



**OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
EASTERN POLAND 2014–2020**

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Table of contents

List of abbreviations	4
1. PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY AND ACHIEVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND TERRITORIAL COHESION	7
1.1 PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY AND ACHIEVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND TERRITORIAL COHESION	7
JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THEMATIC OBJECTIVES AND INVESTMENT PRIORITIES	15
1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION	17
2. PRIORITY AXES	19
2.1 PRIORITY AXIS I ENTREPRENEURIAL EASTERN POLAND	19
2.2 PRIORITY AXIS II MODERN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE.....	32
2.3 PRIORITY AXIS III SUPRA-REGIONAL RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE	41
2.4 PRIORITY AXIS IV TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	46
3. FINANCIAL PLAN.....	49
4. INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL APPROACH	53
4.1 THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE PROGRAMME	53
4.2 APPLICATION OF THE INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL APPROACH	53
4.3 THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION	54
5. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION.....	57
6. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF AREAS AFFECTED BY SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS	58
7. INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM	59
7.1 INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION	59
7.2 MEASURES INVOLVING THE RELEVANT PARTNERS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME	59
8. COORDINATION SYSTEM	64
8.1 COORDINATION OF INTERVENTION IN EASTERN POLAND IN THE YEARS 2014-2020	64
8.2 COMPLEMENTARITY OF INVESTMENT PRIORITIES UNDER OP EP WITH MEASURES OF OTHER OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF THE 2014-2020 FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE	64
9. EX ANTE CONDITIONALITIES.....	69
9.1 IDENTIFICATION OF EX ANTE CONDITIONALITIES FOR THE PROGRAMME AND ASSESSMENT OF THEIR FULFILLMENT.....	69
9.2 DESCRIPTION OF MEASURES TO FULFIL EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES, RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND TIMETABLE.....	78
10. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS FOR BENEFICIARIES	81
11. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES	83
11.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	83
11.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND NON-DISCRIMINATION.....	83
11.3 EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN	84

11.4 OTHER HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO THE PROGRAMME	86
12. ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS	87
12.1 LIST OF MAJOR PROJECTS.....	87
12.2 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME.....	87
12.3 RELEVANT PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME.....	88
13. ANNEXES.....	90
1. EX-ANTE EVALUATION REPORT WITH EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	90
2. FULFILMENT OF EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES FOR THE EUROPEAN FUNDS FOR 2014-2020, ALONG WITH ACTION PLAN.....	90
3. INFORMATION ON THE PROCEDURE FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	90
4. DIAGNOSIS OF CHALLENGES, NEEDS AND CAPACITY OF AREAS COVERED BY OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME EASTERN POLAND 2014-2020	90

List of abbreviations

R&D – research and development

CI – Common Indicators (common indicators referring to the support from ERDF according to the list appended to the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EC) No 1301/2013 of 17 December 2013)

CPR – Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EC) No 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013 (General Regulation)

CSR – Country Specific Recommendations (Council Recommendation on the National Reform Programme 2013 of Poland)

TO – thematic objective

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

EAFRD – European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

ESF – European Social Fund

ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds

ENPI – European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument

ESPON – European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion

ETC – European Territorial Cooperation

CSO – Central Statistical Office

AA – Audit Authority

CA – Certifying Authority

FI – financial instruments

BEI – business environment institutions

MA – Managing Authority

LGU – local government unit

EC – European Commission

KIS – key implementation stage

NSS – national smart specialisations

MC – Monitoring Committee

NRP – National Reform Programme

NSDC – National Spatial Development Concept 2030

MEGA – Metropolitan European Growth Areas

MID – Ministry of Infrastructure and Development

UFA – Urban Functional Area

MRD – Ministry of Regional Development

SME – small and medium-sized enterprises

ASI – Area of Strategic Intervention

PARP – Polish Agency for Enterprise Development

IP – investment priority

GDP – gross domestic product

OP I&E – Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014–2020

OP ID – Operational Programme Intelligent Development 2014–2020

OP DP – Operational Programme Digital Poland 2014–2020

OP EP – Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014–2020

OP DEP – Operational Programme Development of Eastern Poland 2007–2013

OP KED – Operational Programme Knowledge-Education-Development 2014–2020

OP TA – Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014–2020

PP – “Position of the Commission Services on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in POLAND for the period 2014-2020”

CP – cohesion policy

EP – Eastern Poland

SIEE – Strategy for innovation and effectiveness of the economy

SL 2014 – Central IT system supporting the implementation of EU funds in the period 2014–2020 and covering other systems constituting its components

SEIA – strategic environmental impact assessment

NDS – National Development Strategy 2020

SSED EP – Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020

EUSBSR – EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

DDPA – detailed description of priority axes

ICT – information and communication technologies

EU – European Union

PA – Partnership Agreement

GVA – gross value added

IITA – indicator of intermodal transport accessibility

CSF – Common Strategic Framework

ITI – Integrated Territorial Investment

INTRODUCTION

The macroregion of Eastern Poland, comprising Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeships, is a consistent area with the lowest level of economic development in Poland and one of the lowest in the European Union. The problems that affect the socio-economic situation and development prospects of this region are largely of a structural nature, being a consequence of historical circumstances. They are further negatively reinforced by the effects of its peripheral location on the external border of the European Union, across which even less developed areas prevail.

Due to its specific socio-economic situation, **Eastern Poland is a region of particular interest of regional policy** and it requires undertaking additional measures to bridge the gaps and dynamise development, which has already been included in all key national strategic documents concerning development policy, i.e. *Long-Term National Development Strategy (LTNDS)*, *Medium-Term National Development Strategy (MTNDS)*, *National Strategy of Regional Development (NSRD)* and the *National Spatial Development Concept (NSDC)*.

The nature and scale of challenges facing the macroregion in the context of changing national, European and global circumstances have resulted in a need to continue and intensify public action aimed at effective use of the internal capacity of the macroregion and at overcoming barriers that hinder and prevent its development processes. It should be noted that these measures constitute an important element of the state development policy focused on building strong, competitive and innovative regions.

According to the content of the Partnership Agreement, Eastern Poland is one of the areas of national strategic interventions in which measures will be undertaken with the co-financing from CSF 2014–2020 under all national operational programmes, five regional programmes and some ETC and ENPI programmes. Additional funds for supporting development and the competitive position of Eastern Poland will be allocated under this Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014–2020 (OP EP).

OP EP is an additional financial support instrument for economic and social development dedicated only for five voivodeships of Eastern Poland, i.e. Lubelskie, Podlaskie, Podkarpackie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeships. It will reinforce (the synergy effect) and complement (in line with the principle of intervention complementarity) the impact of support provided under regional and national operational programmes of the EU cohesion policy that ensure funding for fundamental development projects.

1. PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY AND ACHIEVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY AND ACHIEVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

The voivodeships of **Eastern Poland are still one of the least developed** (one of the lowest GDP per capita in the EU27)¹ **and least competitive regions in the European Union.**² This is due to two major reasons:

- 1) Low labour productivity resulting, to a significant extent, from a traditional structure of the economy dominated by inefficient agriculture and from low viability of other sectors of the economy. Low efficiency of those sectors is due to low innovation and infrastructural underdevelopment, including in particular low transport accessibility of the macroregion,
- 2) Labour market problems: conglomerate of challenges connected with unfavourable demographic processes, i.e. ageing of the society and depopulation, and economic migration – mainly of young people, educated residents of the macroregion, etc.

According to the analysis conducted as part of an updated *Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020*,³ the macroregion contributed to generating national GDP in 2010 at the level of 15.1% and this value was lower than in 2002 by 0.8 p.p. In comparison to the rest of the country, the macroregion is increasing its development gap. The results of GDP projection included in the Strategy show that with the current negative trends continuing, the macroregion will increase its development gap as opposed to national figures if no effective measures are undertaken in order to dynamise development processes.

The development orientations and priorities of the macroregion Eastern Poland are determined in the medium-term perspective based on the ***Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020*** (SED EP).

The strategic vision for Eastern Poland developed in the process of actions aimed at updating the Strategy is focused on three development opportunities that may have the greatest contribution to improving labour productivity and consequently to strengthening the development and competitive position of the macroregion in the medium term. These opportunities involve:

- 1) **Systematic improvement of the innovation level of the macroregion economy based on endogenous leading economic specialisations;**
- 2) **Activation of the labour force and improving the quality of human capital;**
- 3) **Development of strong socio-economic links with more developed environment, which essentially depends on an integrated and effective infrastructure of external and internal transport links, as well as on complex and modernised energy infrastructure.**

¹ After Bulgaria and Romania, deemed less developed countries, joined the EU in 2007, the voivodeships of Eastern Poland were still among the 20 poorest regions of the European Union. This proves they are underdeveloped.

