p>

SO 2.1	To develop and implement solutions for increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructures
Supported actions	<p>These actions will contribute to leveraging further investments such as the upgrading of the energy efficiency level of public infrastructure and the increased usage of renewable energy.</p> <p><u>Thematic focus of the third call</u></p> <p>Actions shall focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in <u>public infrastructure other than public buildings and streetlights</u>, namely on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport infrastructure including railway, road, waterways, terminals etc. (<i>please note that overlaps with Priority Axis 4 have to be avoided</i>) • Water infrastructure including distribution and maintenance of water supply • Waste and waste water infrastructure including collection and treatment • ICT infrastructure including data storage and distribution systems <p>Emphasis should be put on the integration of renewable energy sources and financing aspects of energy-efficient renovation, e.g. considering investment and operational costs or financial savings during the operation phase.</p> <p>All supported actions have to clearly contribute to improving capacities for increased energy efficiency and renewable energy use in public infrastructures other than public buildings and streetlights, thereby reducing the carbon footprint.</p> <p>Examples of actions supported under SO 2.1 within the third call are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing, testing and implementing policies, strategies and solutions to improve the energy efficiency in public infrastructures as well as to increase the use of renewable energies including energy storage systems – Developing and testing innovative management approaches to increase regional capacities for improving the energy performance in public infrastructure (e.g. energy managers) – Developing and implementing solutions for the application of novel energy saving technologies that will increase the energy efficiency in public infrastructures – Harmonising concepts, standards and certification systems at transnational level to improve the energy performance in public infrastructure – Strengthening the capacity of the public sector to develop and implement innovative energy services, incentives and financing schemes (e.g. energy performance contracting, PPP models, etc.)

SO 2.2	To improve territorially based low-carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation
Challenges	<p>Central Europe has significant potentials with regard to renewable resources. However, the degree of exploitation of those resources varies largely: while the use of renewable energy is still low in several central European regions, some others show higher rates of exploitation. Despite the fact that in some regions considerable experience about renewable energy production already exists, the development and implementation of local and regional energy strategies and action plans is still at a low level. Energy challenges are thereby threatening regional competitiveness (cf. Territorial Agenda 2020).</p> <p>Consequently, there is the need to improve capacities for territorially-based energy planning in central Europe. Enhanced cooperation will enable coordinated local and regional approaches to formulating and planning low-carbon energy strategies, which is key to the uptake of renewable energy measures.</p>
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation shall help building new knowledge as well as exchanging existing knowledge and experiences between and within regions concerning the planning, financing and implementing of concrete actions to deliver sustainable energy measures. It aims to improve the capacity of the public sector and related entities, as a key starting point for mobilising investment for low-carbon measures at territorial level. Transnational cooperation will thereby contribute to triggering activities especially in regions with a lower usage of their renewable energy potentials. Furthermore, it will support the linking of approaches between the demand and supply sides, taking into account the quality and capacity of energy distribution grids. This shall be achieved through strengthening the knowledge and planning capacity of the public sector and related entities that facilitate the transition towards 'Sustainable Energy Regions'. The programme will support them in the development and implementation of innovative local and regional energy planning strategies leading to an enhanced use of endogenous renewable energy potentials in a balanced way and to a reduction of CO₂ emissions. This will in many cases also imply positive effects on air quality.</p> <p>The main result envisaged can be summarised as: <i>"Improved capacities of the public sector and related entities for territorially based low-carbon energy planning and policies in central European regions achieved through transnational cooperation"</i>.</p>
Supported actions	<p>The supported actions shall contribute to strengthening capacities of the public sector and related entities dealing with territorial energy planning targeting the reduction of CO₂ emissions. In the programme context, improving capacities is understood primarily as creating an enabling environment through improving policy, legal and institutional frameworks as well as through developing human resources and strengthening managerial systems. Transnational cooperation can bring added value through facilitating the exchange between territories further strengthening regions with highly advanced planning capacities and improving capacities of those lagging behind. Further, it will contribute to bringing together various stakeholders in energy planning in order to coordinate approaches.</p> <p>This will enable them to develop integrated local and/or regional strategies and plans for a better use of endogenous renewable energy potentials and for improving regional energy performances. Actions supported shall combine demand and supply sides and focus on strategies, policies, tools and new solutions for the exploitation of renewable energy resources as well as for increased energy efficiency.</p>