² According to the Regional Competitiveness Index prepared by the European Commission in 2010, among 271 regions covered by the study, the voivodeships of Eastern Poland rank between 211st and 233rd. Survey results have been presented in two papers prepared by the European Commission: 1) Annoni P., Kozovska K., *EU regional competitiveness index (RCI) 2010*, Joint Research Center EC; 2) Dijkstra L., Annoni P., Kozovska K., *A New Regional Competitiveness Index: Theory, Methods and Findings*, DG Regio Working Paper, 2/2011. According to the most recent EU Regional Competitiveness Index – RCI 2013, the voivodeships of Eastern Poland slightly improved their status and ranked between 204th and 230th out of the 262 regions under analysis.

³ The updated Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020, adopted the Council of Ministers on 11 July 2013.

Taking into consideration the diagnosed challenges and potentials of Eastern Poland macroregion, **the main objective of the intervention under the Programme in 2014–2020 will be improving the competitiveness and innovation of Eastern Poland macroregion.**

The objective will be achieved by focusing Programme measures on:

- Supporting SMEs in terms of innovation activity;
- Establishing conditions conducive to creation of SMEs in Eastern Poland;
- Creation of new business models to internationalise SME activity;
- Support for improving the efficiency of transport systems and sustainable transport of voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas;
- Enhancing accessibility of the macroregion in terms of its transport infrastructure.

The Programme is focused on the above-mentioned measures in order to create a sustainable basis for the development of regional competitiveness. Its source may be speeding up the process of introducing and spreading innovations and technical–organisational progress, cooperation and networking, including with partners from outside the macroregion, and seeking to establish international contacts. An important aspect of regional competitiveness is also a modern transport infrastructure increasing transport accessibility, both in respect of internal cohesion, as well as external accessibility. Improving accessibility results in an effective use of endogenous resources of regions, such as e.g. human capital. Low-carbon public transport results in improvement of the quality of life and the condition of the environment.

Creation of an additional operational programme for Eastern Poland is an essential element of implementation of the SSED EP. OP Eastern Poland, assuming the utilisation of the potential created in the years 2007–2013, also under OP DEP (oriented mostly on the construction and development of technical infrastructure), shifts the focus of support towards measures addressing entrepreneurs. The supraregional nature of the Programme envisages the implementation of projects requiring cooperation of a number of entities from different regions, e.g. in the form of cooperation links or consortia. Intervention under thematic objectives 4 and 7 is highly selective, as it focuses on selected investments connected with undertakings implemented under other programmes (both regional and national) and undertakings having an impact on the entire macroregion.

Entrepreneurship and innovation

Programme intervention in respect of entrepreneurship support will be in conformity with the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy priority, i.e. **smart and socially inclusive growth**. A flagship initiative of Europe 2020 Strategy, important for the scope of Programme intervention regarding the improvement of competitiveness of enterprises from Eastern Poland, is mainly the *Industrial Policy for the Globalisation*, the main assumptions of which are focused on improving the business environment, especially with reference to SMEs, and supporting the development of strong and sustainable industrial base prepared for competing in international markets.

In respect of the proposed support, the Programme responds to Commission propositions concerning funding priorities for CSF funds (PP) under the thematic objective referring to improving competitiveness of SMEs. At the same time, the designed intervention will contribute to increasing the effectiveness proposed in this document through entrepreneurship and innovations, especially by facilitating economic application of new ideas and supporting new enterprises. What is more, the measures to be undertaken under the Programme in respect of TO 3 are in line with CSR/PP, namely with supporting structural changes in the economy by developing new or improving the existing business models in SMEs to promote international expansion of Polish enterprises.

At the same time, by supporting measures planned under TO 3, the Programme will contribute to the implementation of National Development Strategy 2020 objectives. Supporting internationalisation

and cooperation links between SMEs in Eastern Poland, OP EP will contribute to achieving an NDS specific objective, i.e. **increasing the efficiency of the economy**. Thus, the proposed intervention responds to the following measures defined in the NDS:

- Developing export of goods and services (II.1.4), i.a. by providing assistance in the development of instruments supporting the involvement of Polish enterprises on international markets;
- Increasing the use of innovative solutions (II.3.4).

In line with SSED EP, **increasing the level of innovation of economies of Eastern Poland** is a key strategic challenge for systematic strengthening of the competitive position of the macroregion, both in Poland and abroad. Therefore, the Strategy recommends implementing measures consisting in:

- Supporting the development and implementation of innovative solutions;
- Improving the framework conditions for innovative activity by increasing access of enterprises to capital, and by creating a system of financial incentives for innovative activity as well as by strengthening the consultancy system;
- Supporting the establishment of innovative enterprises and creation of new high quality jobs;
- Supporting the development of modern technologies.

In terms of entrepreneurship development, Eastern Poland clearly lags behind when compared to Polish standards. In 2011 there were only 36.3 active enterprises per 1,000 population of the macroregion.⁴ At that time the national average, at the level of 46.3, was significantly higher.

The condition of macroregion's enterprises is unfavourable in comparison with national trends. This is proven by revenue which is clearly lower than the national average. In 2011 the average revenue of Eastern Polish enterprises was PLN 1.4 million, whereas the national average was significantly higher and amounted to PLN 2.1 million. Relatively low revenue is accompanied by investment outlays below the national average. In 2011 the average investment per enterprise in the macroregion was about PLN 69,000 and Poland-wide this value amounted to PLN 90,000.

The relatively poor condition of entrepreneurship in Eastern Poland is also confirmed in a synthetic overview based on a compound entrepreneurship indicator developed by PARP.⁵ In this ranking, three voivodeships of Eastern Poland – Lubelskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Podkarpackie, occupy the lowest positions. Podlaskie Voivodeship ranks twelfth nation-wide, not far ahead of Lubuskie Voivodeship. Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship ranks seventh nation-wide and stands out from the rest of the macroregion in this context. Improvement of the chances for development of Eastern Poland's entrepreneurship will primarily require increased investment outlays of small and medium-sized enterprises, especially in the area of innovation. As a result, the revenue of these enterprises as well as their profitability are expected to improve.

From the perspective of the development potential of the macroregion, a constant outflow of its population to other regions of Poland or abroad is an unfavourable condition. For many years, the migration balance has remained negative. In the period 2002–2012, as a result of migration to different parts of the country, the region lost a total of 145,000 people. The biggest migration outflow was observed in Lubelskie Voivodeship (-2.4%), Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship (-2) and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (-1.9%); the figures were slightly lower for Podlaskie Voivodeship (-1.6%) and Podkarpackie Voivodeship (-1.1%). The international migration balance was also negative

⁴ In accordance with CSO standards "non-financial entities involved in economic activity" were included.

⁵ Tarnawa A., Zadura-Lichota P. *Raport o stanie sektora małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw w Polsce w latach 2010–2011* [Report on the condition of small and medium-sized enterprises in Poland in the years 2010–2011], Warsaw: PARP, p. 210.

and in the years 2002–2012 amounted to -18,000 people.⁶ This problem concerns mainly well-educated persons (in particular aged 25–34).

This group accounts for almost a half of the negative net migration in Eastern Poland. According to available analyses, these migrations result mainly from a less attractive labour market in the macroregion and better career development prospects in the most developed metropolises in Poland and abroad. Additionally, migration outflow is a barrier for regional development potential, if only because it is usually the young and well-educated people who decide to migrate.⁷ Therefore, it is necessary to counteract migration through measures aimed at establishing conditions conducive to creation and development of enterprises in Eastern Poland. The aim of this support should mainly consist in removing the barriers preventing young people from starting their own businesses in the macroregion and counteracting brain drain and economic migration.

Increasing the scale of export is one of the most important challenges for the macroregion's economy. International trade in Eastern Poland is definitely less intensive than in other regions of the country. In 2009 the value of export from the macroregion was almost USD 10.5 billion, which constituted only 9% of national exports. Even lower was the value of import: it amounted to USD 7.3 billion, i.e. 5.6% of national imports.⁸ Higher share of export means that the foreign trade balance was positive, which may be considered an advantage of the macroregion (generally in Poland the balance of trade is negative).

The value of export per capita in Eastern Poland in 2009 was almost USD 1,300, which was 2.4 times less than the national average, i.e. above USD 3,000. The lowest export per capita was found in Lubelskie Voivodeship (USD 900), Podlaskie Voivodeship (USD 1,000) and Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship (USD 1,200). Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Podkarpackie Voivodeships exceeded the regional average (USD 1,500 and USD 1,700, respectively). Relatively low level of international trade, also in relation to GDP, is one of the manifestations of the macroregion's poor position in the European and global economic networks. Nevertheless, there are companies and whole branches in the macroregion which have significant export achievements, for example the macroregion makes a big contribution to the national export under the category "other transport equipment" (where the Aviation Valley has a lot to offer).

The major identified barriers that hinder access of Eastern Poland SMEs to foreign markets are: unawareness of the benefits of internationalisation of activity and unfamiliarity with the situation on foreign markets (and of customers' needs). In addition, the major barriers also include: inability to effectively select marketing mix instruments on foreign markets, absence of a stable access to resources or ability to optimise supplies (in the context of foreign competition), and lack of developed export strategies that would ensure long-term and stable vision of foreign trade of enterprises.

Voivodeships of Eastern Poland are characterised by lower level of innovation than the national average. This results in lower labour productivity which affects the competitiveness and investment attractiveness of the macroregion. In the study on regional innovation potential covering all EU27 regions, the voivodeships of Eastern Poland were classified as low innovation regions, capable of absorbing innovation generated elsewhere rather than generating breakthrough innovation.⁹ These findings were confirmed also in the typology of regional innovation developed by European Spatial

⁶ Cf. e.g. Zdrojewski E.Z., Guzińska M. (2012) *Regionalne zróżnicowanie sald migracji w Polsce (1999–2009)* [Regional differentiation of migration balance in Poland (1999–2009)] in: Kaczmarczyk P., Lesińska M. (eds.) *Krajobrazy migracyjne Polski* [Poland's migration landscapes]. Warsaw: Centre of Migration Research of the Warsaw University, pp. 163–186.

⁷ Miszczuk A., Smętkowski M., Płoszaj A., Celińska-Janowicz D., *Aktualne problemy demograficzne regionu Polski wschodniej* [Current demographic problems of Eastern Poland region], Raporty i Analizy EUROREG 5/2010, p. 6.

⁸ Information on international trade stem from the expert report: Komornicki T., Szejgiec B. (2010) *Handel zagraniczny. Znaczenie dla gospodarki Polski Wschodniej* [International trade and its importance for Eastern Poland], Warsaw: Ministry of Regional Development, p. 54.

⁹ DG Regio, European Commission, 2010.

Planning Observation Network (ESPON) which recognises voivodeships of Eastern Poland as regions with imitative innovation profile.¹⁰ For the macroregion's SMEs that are incapable of implementing complex and capital-intensive research and investment projects, consisting in absorption of advanced technologies, industrial design in a wide sense may be one of the few (or possibly the only) form of introducing innovation and the greatest opportunity for a fast increase in competitiveness of products and services. Industrial design provides a number of methods, tools and techniques that may be applied at different stages of the production process in order to create innovative products and services.

Insufficient activity of enterprises in the area of innovation stems to some extent from the fact that companies pursue a very limited degree of cooperation with other entities (both other companies and non-commercial institutes) concerning innovation in business. In Eastern Poland this unfavourable trend is more dominant than in other parts of the country. In 2012, 5.5% of Polish industrial enterprises declared that they were active in innovation-related cooperation. In four of the macroregion's voivodeships the value of the indicator was even lower (4% in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, 4.8% in Podlaskie Voivodeship, 4.9% in Lubelskie Voivodeship and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship). The situation is different in the case of enterprises from the services sector. On a national scale, 3.5% of such Polish companies declared cooperation in the area of innovation in 2011. Two voivodeships of Eastern Poland had a definitely lower result (2.3% in Podlaskie Voivodeship and 2.4% in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship), whereas Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Lubelskie and Podkarpackie Voivodeships were closer to the national average (3.4–3.6%).¹¹

An important element stimulating the development of entrepreneurship are measures aimed at the development of supraregional cooperation links, particularly under cluster initiatives. In 2012 in Eastern Poland there were 72 cluster initiatives, which constitutes over 35% of the total number of such undertakings in the country.¹² There is potential in the macroregion for the creation and reinforcement of cooperation links across regional borders, both within the macroregion and outside it.

Supraregional cooperation links may be successful *inter alia* among SMEs from the tourism sector, which is a smart specialisation common for all Eastern Poland regions. The macroregion enjoys high tourism potential that envisages a number of assets, both natural and man-made. This endogenous potential may constitute a good source of economic development. So far, these assets have been used towards further improvement of economic development of the macroregion, in a systemic way and as a well-thought-through and mutually interlinked product offer, to a very limited extent.

Spatial accessibility and transport infrastructure

Programme intervention in the field of transport infrastructure will be in line with the implementation of Europe 2020 priority defined as *sustainable growth – promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy*, including the flagship initiative *Resource efficient Europe*.

Additionally, the planned intervention is also in line with implementation of National Development Strategy 2020, contributing to better transport accessibility in respect of the access to labour markets and increased transport efficiency by means of modernisation and rebuilding transport connections for the purpose of moderating the traffic on roads passing through voivodeship cities of Eastern Poland.

Removing infrastructural barriers, in addition to support for raising the level of innovation, enhancing the quality of human capital and mobilising the resources in the labour market, is deemed a key

¹⁰ *Knowledge – Innovation – Territory*, ESPON, 2012.

¹¹ *Innovation activity of enterprises*, CSO, 2014.

¹² Data from cluster map of Polish Agency for Enterprise Development: www.pi.gov.pl/PARP/data/klastry.

strategic challenge in the Strategy in terms of systematic strengthening of competitive position of Eastern Poland in the country and abroad. Therefore, the Strategy recommends implementing measures consisting in:

- Increasing transport accessibility of voivodeship capital cities, including in functional areas of labour markets;
- Developing transport connections between major centres of Eastern Poland;
- Developing low-carbon urban and agglomeration transport in major urban centres.

Large cities, especially metropolises, are currently of key importance for development, both economic and social, concentrating the population, economic, scientific and cultural potential.¹³ Metropolization of development is a global phenomenon, visible also in Poland.¹⁴ The capitals of Eastern Poland voivodeships are relatively undeveloped in comparison with the largest Polish cities, and even more so in comparison with European cities. In the classification of European metropolises drawn up in 2005 under the ESPON programme, none of the Eastern Poland's capitals was classified as a Metropolitan European Growth Area (MEGA).¹⁵ Warsaw was classified as third category MEGA, while Katowice and its agglomeration, Krakow, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Tri-city and Wrocław were classified as fourth category MEGAs, which is the lowest rank. One of the measures reflecting the weaker rank of Eastern Poland cities is the concentration of GDP generated by voivodeship capital cities of the macroregion and their surrounding regions in relation to regional GDP, which is lower than the national average.¹⁶

Despite relative weakness, it should be noted that voivodeship capital cities are crucial for development of the macroregion as they constitute centres of concentration of economic, administrative and cultural functions. They are the main destinations of work commuters and key centres of higher rank public services.

At the same time their competitive position – connected, among others, with concentration of highest-quality human resources – is subject to stiff competition for human capital from major Polish metropolitan areas, such as: Warsaw, Krakow or and Tri-city, as well as from foreign centres.

In this context, also the **development of public transport**¹⁷ is highly important, particularly in the macroregion's main centres and their functional areas. Public transport is an important factor for building the metropolitan potential of the regional capitals of Eastern Poland. It also has a pro-environmental added value. In the recent years the regional capitals of Eastern Poland made considerable investment in the development of public transport – those projects were implemented mostly under programmes financed from Operational Programme Development of Eastern Poland 2007–2013 (the value of projects implemented in the five capitals was almost PLN 2.1 billion). Still, further investments are necessary. The strategies for the development of Białystok, Kielce, Lublin, Olsztyn and Rzeszów suggest that there is still need to develop public transport, also in the context of environmental protection and the shift to low-carbon economy.

Collective urban transport in Eastern Poland is still based mainly on a bus transport system. The structure of vehicle age is very important to using this type of transport. Despite acquisitions of fleet, also using EU funds, in 2011 in many Eastern Poland cities there were mostly vehicles over 10 years old. Compared to other Polish cities with a similar FUA population, i.e. Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Toruń,

¹³ Cf.: Sassen S. (1991) *The Global City*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁴ Cf. e.g.: Jałowiecki B. (2005) *Polskie miasta w procesie metropolizacji [Polish cities in the process of metropolization]*, No 1(19), *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, pp. 5–15.

¹⁵ ESPON Project 1.1.1. (2005) *Potentials for polycentric development. Potentials for polycentric development in Europe*, NORDREGIO, Stockholm, <http://www.espon.lu/online/documentation/projects/thematic/>.