SO 2.2	To improve territorially based low-carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation
Supported actions	<p>The implementation of pilot actions and exchanges of good practices will stimulate and trigger investment towards low-carbon development. Coordinated strategies for improved interconnections of energy networks will enable a better integration of renewable energy sources into the existing distribution networks and consequently open the opportunity for an increased production and use of renewable energy.</p> <p>All the supported actions will clearly contribute to the improvement of capacity of the public sector and related entities for an increased and balanced use of endogenous renewable energy potentials and for an enhanced energy performance in central European regions. Moreover, they will contribute to the improvement of territorially based energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation. It is to be emphasized that the programme will not support actions and/or pilot investments having a negative effect on the environment (e.g. hydropower plants affecting the ecological status of water bodies, emissions of biomass installations etc.).</p> <p>Examples of actions supported within SO 2.2 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing and implementing integrated territorial strategies and plans to increase the use of endogenous renewable energy potentials and to improve regional energy performance – Designing and testing concepts and tools for the exploitation of endogenous renewable energy resources and increasing their share in the energy mix – Developing and implementing territorial strategies to improve the energy management in both the public and the private sector (especially in SMEs) – Developing demand-focused strategies and policies to reduce energy consumption (e.g. smart metering, distribution of smart consumer applications, etc.) – Developing and testing solutions for improved interconnections and coordination of energy networks (including network stability) targeting the integration and use of renewable energy sources – Promoting the role of energy prosumers (i.e. consumers who both produce and consume electricity, e.g. residential/commercial/public prosumers, community/cooperative energy) in achieving the vision of the Energy Union
SO 2.3	To improve capacities for mobility planning in functional urban areas to lower CO₂ emissions
	<p><u>Closed within the third call</u></p>

Priority axis 2	
Main target groups	Individuals and/or organisations positively affected by the activities and results of operations, though not necessarily being directly involved in the operation, with different approaches to stimulate the uptake of solutions for improved energy efficiency and renewable energy use. They include both public and private actors, such as energy operators, policy makers and planners, energy distributors, infrastructure providers and other local and regional energy actors as well as enterprises including SMEs. Target groups include all population groups which are benefitting from an improved regional and local energy performance in areas which are affected by the issue.
Beneficiaries ⁷	All legal personalities that can contribute to improved energy planning. They comprise among others local, regional and national public authorities, regional development and energy agencies, energy operators, energy management institutions, enterprises including SMEs, associations, innovation agencies, NGOs, financing institutions, education and training organisations as well as universities and research institutes.
Specific territories targeted	The supported actions can be implemented throughout the cooperation area. Emphasis will be put on territories having deficiencies in low-carbon energy planning, for which an exchange and learning from more advanced regions will be most beneficial. Simultaneously, territories which already show an advanced status of low-carbon energy planning will be further strengthened as consequence of improving their implementation capacities (e.g. novel low-carbon technologies, investment preparation etc.). All actions will thereby need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of the respective targeted areas.

⁷ project partners benefitting from programme funds and implementing activities within the project

Priority axis 3 - *Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE*

SO 3.1	To improve integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources
Challenges	<p>Central Europe has a very rich natural heritage including important eco-systems and abundant biodiversity. This heritage and related natural resources are highly valuable and need to be preserved, protected and if necessary ecologically restored. At the same time natural heritage is an important location factor and the use of its assets can serve as a driver for economic development. As a consequence, natural heritage and resources (including water, soil, fauna and flora) are subject to numerous pressures and usage conflicts, e.g. between environmental protection and industry, agriculture, transport, urbanisation or tourism. Further pressure arises from the increasing risk of natural hazards linked to the effects of climate change. The loss of biodiversity, the vulnerability of natural heritage and landscapes as well as the effects of climate change have a strong impact at territorial level (cf. Territorial Agenda 2020).</p> <p>The complexity of these challenges requires integrated approaches based on sustainable long-term strategic visions linking different policies, sectors and administrative levels. Integrated environmental management thereby means a comprehensive approach to natural resource planning and management that encompasses ecological, social, and economic objectives (such as river basin management plans, air quality etc.). It considers interrelations among different elements and incorporates concepts of carrying capacity, resilience and sustainability. The capacities for such integrated environmental approaches are, however, not yet sufficiently established in the public sector and in related entities dealing with the protection and sustainable use of natural resources. This is notably shown by the large number of usage conflicts and pressures on natural heritage and resources in many central European regions.</p>
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation will allow for improving the capacities of those actors by supporting the development and implementation of integrated environmental strategies and tools as well as the joint testing of pilot solutions. This will facilitate a larger uptake of the integrated environmental concept into the public and private sector such as the application of innovative technologies and introducing resource efficient solutions.</p> <p>The main result envisaged can be summarised as: <i>“Improved integrated environmental management capacities of the public sector and related entities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources in central Europe achieved through transnational cooperation”</i>.</p>
Supported actions	<p>The supported actions shall increase capacities of the public sector and related entities to preserve, manage and use natural heritage and resources (including water, soil, fauna and flora). The application of an integrated approach is a key factor to ensure sustainable development and to avoid usage conflicts. In the programme context, improving capacities is understood primarily as creating an enabling environment by improving policy, legal and institutional frameworks as well as through developing human resources and strengthening managerial systems.</p> <p>Transnational cooperation will add value by building new knowledge and by fostering the exchange of knowledge and experience among regions, in particular addressing stakeholders dealing with the protection and management of natural heritage and resources.</p>

SO 3.1	To improve integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources
Supported actions	<p>Transnational coordination can also be essential for ensuring coherent and effective solutions and policies. This includes the capitalising on location factors as the high-value of eco-systems in an integrated and sustainable way, promoting a sustainable regional development. Furthermore, the focus on integrated environmental management approaches and strategies shall contribute to reducing current and avoiding future usage conflicts as well as to ecological restoration of degraded ecosystems (e.g. river basin management, air quality etc.). Resource efficiency is thereby another key aspect to be considered as a guiding principle. In order to facilitate its application, both in the public and private sectors, innovative tools and technologies shall be developed and tested. Joint and harmonised tools and concepts will be applied for risk prevention and management (considering natural risks and risks linked to human activities) responding also to challenges of negative climate change impacts in order to allow for effective and coherent solutions.</p> <p>All the supported actions have to clearly contribute to improving integrated environmental management capacities and to fostering the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources in central Europe.</p> <p>Examples of actions supported within specific objective 3.1 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing and implementing integrated strategies and tools for the sustainable management of protected or environmentally highly valuable areas (e.g. biodiversity, landscapes, eco-systems, etc.) – Developing and implementing integrated strategies and tools to sustainably use natural resources for regional development, thus avoiding potential use conflicts (e.g. with tourism, transport, industry, agriculture, energy, etc.) – Developing and testing the application of innovative technologies and tools that facilitate effective integrated environmental management (e.g. remediation technologies, monitoring tools etc.) – Developing and testing applications to improve the efficient management of natural resources in public institutions and enterprises (e.g. reduction of natural resource consumption, closed loop systems) – Harmonising environmental management concepts and tools on the transnational level for risk prevention and management (e.g. flood risk management plans) and to reduce negative climate change impacts on the environment and human life (e.g. adaptation measures).