¹⁶ CSO, *Gross domestic product. National accounts in 2011*, Katowice 2013, table 14, data for NTS3.

¹⁷ Then R. (2012) *Transport publiczny jako element polityki zrównoważonego rozwoju [Public transport as an element of sustainable development]* pp. 129–150. *Zarządzanie i Edukacja*, No 84, September–October 2012.

Radom and Opole, the situation of voivodeship centres of Eastern Poland, especially Rzeszów and Olsztyn, is unfavourable. Only Opole had a comparably worse structure of vehicle age, while in all other cities the share of buses that were above 10 years old was lower than in Eastern Poland cities. The situation of Eastern Poland capitals was similarly unfavourable in terms of bus fleet engine types. In Lublin, Olsztyn, Rzeszów and Kielce about 20% of their fleet were vehicles which did not meet any Euro emission norms (which means these were high-emission vehicles), while the lowest Euro norms 1–4 were met by a half of the bus fleet of voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland. This means that a reduction of air pollution from urban transport remains a pressing problem.¹⁸

What is more, it was indicated in SSED EP that a considerable barrier for a full exploitation of endogenous potentials of the macroregion is **poor inter-regional accessibility** of this area, demonstrated mainly by insufficient accessibility of voivodeship centres. This is proven i.a. by low levels of potential accessibility indicators, both in the case of multimodal and traffic version.¹⁹ In 2010, the value of inter-branch transport accessibility indicator (ITAI) in the voivodeships of eastern macroregion were the lowest in the country. A similar negative situation can be seen based on the indicator which takes only transport accessibility into consideration. It should be emphasised that an insufficiently developed and poorly integrated transport infrastructure hinders the transfer of *know-how* and makes it difficult to strengthen the functional ties between Eastern Poland and centres from outside of the macroregion, serving development diffusion.²⁰

One of the important factors influencing the low position of the majority of the macroregion's cities in the national urban network is their poor **transport accessibility**. Despite positive changes in this respect, resulting from investments co-funded from EU funds since 2004, road and railway infrastructure connecting the capitals of Eastern Poland voivodeships with the most important national centres requires further development.

Half of the population of Eastern Poland live within the isochrone of 60 minutes from voivodeship capital cities, which often corresponds to the size of labour market, and approximately 55% of all enterprises of the macroregion, 70% of which are large enterprises, have their registered offices there. Olsztyn, Białystok, Lublin, Rzeszów and Kielce form large labour market in territorial terms. Their strong influence is also proven by the fact that the percentage of people commuting to voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland is rarely below 25%. Similar conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of traffic on exit roads and the congestion level during morning rush hours. Despite significant differences in the congestion of road systems of individual Eastern Poland cities, related to everyday commuting to work, in terms of total traffic the centres with the highest congestion are voivodeship capital cities. Down the administrative and settlement hierarchy, the reach of labour market influence decreases: subregional cities are relatively small and separate labour markets (i.e. commuter centres), while powiat capital cities of Eastern Poland have no such functions.

As a result of measures taken so far under the 2007–2013 perspective, particularly those connected with A4 motorway (Krakow–Rzeszów–State Border) and expressway S7 (Gdańsk–Warsaw–Krakow), some voivodeship capital cities and selected areas of Eastern Poland recorded an improvement in transport accessibility of strong national economic centres, such as Warsaw, Tri-city and Krakow. The most visible effect of shortening car travel time in the years 2004–2013 took place between Rzeszów

¹⁸ Information about the structure and Euro norms for the fleet on the basis of an expert opinion: Rosik P. (2013). *Analiza potrzeb inwestycyjnych i uzasadnienie założeń operacyjnych programu dla Polski Wschodniej na lata 2014–2020 w obszarze transport miejski* [Analysis of investment needs and justification of the operational premises of the programme for Eastern Poland for years 2014–2020 in the area of urban transport], Warsaw, Ministry of Regional Development, pp. 73–76.

¹⁹ Detailed information on the methodology in respect of these indicators may be found e.g. in: Komornicki T., Śleszyński P., Rosik P., Pomianowski W. (2010) *Dostępność przestrzenna jako przesłanka kształtowania polskiej polityki transportowej* [Spatial accessibility as a premise for shaping Polish transport policy], Bulletin of the Committee for Spatial Economy and Regional Planning, No 241. Warsaw: Committee for Spatial Economy and Regional Planning, Polish Academy of Sciences, p. 167.

²⁰ Śleszyński P., Czapiewski K., Kozak M., *Znaczenia ośrodków miejskich oraz ich hierarchicznych powiązań dla regionalnego i lokalnego rozwoju ekonomicznego i społecznego Polski Wschodniej* [The significance of urban centres and their hierarchic links for economic and social development of Eastern Poland at regional and local level], Warsaw 2011.

and Krakow (over 30 minutes per 100 km) thanks to construction of A4 motorway. Also the travel time between Kielce and Warsaw decreased significantly (19.5 minutes per 100 km) due to investments at S7 expressway. The completed sections of expressways resulted *inter alia* in spatial expansion of the labour markets of voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland. The greatest improvement in this respect occurred in the case of Kielce which, thanks to S7 expressway, influences not only Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, but also the southern part of Mazowieckie Voivodeship – up to Radom borders. Podkarpackie Voivodeship was also affected to a significant extent, as the labour markets of Krakow and Rzeszów merged in spatial terms (thanks to A4 motorway). The influence of Rzeszów extended to cover eastern regions of the voivodeship and Przemyśl city. in Podlaskie Voivodeship, the labour markets of Białystok and Łomża merged in spatial terms (thanks to investments along S8 expressway). The influence of other investments co-funded with cohesion policy funds is less pronounced; it contributes to improvement of transport accessibility on a local scale, corresponding to the nature of particular investment projects.

Poor intra-regional connections of **rail transport**, especially as regards accessibility of the voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, as well as insufficient extra-regional connections hinder diffusion of the drivers of development, limit opportunities for development of economic cooperation within the macroregion and contribute towards economic marginalisation in relation to the whole country.

The main cause of this situation is the lack of coherent infrastructure and unsatisfactory technical condition of the infrastructure resulting from the investment gap in the form of comprehensive modernisation projects. Therefore, the investments implemented will consist mainly in improving the condition of existing railway lines to ensure increased standard of the infrastructure operation and use.

Lessons learnt from the implementation of OP DEP 2007–2013

The following part describes the most important conclusions and recommendations from evaluation studies, analyses and experience of the institutions involved in Programme implementation, which have been used towards designing OP EP. They concern:

- **The positive impact of the cohesion policy on socio-economic development of Eastern Poland.** EU funds have already had a significant impact on economic growth, investment activity and the labour market. It is an important argument in favour of continuing providing support dedicated to Eastern Poland;
- The need to **strengthen the mechanisms of coordination, complementarity and synergy** of interventions in Eastern Poland. For this reason, in the 2014–2020 perspective solutions will be created to allow coordination of all processes, from intervention planning to verification of its effects;
- **The need for increasing the share of direct support for enterprises**, which has been taken into account in OP EP structure;
- **Support to entities covered by a cluster initiative** with a view to improving their competitiveness and innovation;
- **Initial positive effects of urban transport projects** implemented in voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland due to the increase in the number of people travelling by means of urban transport in recent years (2011–2012). Further support for transport infrastructure in voivodeship capital cities may contribute to entrenching this positive trend and improvement in terms of low carbon urban transport thanks to interventions under axis II of OP EP.

Full evaluation of the effects of OP EP implementation as an additional instrument of support from structural funds that contributes to socio-economic development of the macroregion will be possible once Programme implementation is completed.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THEMATIC OBJECTIVES AND INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

The *Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020* provides the basis for the choice of thematic objectives implemented under the Programme and takes into consideration both conclusions drawn in the diagnosis of the situation and development trends of this area, as well as broad European and national conditionalities. The objectives and scope of OP support for Eastern Poland are at the same time a response to selected development challenges outlined in draft Partnership Agreement (PA) referring to five voivodeships in the macroregion. OP EP will focus on the creation of conditions conducive to establishment of innovative SMEs and enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises. The Programme will also envisage investments contributing to improvement of transport accessibility of voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas as the centres for diffusion of economic growth and increasing internal cohesion and external accessibility of the macroregion, which determine the improvement of Eastern Poland's competitiveness.