SO 3.2	To improve capacities for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources
Challenges	<p>Central Europe has a great diversity of cultural heritage and resources in terms of historical sites, documentary heritage (e.g. archives and library collections), artefacts, traditions, cultural landscapes as well as traditional skills and knowledge. This heritage and its related resources represent important location factors, strongly contributing to the attractiveness of central Europe's territory. The protection and valorisation of cultural heritage and resources through <u>cultural and creative industries (CCI)</u> - which is the <u>thematic focus of the third call</u> - represent a powerful potential for economic growth, generating value and thereby directly benefiting citizens.</p> <p>For CCI, there is a clear potential of cross-sectorial cooperation between cultural heritage actors and the different creative sectors as well as the need to strengthen small creative businesses (and their networks), creative hubs and incubators. Furthermore, this topic is closely linked to the re-use of abandoned spaces, existing in many central European cities and regions, which could benefit from developing creative industries in such sites.</p> <p>Fostering cultural and creative entrepreneurship is a topic of high relevance as also emphasized by European and worldwide efforts aiming at finding most appropriate policies to fully benefit of these growing sectors.</p>
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation will help improving capacities of the public and private sector dealing with the cultural and creative industries. The development and implementation of strategies and policies for exploiting potentials of cultural and creative industries will trigger economic opportunities and employment at regional level.</p> <p>The main result envisaged can be summarised as: <i>“Improved capacities of the public and private sector for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources in central Europe achieved through transnational cooperation”</i>.</p>
Supported actions	<p><u>Thematic focus of the third call</u></p> <p>The supported actions shall build on transnational cooperation and target the improvement of capacities of the public and private sector working in the field of <u>cultural and creative industries (CCI)</u> in order to accomplish a more sustainable use and valorisation of those assets. The application of an integrated approach is a key factor to ensure sustainable development and to avoid usage conflicts. In the programme context, improving capacities is understood primarily as creating an enabling environment by improving policy, legal and institutional frameworks as well as through developing human resources and strengthening managerial systems.</p> <p>Transnational cooperation will add value by building new knowledge and by fostering the exchange of knowledge and experience among regions, in particular addressing stakeholders dealing with CCI. Transnational coordination can also be essential for ensuring coherent and effective solutions and policies.</p> <p>Within the third call, actions should focus on strengthening CCI in central Europe, including CCI entrepreneurship, CCI policies as well as cross-sectorial cooperation between CCI and other sectors and/or innovative technologies (e. g. crafts sector with digital techniques). Actions are linked to setting up concepts, strategies and coordinated approaches aiming at stimulating and promoting cultural and creative industries. Investment shall be prepared and business plans elaborated increasing the awareness on the value of cultural and creative industries and fostering cultural and creative entrepreneurship. Overall, this improved capacity shall allow for better exploitation of existing potentials in the growing sector of CCI, thus supporting sustainable economic development and employment.</p>

SO 3.2	To improve capacities for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources
Supported actions	<p>All supported actions have to clearly foster CCI in central European regions.</p> <p>Examples of actions supported under SO 3.2 within the third call are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing and implementing strategies and policies for valorising the potentials of CCI – Developing and implementing integrated territorial development strategies and concepts that build on CCI to foster sustainable economic growth and employment – Developing and testing tools and approaches for a better promotion of the CCI sector and the fostering of CCI entrepreneurship <p>Establishing and strengthening transnational cooperation among relevant actors to enhance cross-sectorial cooperation and linkages of CCI to other sectors and/or innovative technologies (<i>please note that overlaps with SO 1.1 targeting RIS3 implementation have to be avoided</i>)</p>
SO 3.3	To improve environmental management of functional urban areas to make them more liveable places
Challenges	<p>Central Europe includes many regions in which urbanisation processes cause land use conflicts and generate urban environmental challenges. Although scale and intensity of problems vary, a common set of issues can be identified, including increased soil sealing, poor air and water quality, high levels of ambient noise, generation of large volumes of waste and waste water, vulnerability to climate change, as well as urban sprawl with its social implications. Due to these developments the quality of life (and health) of citizens varies strongly in different central Europe cities (cf. Mercer, 2013). They also have an impact on the environment and economic performance of cities.</p> <p>These challenges call for integrated environmental management of urban areas, which considers environmental impacts of all activities within the entire functional area of a city (cf. European Commission, 2006a). Therefore, integrated environmental management is addressing functional urban areas based on functional characteristics going beyond administrative boundaries of cities. According to the OECD, European Commission and Eurostat (cf. OECD, 2012), a functional urban area is a functional economic unit characterised by densely inhabited “urban cores” and “hinterlands” whose labour market is highly integrated with the cores.</p> <p>Capacities of the public sector and related entities for integrated environmental management ensuring compliance with environmental policies, engaging with the relevant stakeholders and integrating environmental considerations into economic decisions are, however, not yet sufficiently established in many central European cities. This calls for a closer vertical and horizontal coordination and integration of environmental management measures considering urban cores and their hinterlands.</p>

SO 3.3	To improve environmental management of functional urban areas to make them more liveable places
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation will help to increase those capacities by supporting the development and implementation of integrated environmental management to improve the environmental performance (such as air quality, water management, flood risks etc.) of functional urban areas. Enhanced governance will contribute to better planning, management and decision making thereby reducing usage conflicts and negative externalities on the environment. The development and implementation of strategies and tools as well as the joint testing of pilot applications (e.g. for site rehabilitation) will trigger investments for improving the quality of the urban environment.</p> <p>The main result envisaged can be summarised as: <i>“Improved integrated environmental management capacities of the public sector and related entities in central Europe’s functional urban areas achieved through transnational cooperation for making them more liveable places”</i>.</p> <p>The supported actions will contribute to improving capacities of the public sector and related entities within the urban context for enhancing integrated environmental management in functional urban areas. In the programme context, improving capacities is understood primarily as creating an enabling environment by improving policy, legal and institutional frameworks as well as through developing human resources and strengthening managerial systems.</p> <p>The supported actions shall build on transnational cooperation in order to connect different actors within and across different functional urban areas. The aim is to build knowledge and competences and to accomplish strategies and integrated management systems that are able to tackle urban environmental problems (such as climate change, water management, flood risk management etc.) and deal with natural and man-made risks related to both core areas and their hinterlands. Integrated approaches shall include cross-sectoral and multi-governance aspects considering also social implications. The development and testing of innovative solutions and tools (including financing models) as well as pilot actions may further support the implementation of measures and investments for improving the quality of the urban environment and consequently the quality of life for urban residents.</p> <p>All the supported actions will clearly contribute to improving environmental management capacities in the public sector and related entities in central Europe’s functional urban areas, thereby making them more liveable places.</p> <p>Examples of joint actions supported within specific objective 3.3 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing and implementing strategies and tools (including innovative financing and investment models) to manage and improve environmental quality (air, water, waste, soil, climate) as well as to tackle natural and man-made risks in functional urban areas – Strengthening the capacity for environmental planning and management (e.g. participatory planning mechanisms and decision-making processes) at the level of functional urban areas – Developing and implementing integrated strategies, policies and tools to reduce land-use conflicts in functional urban areas (e.g. urban sprawl, shrinkage and fragmentation also in the view of social implications) – Developing and implementing integrated strategies and pilot applications for the rehabilitation and reactivation of brownfield sites – Developing concepts and implementing environmental pilot applications to support the development towards smart cities (e.g. ICT applications, environmental technologies)
Supported actions	

Priority axis 3	
Main target groups	<p>Individuals and/or organisations positively affected by the activities and results of operations, though not necessarily being directly involved in the operation. They include both the public and private sector, such as policy makers and planners and organisations dealing with the protection, management and valorisation of natural and/or cultural heritage and resources including cultural and creative industries, owners and users of natural and/or cultural heritage sites as well as other organisations influencing the development of functional urban areas. Target groups include all population groups which are benefitting from the improved management of natural and cultural heritage and resources as well as improved urban environmental management.</p>
Beneficiaries ⁸	<p>All legal personalities that can contribute to an improved management and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources and to improved environmental management of functional urban areas. They comprise among others local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, enterprises (in particular SMEs within the cultural and creative industry as well as the environmental sector), environmental facilities and infrastructure operators and owners, associations, regional innovation agencies, special interest groups, NGOs, financing institutions, education and training organisations as well as universities and research institutes.</p>
Specific territories targeted	<p>The supported actions can be implemented throughout the cooperation area. Emphasis will thereby be put on regions with high value natural and cultural heritage sites or resources to be protected or valorised or with areas facing significant pressures and usage conflicts as well as on functional urban areas having deficiencies in integrated environmental management for which an exchange and learning from more advanced regions will be most beneficial. Simultaneously, territories which already show an advanced status of integrated environment and/or cultural management will be further strengthened as a consequence of improving their implementation capacities (e.g. improved international connection of sites, novel technologies, novel rehabilitation methods, smart city approaches, investment preparation etc.). All actions will thereby need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of the respective targeted areas.</p>

⁸ project partners benefitting from programme funds and implementing activities within the project