The cohesion policy for the years 2014–2020 is characterised by thematic concentration and coordination of EU funds which, by 2020, will lead European economies to the path of smart, sustainable and socially inclusive economic growth.²¹

Taking into account the challenges and potentials of Eastern Poland macroregion diagnosed in the *Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020*, OP EP – according to the principle of selectivity and concentration – will be focused on thematic objectives 3, 4 and 7.

Table 1. Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Thematic objective	Investment priority	Justification for the choice
3. Strengthening SME competitiveness by:	3a Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing efficiency through entrepreneurship and innovations, especially by facilitating making commercial use of new ideas and supporting the creation of new enterprises (PP). 2. Building an effective environment supporting enterprises and contributing to innovations and entrepreneurship (PP).
	3b Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing international activity of Polish enterprises and increase in foreign trade by developing new business models (PP).

²¹ Rogut A., Piasecki B, *Analiza potrzeb inwestycyjnych i rekomendacje odnośnie założeń operacyjnych programu dla Polski Wschodniej na lata 2014-2020 w obszarze Celu tematycznego 1 Wspieranie badań naukowych, rozwoju technologicznego i innowacji z uwzględnieniem Celu tematycznego 3 Podnoszenie konkurencyjności MŚP, sektora rolnego oraz sektora rybołówstwa i akwakultury polityki spójności na lata 2014–2020* [Analysis of investment needs and recommendations regarding operational assumptions of the programme for Eastern Poland for the years 2014–2020 under Thematic objective 1: Supporting research, technological development and innovations, taking into consideration Thematic objective 3: Increasing competitiveness of SME, agricultural sector, fisheries and aquaculture sector of the cohesion policy for the years 2014–2020], Part I: Expert opinion commissioned by the MRD, 2013, p. 6.

	<p>3c Supporting the creation and the extension of advanced capacities for product and service development;</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing productivity through entrepreneurship and innovation (PP). 2. Increasing aptitude for innovation (product, process, marketing, management and organisational innovations) among SMEs (PP). 3. Fostering cooperation in innovation implementation (SIEE).
<p>4. Supporting the shift to low-carbon economy in all sectors by:</p>	<p>4e Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and climate change mitigation-relevant adaptation measures;</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need to develop sustainable transport, improve its efficiency and eliminate capacity deficiencies in the functioning of major network infrastructures, including the development of environmentally friendly transport systems and promoting sustainable mobility in voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland and their functional areas (PP) in line with SSED EP, etc. 2. The need to raise the effectiveness of transport systems of voivodeship capital cities in Eastern Poland and their functional areas.
<p>7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures by:</p>	<p>7b Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes;</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing the competitiveness of the economy by investing in TEN-T road network and linking secondary and tertiary nodes with TEN-T infrastructure (PP). 2. Implementation of SSED EP objective concerning increasing transport accessibility of voivodeships capital cities, including in functional areas of labour markets. 3. Low level of internal and external transport accessibility of the macroregion. 4. The need to strengthen internal transport consistency of Eastern Poland.
	<p>7d Developing and rehabilitating comprehensive, high quality and interoperable railway systems, and promoting noise-reduction measures;</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing complex, high quality and interoperable railway systems, especially by investing in TEN-T railway network and linking secondary and tertiary nodes with TEN-T infrastructure (PP). 2. Performance of SSED EP tasks concerning the improvement of internal coherence and overcoming barriers connected with the peripheral location of Eastern Poland.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014–2020 is a national operational programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

In line with the Partnership Agreement, the allocation of ERDF funds for OP EP amounts to EUR 2 billion.

The assumed division of funds into thematic objectives under OP EP results particularly from:

- The assumed Programme intervention logic, which will contribute to achievement of the OP EP major objective – increase in competitiveness and innovation, and tackling other identified challenges, needs and development potentials of Eastern Poland macroregion;
- The directions of measure for Eastern Poland defined by the SSED EP, the scope and complementarity of support for Eastern Poland ASI in other national and regional operational programmes;
- Characteristics of projects, taking into consideration their cost;
- Minimum levels of concentration of support (so-called ring-fencing) from the cohesion policy determined by the European Commission that have an impact on the division of financial resources into different thematic objectives and (indirectly) operational programmes.

Table 2. Logical matrix of programme investment strategy

Priority axis	Fund	EU support – EUR	Share of EU support in total OP budget (%)	TO	IP	Specific objectives of investment priorities	Common and Programme-specific output indicators for which a target value has been defined
I	ERDF	719,439,927	35.97	3	3a	Higher number of innovative start-ups in Eastern Poland.	Share of innovation-active enterprises in Eastern Poland [%]
					3b	Increased activity of SMEs from Eastern Poland on international markets.	Revenue of SMEs from Eastern Poland from sales of products, goods and materials for export
					3c	Increased activity of SMEs from Eastern Poland in innovative activity.	Investment outlays on innovative activity (enterprises from industry and services sectors) in Eastern Poland in 2013–2023
II	ERDF	440,110,395	45.81	4	4e	Improved use of urban transport in voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas.	Number of passenger transport services by means of urban transport in the voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland
	ERDF	476,045,696		7	7b	Increased accessibility of voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas in terms of road infrastructure.	Indicator of road accessibility of Eastern Poland (on the basis of ITAI)
III	ERDF	330,406,722	16.52	7	7d	Increased accessibility of Eastern Poland in terms of railway infrastructure.	Indicator of railway accessibility of Eastern Poland (on the basis of ITAI)
IV	ERDF	33,997,261	1.70	N/A	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Efficient management and implementation of the Programme and effective use of the funds under OP EP. 2. Efficient and correct preparation and implementation of projects by the Programme beneficiaries. 3. Efficient information and promotion system under the Programme. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual average number of training forms per one employee of an institution of the EF implementation system. 2. Assessment of the usefulness of the training forms for beneficiaries.
Total	ERDF	2,000,000,000	100				

2. PRIORITY AXES

2.1 PRIORITY AXIS I ENTREPRENEURIAL EASTERN POLAND

The scope of intervention of priority axis I covers thematic objective 3, investment priorities:

3a Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators;

3b Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation;

3c Supporting the creation and the extension of advanced capacities for product and service development.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 3A

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Higher number of innovative start-ups in Eastern Poland.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Thanks to the designed support, conditions conducive to setting up and developing innovative and technology-oriented SMEs (start-ups) will be created in the macroregion. Thus, the macroregion will have an offer for young and entrepreneurial people from the macroregion and from outside of it regarding the development of their business ideas and setting up new businesses (start-ups) in Eastern Poland.

The aim of this support should mainly consist in removing the barriers preventing young people from starting their own businesses in the macroregion.

The proposed measures will promote setting up innovative SMEs and the “culture of innovation.” They will also contribute to increasing the share of companies operating in high/medium technology sectors in the region.

Table 3. Programme-specific result indicators for the specific objective of IP 3a

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Share of innovation-active enterprises in Eastern Poland [%]	[%]	less developed regions	16.0	2013	17.7	CSO	once a year

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE OF UNDERTAKINGS

Start-up platforms for the new ideas

Support will be provided through a comprehensive instrument under the name of *Start-up platforms for the new ideas*. Its purpose is to support the development of innovative start-ups based on new ideas.

The offer of the Start-up platforms for the new ideas will be addressed at people below 35 in particular to higher education graduates and students of the last years of the studies willing to develop their ideas and establish and develop own start-up companies in Eastern Poland on the basis of an idea or concept submitted to the Start-up platform.

The instrument assumes the consecutive (sequential) measures, i.e.:

- Initial idea assessment and provision of individual advisory support,
- Support for the development of a business idea and start-up company strategy,
- Support for the development of new innovative start-up companies' activity in the macroregion.

The Start-up platforms for the new ideas will apply a formula of a comprehensive idea acceleration programme implemented with the involvement of entities acting to support entrepreneurship.

The Start-up platforms (stage 1) will provide individual support intended for innovative start-ups set up on the basis of an idea that received a positive opinion and was qualified for support under the Start-up platform. In order to adjust the scope of services to individual needs of a given start-up, the incubation process will start with preparing a detailed incubation programme. This support will cover *inter alia*: access to a workspace, ensuring sectoral mentoring (individual and group mentoring sessions), coaching (e.g. business, marketing, financial, technology coaching) and other services essential to developing a new business idea, such as testing and verifying ideas and concepts, until a successful business model is prepared.

Subsequently those start-up companies that are ready to enter the market with a product developed within a Start-up platform will be able to obtain support for the development of their activity in the macroregion

Innovation centres will be responsible for the animation, i.e. preparation and then management of the Start-up platforms. The mandatory role of a Start-up platform animator will be limited to the first stage alone, i.e. support in creating a market-verified business model. The implementation of the support instrument in the form of a Start-up platforms for the new ideas will require a networking cooperation between institutional partners, from local and regional authorities, to support institutions, the financial sector, to the business environment. A Start-up platform animator will ensure a relevant system for monitoring incubation progress and economic activity of enterprises after they exit the Start-up platform, based on data gathered during his/her own work and information provided by supported start-ups.