Priority axis 4 - *Cooperating on transport to better connect* *CENTRAL EUROPE*

SO 4.1	To improve planning and coordination of regional passenger transport systems for better connections to national and European transport networks
Challenges	<p>The central Europe area shows weak local, regional and transnational accessibility especially outside of agglomerations and in its eastern parts. Transport systems mostly lack integration between modes of transport. Many peripheral regions, characterised by a low accessibility and few major centres of urbanisation, are facing a low quality of public transport and are not sufficiently linked to TEN-T corridors and transport nodes. Indeed, while some regions have well developed mobility planning systems, in others relevant knowledge and capacity is missing.</p> <p>With respect to the development and implementation of integrated passenger transport systems and multimodality, central European regions show large disparities and transnational coordination is lacking.</p>
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation aims to reduce existing disparities of knowledge as well as to increase the planning and implementation capacity in the field of integrated passenger transport systems where better regional and transnational coordination between stakeholders is considered a key factor. Transnational cooperation can strengthen connections to TEN-T corridors and to primary, secondary and tertiary transport nodes of the TEN-T network (as defined according to “The New Trans-European Transport Network Policy Planning and implementation issues”, SEC (2011) 101 final), in particular for peripheral regions. A specific focus will be put on public transport at regional level as the sustainability of those connections is considered to be an underlying principle. Strategies, tools and pilot applications will contribute to setting up improved connections to the TEN-T network and transport nodes. Furthermore, within the transnational context the development of coordinated concepts for smart regional mobility and services is foreseen, fostering improved service standards and interoperability. Particular attention will be put on mobility services in the public interest.</p> <p>The main result envisaged can be summarised as: <i>“Improved and coordinated planning capacities of the public sector and related entities for regional passenger transport systems in central Europe linked to national and European transport networks achieved through transnational cooperation”</i>.</p>
Supported actions	<p>The supported actions shall build on transnational cooperation in order to accomplish improved capacities of the public sector and related entities for coordinated planning of regional passenger transport systems within and between central Europe regions. Actions will particularly target the needs of peripheral regions with respect to linkages to the TEN-T network and transport nodes.</p> <p>In the programme context, improving capacities is understood primarily as creating an enabling environment by improving policy, legal and institutional frameworks as well as through developing human resources and strengthening managerial systems. This will be achieved by creating knowledge or exchanging on existing knowledge, developing and implementing strategies, tools and pilot applications for improving regional transport, which are expected to trigger investments in the field. Considering the principle of sustainable development, emphasis shall be put on public transport at regional level and resilience of transport systems. Actions linked to the development of coordinated concepts for smart regional mobility and services (also considering mobility services in the public interest) will foster improved service standards and interoperability.</p>

SO 4.1	To improve planning and coordination of regional passenger transport systems for better connections to national and European transport networks
Supported actions	<p>All the supported actions have to clearly contribute to improving the planning and coordination of regional passenger transport systems in central Europe, thus strengthening the link to national and European transport networks. Multimodal transfer points will be also promoted and developed to streamline the movement of people and to make the passenger transport more sustainable (environmentally-friendly) contributing also to climate change mitigation. It is to be emphasized that the programme will not support actions and/or pilot investments having a negative effect on the environment (e.g. in case of inland navigation the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive have to be respected).</p> <p>Examples of actions supported within specific objective 4.1 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing and implementing strategies (including innovative financing and investment models) to link sustainable passenger transport in particular in peripheral areas to the TEN-T network as well as to the primary, secondary and tertiary transport nodes – Developing and implementing coordinated strategies, tools and pilot applications to improve regional public transport systems for passengers in particular across borders (e.g. commuter connections, interoperability, etc.) – Developing concepts and testing pilot applications for smart regional mobility (e.g. multimodal ticketing, ICT tools, routes on demand, etc.) – Developing coordinated concepts, standards and tools for improved mobility services in the public interest (e.g. for disadvantaged groups, for shrinking regions, etc.)
SO 4.2	To improve coordination among freight transport stakeholders for increasing multimodal environmentally-friendly freight solutions
Challenges	<p>The economic development of industrialised areas is closely linked to efficient multimodal exchange of goods at interregional and international level. The central Europe area shows regional disparities in multimodal accessibility which constrains the competitiveness of several regions. Beside the need for optimisation of individual modes of transport (i.e. making them more environmentally-friendly, safe and energy efficient), their combination in multi-modal freight transport chains is required for a sustainable transport system. There is a lack of shared standards and procedures and, more generally, of a harmonised framework. Deficiencies in terms of coordination among freight transport stakeholders can be observed, which represents a barrier to more streamlined, flexible and sustainable multimodal freight transport.</p>
Expected results	<p>Transnational cooperation aims to improve coordination among existing services, provided by different modes of transport, creating intermodal systems of existing transport facilities, overcoming discontinuity across borders and the lack of infrastructure. Coordinated strategies, concepts and management tools will contribute to improving the multimodality of environmentally-friendly freight transport (e.g. rail, river or sea transport). Multi-modal platforms will be promoted and developed as a potential for consolidating and optimising freight flows. This will enhance the efficiency, reliability and quality of greener freight transport modes and services, thus contributing also to trade facilitation.</p>

SO 4.2	To improve coordination among freight transport stakeholders for increasing multimodal environmentally-friendly freight solutions
Expected results	<p>Such a coordinated approach will pave the way for designing future infrastructure in a sustainable manner and a more effective transportation of goods to and across central European regions.</p> <p>The main result envisaged can be summarised as: <i>“Improved coordination among freight transport stakeholders for increasing multimodal environmentally-friendly freight solutions in central Europe achieved through transnational cooperation”</i>.</p>
Supported actions	<p>The supported actions shall build on transnational cooperation in order to improve coordination and cooperation between freight transport actors as well as enhance capacities in multimodal logistics management. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of coordinated strategies, concepts and tools also in terms of harmonised standards and procedures for strengthening multimodality and the environmental sustainability of freight transport. Actions are further contributing to the improvement and testing of freight transport services and logistics planning, including pilot applications which are supposed to trigger investments in the field. If relevant, actions should link to the TEN-T core network corridor and the rail freight corridor initiatives in order to create positive synergies.</p> <p>All supported actions will clearly contribute to improving coordination among freight transport stakeholders, thereby increasing multimodal environmentally-friendly freight solutions which are also further fostering climate change mitigation in central Europe.</p> <p>Examples of actions supported within specific objective 4.2 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing and implementing coordinated strategies (including innovative financing and investment models) for strengthening the multimodality of environmentally-friendly freight transport systems (e.g. rail, river, or sea transport) – Developing and implementing coordination and collaboration mechanisms between multimodal freight transport actors – Developing and implementing coordinated concepts, management tools and services aimed at increasing the share of environmentally friendly logistics through optimised freight transport chains (e.g. multimodal transnational freight transport flows) – Developing and testing coordinated strategies and concepts for “greening” the last mile of freight transport (e.g. logistics planning)

Priority axis 4	
Main target groups	<p>Individuals and/or organisations positively affected by the activities and results of operations, though not necessarily being directly involved in the operation. They include public and private actors, such as institutions responsible for planning and managing regional transport networks, public transport operators, providers and operators of freight transport and logistics services, commercial customers of freight transport systems, institutions planning and managing freight transport, infrastructure providers and other local or regional (freight) transport actors, additionally all population groups which can benefit from improved regional passenger transport services (e.g. commuters, tourists, etc.) and freight transport.</p>
Beneficiaries ⁹	<p>All legal personalities that can contribute to improved regional passenger and freight transport. They comprise among others local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, enterprises, public transport operators including operators of multimodal logistics hub, infrastructure providers, regional transport associations, regional innovation agencies, NGOs, financing institutions, education and training organisations as well as universities and research institutes.</p>
Specific territories targeted	<p>The supported actions can be implemented throughout the cooperation area. Emphasis will be put on peripheral areas showing weak links to TEN-T corridors and transport nodes and areas showing deficiencies in terms of multimodal accessibility for freight transport, which can profit from the exchange with - and learn from - more advanced regions. Simultaneously, regions which already show an advanced degree of connectivity to the TEN-T network and/or an advanced status of multimodal freight transport will be further strengthened as consequence of improving their implementation capacities (e.g. ICT tools, smart regional mobility services, logistic concepts, investment preparation, etc.). All actions will thereby need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of the respective targeted areas.</p>

⁹ project partners benefitting from programme funds and implementing activities within the project