In the framework of co-financing, which start-ups will receive at the next stage, they will be able to purchase the necessary services (according to their own individual needs), to implement the business model they came up with (demand-driven approach).

Under the measure, a pilot project will be implemented aimed at testing the assumed model of *Start-up platforms for the new ideas* and identification of additional solutions that may be used during OP EP implementation.

The pilot project will be financed on the basis of EUR 20 million. The European Commission and the Managing Authority committed to analyse the efficiency of the pilot project once it is completed. The conclusions from the pilot project will be taken into consideration by the Managing Authority and the European Commission when assessing the possibilities for and advisability of further measure implementation in the current or changed shape. If the assumptions of the pilot project and project

selection criteria of the Start-up platform are met, the measure will be continued to be implemented with the defined allocation, output and result indicators. If a measure implementation model changes and it gives rise to a necessity to change the allocation or if certain conditions are not met, the Managing Authority will shift all or a part of funds to other measures under TO 3. Analysis of the pilot project is planned to be carried out before 2018.

As a result of the pilot project, it is expected that 60 enterprises would be supported, of which 30 are supposed to enter the market. When assessing the pilot project, the EC and the MA will consider the following criteria: achievement of output indicators of the pilot stage, capacity to attract potential initiators, innovation level of the supported business ideas, partnership structure, including the financial, technical and organisational potential necessary to implement the project, quality and availability of the services provided by BEIs which are platform members and absence of serious implementation problems that would considerably affect achievement of the planned measure objectives. Any other difficulties that do not affect achievement of measure objectives significantly should be analysed in detail in order to work out proposals to improve the quality and efficiency of this instrument in subsequent years of OP EP implementation.

Continuation of the measure's implementation following the completion of the pilot stage will require a formal consent from the European Commission.

Types of beneficiaries

- Innovation centres (such as science and technology parks, science parks, technology parks, technology incubators) as animators of Start-up platforms for the new ideas.
- Start-ups companies (set up under Start-up platforms for the new ideas).

Implementation area

Implementation of undertakings under IP 3a covers the area of Eastern Poland, indicated in the Partnership Agreement as the area of strategic intervention (ASI) of the State.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Under IP 3a, co-financing will cover projects selected under the contest procedure. It concerns the process of selecting Start-up platforms as well as support for the development of innovative start-ups based on new ideas.

Support for the development of activity of a start-up after exiting the Start-up platform will be provided under a contest procedure under an ongoing call for ideas, common for all Platforms, in order to standardise the evaluated applications.

The measure will be implemented in accordance with unified standards adopted at the macroregional level, for all Eastern Poland voivodeships.

In order to ensure the implementation of measures under the *Start-up platforms*, a business and social partnership will have to be built around them, involving experienced entrepreneurs (as experts and mentors), local authorities, universities, NGOs and other institutions from the BEI sector offering their specialist services depending on the needs of the final recipients (authors of the ideas). One of the key evaluation criteria during the stage of Start-up platform selection will be the quality of business support services and attractiveness of Start-up platform partners' offer, especially of local government units. Evaluation of the quality of those services will be based on clearly defined criteria, such as meeting the service provision standards defined at the national or international level,

qualifications of the personnel providing advisory services, availability of these services. In addition, evaluation will cover the financial, technical and organisational capacity necessary for project implementation. These criteria will be defined in detail at the DDPA level of the Operational Programme.

The Innovation Centre being the animator of a Start-up platform should have a strategy of its activity development.

The Start-up platforms for the new ideas do not form a separate institutional entity, but will apply a formula of a comprehensive idea acceleration programme implemented with the involvement of existing entities, acting to support entrepreneurship. The measure will not finance new infrastructural investments.

The support will not cover current operations of business environment institutions.

Under the Start-up platforms, a mechanism will be provided to monitor business ideas put into practice (e.g. by establishing checkpoints), whose results will determine further support options from the OP EP budget for start-ups. Under the mechanism, evaluation criteria will be defined at the stage of signing the co-financing agreement with the beneficiary.

Innovation will be the basic evaluation criterion for a business project. Evaluation of innovation and its expected results will be based on the principles described in the Oslo Manual.²²

By signing the co-financing agreements, beneficiaries commit to pursue economic activity in the macroregion for at least the project durability period, pursuant to Article 71 of the General Regulation.

Preference will be given to projects matching the scope of regional smart specialisations common for at least two voivodeships of Eastern Poland.

Project selection will take place as a result of evaluation of individual undertakings on the basis of criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation criteria will be non-discriminatory, transparent and will take into account the general rules laid down in Articles 7 and 8 of the General Regulation, i.e. gender equality, non-discrimination, sustainable development and promotion of green and sustainable economy.

PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The use of financial instruments should be considered in the case of supporting investments that are potentially financial viable. The decision to make a contribution to a financial instrument from an Operational Programme will be preceded by an ex ante evaluation in accordance with Article 37 of the General Regulation.

PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Under IP 3a no major projects are envisaged.

²² *Oslo Manual. Guidelines for Collecting and Interpreting Innovation Data*, OECD, Eurostat.

Table 4. Common and programme-specific output indicators for IP 3a

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Number of supported enterprises (CI1), of which:	items	ERDF	less developed regions	1,820	SL 2014	once a year
1a	Number of supported new enterprises (CI5)	items	ERDF	less developed regions	1,820	SL 2014	once a year
1b.	Number of enterprises which obtain non-financial support (CI4)	items	ERDF	less developed regions	1,820	SL 2014	once a year
1c	Number of enterprises which obtain grants (CI2)	items	ERDF	less developed regions	910	SL 2014	once a year

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 3B

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Increased activity of SMEs from Eastern Poland on international markets.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Increased activity of SMEs from Eastern Poland on international markets will translate into accelerated accumulation of knowledge and experience as well as into economies of scale (the “learning-by-exporting” mechanism).²³

Developing a new business model with a view to internationalisation of SME activity will be one of the important factors that may improve their broadly understood efficiency and competitiveness, owing to both a reduction of production costs and increased revenue, as well as increased scope of absorption of technical and organisational progress. Expanding international activity of SMEs thanks to the proposed support will translate into gaining independence from inadequate level of internal demand, which is a significant limitation to the development of economic activity in Eastern Poland. The number of small and medium-sized enterprises from the eastern macroregion that engage in international trade is relatively low. Only 14.4% of Polish exporters have their registered seats in Eastern Poland. International trade in the macroregion is definitely less intensive than in other regions of the country.

²³ J. Cieślík, *Internacjonalizacja polskich przedsiębiorstw [Internationalization of Polish enterprises]*, Kozminski University, 2010.

Thus, an expected result of the support offered under IP 3b will consist in increased revenue from sales of products, goods and materials for export from Eastern Poland and an increase in the number of intensive exporters in the macroregion.

Table 5. Programme-specific result indicators for the specific objective of IP 3b

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Revenue of SMEs from Eastern Poland from sales of products, goods and materials for export (2014 prices)	PLN million	less developed regions	15,595	2012	21,460	CSO	once a year

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF UNDERTAKINGS UNDER IP 3B

Supporting the internationalisation of SMEs

Support will be aimed at increased international economic activity of SMEs from the macroregion of Eastern Poland. It will cover comprehensive, individual, tailor-made measures related to devising and preparing the implementation of a new business model of a SME on the basis of internationalisation of its activity. The support will consist, *inter alia*, in providing advice regarding foreign market entry strategies, target market analysis, presenting possible and optimal distribution channels, selecting and establishing contacts with foreign partners.

SMEs will also be able to obtain support for their participation in domestic and international economic and sectoral fairs, unless it is an element essential to implementation of the strategy developed as part of the measure.

The instrument is an advisory activity, based on the demand model, which is to support entrepreneurs in diagnosing their internationalisation capacity, preparing the enterprise and its offer for export and actively seeking business partners with a view to introducing products or services onto selected foreign markets.

In particular, the support will be targeted at SMEs initiating activity related to internationalisation on a given market.

Types of beneficiaries

SMEs

Implementation area

Implementation of undertakings under IP 3b covers the area of Eastern Poland, indicated in the Partnership Agreement as the area of strategic intervention (ASI) of the State.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Under IP 3b, co-financing will cover projects selected under the contest procedure.

The measure will be implemented in accordance with unified standards adopted at the macroregional level, for all Eastern Poland voivodeships.

The possible participation of SMEs in domestic and international fairs and economic missions will form an integral and non-dominant part of a project connected with devising and preparing a new business model for implementation.

Preference will be given to projects matching the scope of regional smart specialisations common for two voivodeships of Eastern Poland.

Project selection will take place as a result of evaluation of individual undertakings on the basis of criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation criteria will be non-discriminatory, transparent and will take into account the general rules laid down in Articles 7 and 8 of the General Regulation, i.e. gender equality, non-discrimination, sustainable development and promotion of green and sustainable economy.

PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Financial instruments are not to be used under IP 3b.

PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Under IP 3b no major projects are envisaged.

Table 6. Common and programme-specific output indicators for IP 3b

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Number of supported enterprises (CI1), of which:	items	ERDF	less developed regions	870	SL 2014	once a year
1a.	Number of enterprises which obtain grants (CI2)	items	ERDF	less developed regions	870	SL 2014	once a year
2.	Private investments that supplement public support for enterprises (grants) (CI6)	EUR	ERDF	less developed regions	24,530,000	SL 2014	once a year
3.	The number of enterprises that received support for internationalisation of their activity	items	ERDF	less developed regions	870	SL 2014	once a year

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 3C

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Increased activity of SMEs from Eastern Poland in innovative activity.

EXPECTED RESULTS

For the macroregion's companies that are incapable of implementing complex and capital-intensive research and investment projects, consisting in absorption of advanced technologies, widely understood projects related to innovation introduction may constitute the greatest opportunity for a fast increase in competitiveness and introduction of innovative products and services.

The functioning of the macroregion's economy is not determined by individual enterprises, but mainly by entire industries and sectors. Value added of the designed support will thus concern not only their actors, but also the local environment thanks to so-called spillover effects.

The planned intervention will contribute to an improvement in the competitive position of the Eastern Poland macroregion (so-called ultimate competitiveness that reflects the level of socio-economic development achieved by a given economy, which largely depends on the efficiency of means of production use), *inter alia* by increasing the level of its innovation thanks to projects that envisage introduction of R&D (own or acquired) into production systems, i.e. focused on creating and primarily on using new solutions.

Table 7. Programme-specific result indicators for the specific objective of IP 3c

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Investment outlays on innovative activity (enterprises from industry and services sectors) in Eastern Poland in 2013–2023 (2014 prices)	PLN million	less developed regions	2,857	2013	34,965	CSO	once a year

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF UNDERTAKINGS UNDER IP 3C

Support for supra-regional cooperation ties

The purpose of intervention targeted at SMEs operating in the framework of supra-regional cooperation ties is to enhance their potential in terms of the capacity to implement innovative processes. The measure will focus on supporting the creation of innovative products or services by introducing R&D results by SMEs.

The measure also envisages support for SME cooperation ties in terms of creating and developing network products in areas matching the scope of regional smart specialisations common for at least two voivodeships of Eastern Poland. The projects implemented in this area must be innovative (technology or non-technology innovation).²⁴ A network products should be understood as a market-ready package offer based on a dispersed structure of entities, functioning as a single coherent concept, with a common leading characteristic (brand). Implemented projects will contribute to creating new jobs, particularly jobs that constitute an attractive alternative to employment in agriculture.

Use of design processes by SMEs

The purpose of the measure is to enhance the potential of SMEs from Eastern Poland in terms of sound design management in a company and to popularise industrial design. It is also possible to use other forms of design that result in devising new products and services in the framework of enterprise activity, which would translate into introduction of innovative solutions and enhanced enterprise competitiveness.

The measure under OP EP envisages comprehensive support for SMEs for the use of design processes. The support for SMEs will cover a design audit and development of a design strategy. The strategy will describe the scope of measures necessary to build a brand, a market offer and a communication strategy, and adjustment of internal management processes within the company that relate to design use. Next, the strategy will be used towards implementing the design process. The end result will consist in introduction of innovation onto the market.

Types of beneficiaries

- SMEs
- SME consortia

Implementation area

Implementation of undertakings under IP 3c covers the area of Eastern Poland, indicated in the Partnership Agreement as the area of strategic intervention (ASI) of the State.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS

Under IP 3c, co-financing will cover projects selected under the contest procedure.

The measures will be implemented in accordance with unified standards adopted at the macroregional level, for all Eastern Poland voivodeships. Preference will be given to projects matching the scope of regional smart specialisations common for two voivodeships of Eastern Poland.

Project selection will take place as a result of evaluation of individual undertakings on the basis of criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation criteria will be non-discriminatory, transparent and will take into account the general rules laid down in Articles 7 and 8 of the General Regulation, i.e. gender equality, non-discrimination, sustainable development and promotion of green and sustainable economy.

PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

²⁴ The definition of innovation as in the Oslo Manual, OECD, Eurostat.

The use of financial instruments should be considered in the case of supporting investments that are potentially financial viable. The decision to make a contribution to a financial instrument from an Operational Programme in respect of a measure concerning support for supra-regional cooperation ties will be preceded by an ex ante evaluation in accordance with Article 37 of the General Regulation.

PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Under IP 3c no major projects are envisaged.

Table 8. Common and programme-specific output indicators for IP 3c

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Number of supported enterprises (CI1), of which:	items	ERDF	less developed regions	598	SL 2014	once a year
1a.	Number of enterprises which obtain grants (CI2)	items	ERDF	less developed regions	598	SL 2014	once a year
2.	Private investments that supplement public support for enterprises (grants) (CI6)	EUR	ERDF	less developed regions	285,650,000	SL 2014	once a year
3.	Number of enterprises supported to introduce products new to the company to the market (CI29)	items	ERDF	less developed regions	185	SL 2014	once a year
4.	Employment growth in supported enterprises (CI8)	[FTE]	ERDF	less developed regions	142	SL 2014	once a year
5.	Number of introduced innovations	items	ERDF	less developed regions	285	SL 2014	once a year

Table 9. Performance framework of priority axis I

Indicator type (key implementation stage, financial, product or, where appropriate, result indicator)	No.	Indicator or key implementation stage	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone (2018)	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of indicator relevance
Output indicator	1.	Number of supported enterprises (CI1)	items	ERDF	less developed regions	250	2,260	SL 2014	The indicators refer to the total allocation under axis I
Key implementation stage	2.	Number of supported enterprises in signed co-funding agreements	items	ERDF	less developed regions	430	-	SL 2014	
Financial indicator	3.	Total amount of certified eligible expenditure	EUR	ERDF	less developed regions	150,987,454	846,399,915	SL 2014	

Tables 10–14. Categories of intervention under priority axis I

Fund and category of region: ERDF, less developed regions									
Table 10 Dimension 1 Intervention scope		Table 11 Dimension 2 Form of financing		Table 12 Dimension 3 Territory type		Table 13 Dimension 4 Territorial implementation mechanisms		Table 14 Dimension 6 ESF supplementary theme (ESF only)	
Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)
067	315,196,170	01	719,439,927	07	719,439,927	07	719,439,927	-	-
064	404,243,757							-	-

PLANNED USE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Not applicable.

2.2 PRIORITY AXIS II MODERN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The scope of intervention under priority axis II covers thematic objectives 4 and 7, investment priorities:

4e Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and climate change mitigation-relevant adaptation measures;

7b Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes.

JUSTIFICATION

Cities (especially the largest ones) and their functional areas are the driving force of development of competitiveness of regions and the whole country. They also play a crucial role in stimulating economic, scientific and social growth. It should be noted that voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland have a potential that is sufficient to improve the competitiveness of the entire macroregion. They concentrate both specialised services and the population potential, and are the largest regional labour markets. Support for regional development centres will allow achieving the scale effect taking the form of evolution of the entire macroregion.

One of the important factors influencing the low position of the largest macroregion's cities in the national urban network is their relatively poor transport accessibility. Despite positive changes in this respect, resulting from investments co-funded from EU funds since 2004, the transport infrastructure of the capitals of Eastern Poland voivodeships remains underdeveloped: there are bottlenecks – no connections between cities and the national road network, including TEN-T, absence of bypasses and insufficient capacity of the urban transport network. In the longer perspective, development and modernisation of transport infrastructure will contribute to enhancing work-related and spatial mobility of the population, thus improving accessibility of the labour, science and service markets.

Investments supporting the development of modern transport infrastructure contribute to improving the condition of the environment, especially a reduction on pollutant emissions, thus improving the quality of life of the population as well as increasing the development opportunities of the macroregion. Under priority axis II, investment will be made in the area of creating new or expanding the existing green integrated urban transport networks and improvement of the transport systems of five voivodeship capital cities, i.e. Białystok, Kielce, Lublin, Olsztyn and Rzeszów together with their functional areas or areas of ITI implementation of these cities. Despite considerable investments in urban transport, there is still well-grounded need for continuation of interventions for further improvement of the existing green integrated urban transport networks, in the form of comprehensive projects aimed at improving sustainable urban mobility.

The above measures match the assumptions of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region aimed at reducing the region's remoteness by improving internal and external transport connections (within the region and with other EU territories), enhancing the efficiency of the transport systems and reducing their environmental impact, which is expected to contribute to improving the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region, increasing its accessibility and attractiveness.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 4E

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Increased use of urban transport in voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Sustainable mobility understood as connecting, complementing and streamlining of travels – walking, by bike, tramway, bus, trolleybus, suburban train and long-distance trains – in a city and functional area. Traffic smoothness is improved by investments in both urban transport infrastructure, which give priority to collective transport, and modern organisational solutions, such as ITS. This way, the attractiveness and accessibility of urban space is improved. Better organisation of transport results in lower energy use. A more efficient, functional and harmonised transport infrastructure contributes to lower air pollution, lower traffic noise and congestion, bringing about positive health effects and higher quality of life of the population.

Allocation of funds to support the development of existing or creation of new green public transport networks in the voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas will contribute to higher sustainable mobility of the macroregion's population, improved living conditions in Eastern Poland, better ecological condition of cities and thus increased economic activity in each region. A tangible result of the implementation of undertakings will consist in increased effectiveness of the transport systems of the voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas, expressed by improved quality of urban transport services and its increased attractiveness, which is expected to translate into an increased role of urban transport in the above-mentioned area. It is assumed that the areas not serviced before will be included into the existing urban transport system while the potential of public transport for passengers' handling will be used to the maximum possible extent.

In order to create a sustainable transport system it is necessary to support forms of transport alternative to individual transport. Therefore, priority will be given to projects which will contribute towards the following results:

- Shorter travel time by existing urban transport (bus, trolleybus, tramway) and smoother traffic in congested areas;
- Infrastructural integration of the green forms of rail transport (trains, tramways) and other forms of transport (trolleybuses, buses) operating in the urban and suburban area;
- Convenient connection of public transport with individual use of bicycles, and pedestrian paths (so-called eco-mobility chains) and transportation by car;
- Promotion of environmentally friendly sustainable public transport system (i.a. by purchasing low-carbon fleet/rolling stock: buses, trolleybuses and tramways, adapted to the needs of disabled persons).

The implementation of IP 4e will contribute to supporting the metropolitan functions of five voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, being the supra-regional catalysts of development processes.

Table 15. Programme-specific result indicators for the specific objective of IP 4e

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Number of passenger transport services by means of urban transport in the voivodeship cities of Eastern Poland	million	less developed regions	298.89	2012	330	CSO	once a year

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF UNDERTAKINGS UNDER IP 4E

Under IP 4e, comprehensive projects relating to creation of new or extension of the existing green integrated urban transport networks will be implemented, including i.a. tasks such as:

- Construction/reconstruction of bus, trolleybus and tramway networks, and acquisition of low-carbon fleet/rolling stock;
- Construction/reconstruction of the necessary infrastructure for the needs of urban transport, including intermodal transport interchanges;
- Implementation of new, development and modernization of the already existing telematics systems for urban transport.

Support under IP 4e will be provided in accordance with the horizontal principle of sustainable development. The obligatory requirement for the implementation of the above investments under OP EP will be covering them with an ITI Strategy and preparation by the beneficiaries the low-carbon economy plans which would take mobility into account.

In addition, it will be possible to finance projects that consist in preparing documentation necessary for the implementation of investments under IP 4e of OP EP.

Types of beneficiaries

- Voivodeship capital cities, including in cooperation with local government units located within the functional area of an Eastern Poland voivodeship capital city or an ITI implementation area of a voivodeship capital city/other entities;
- Unions and associations of local government units located within the functional area of an Eastern Poland voivodeship capital city or an ITI implementation area of a voivodeship capital city of Eastern Poland incorporating the voivodeship capital city.

Implementation area

Implementation of undertakings under IP 4e covers five voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, i.e. Białystok, Kielce, Lublin, Olsztyn and Rzeszów, as well as their functional areas or ITI implementation areas of the above-mentioned cities.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Projects included in an ITI Strategy will be eligible for co-financing within IP 4e and will be selected under a non-contest procedure.

Pursuant to the Partnership Agreement, the contest procedure may be abandoned only in justified cases, i.e. where the contest procedure is ineffective (including in terms of costs) or impossible to apply. In the case of IP 4e, it is previous direct identification of given projects in the ITI strategy, in a way ensuring their transparent identification and a positive opinion on undertakings from relevant MA, on the basis of criteria defined by the MA.

- Investments in urban transport under IP 4e will contribute to achieving low-carbon and sustainable mobility in cities. They must result from plans developed by local authorities, with references to switching to greener and more sustainable transport systems in cities. Low-carbon economy plans or ITI Strategies with elements of sustainable urban mobility plans may serve as such documents.²⁵ These documents should define local conditions and directions of planned interventions in a given area, including references to or pointing to relevant valid documents covering issues such as e.g. collective passenger transport, non-motorised transport, use of intelligent transport systems (ITS), urban logistics, road traffic safety in cities, introduction of new use patterns, and promotion of clean and energy-efficient vehicles (clean fuels and vehicles).
- Investments in roads may be financed only as an essential and supplementary element of a project that concerns a sustainable urban mobility system. **Independent projects concerning road infrastructure alone will not be accepted under IP 4e.**
- Acquisition of low-carbon fleet/rolling stock must be accompanied by investments in necessary infrastructure for the sake of proper functioning of sustainable mobility.
- If plans, strategic documents or cost-benefit analyses referring to sustainable urban mobility prove it is necessary to purchase buses, acquisition of vehicles that meet at least Euro VI exhaust gas emission norm is allowed. Priority will be given to acquisition of vehicles with alternative types of propulsion (electric, hybrid, biofuels, hydrogen-fuelled, etc.).
- In cities with rail transport (tramways), preference will be given to development of this collective transport branch through investments in rail infrastructure and rolling stock.

The non-contest procedure will be applied in the first place, but application of the contest procedure is also possible.

Project selection will take place as a result of evaluation of individual undertakings on the basis of criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation criteria will be non-discriminatory, transparent and will take into account the general rules laid down in Articles 7 and 8 of the General Regulation, i.e. gender equality, non-discrimination, and sustainable development. Detailed criteria on the environment and climate change will be applied at the level of projects. The categories of selection criteria are laid down in section 11.1 Sustainable development.

PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Financial instruments are not to be used under IP 4e.

PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Implementation of major projects, which will be included in the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) Strategy, is possible.

²⁵ Communication N° COM(2013)913 final on “a concept for Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans”.

Table 16. Common and programme-specific output indicators for IP 4e

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Number of purchased units of the passenger fleet used in public collective urban transport	items	ERDF	less developed regions	270	SL 2014	once a year
2.	Total length of new or modernised urban transport lines	km	ERDF	less developed regions	450	SL 2014	once a year
3.	Number of intelligent transport systems installed	items	ERDF	less developed regions	5	SL 2014	once a year

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 7B

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Increased accessibility of voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas in terms of road infrastructure.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The measures will result in increasing the efficiency level of the transport systems' operation in the voivodeship cities and their functional areas or ITI implementation areas of the above-mentioned voivodeship cities, resulting in a reduction of commuting times. Moreover, increasing transport accessibility of these areas will have a positive effect on the development of competitiveness and will contribute towards stimulating entrepreneurship in the macroregion.

Projects under OP EP will contribute to further improvement of accessibility of voivodeship centres through better connection of voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas with the national road network, including TEN-T, which in turn will allow smoother connection with other voivodeship and subregional centres of the macroregion and of entire Poland. Thus, access to centres that constitute important labour markets will be ensured.

Enhancing transport accessibility of both urban centres and within functional areas will also contribute to increasing of the range of impact of voivodeship capital cities in terms of everyday commuting to work and will allow for greater integration of functional labour markets. It will also ease the burden on roads in congested areas.

The planned support will contribute to establishing conditions for further development of the voivodeship capital cities as the main growth centres in the macroregion.

Direct results of the scope of intervention under analysis will have a supra-regional impact. The implementation of IP 7b will contribute to supporting the metropolitan functions of five voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland being the supra-regional catalysts of development processes.

Table 17. Programme-specific result indicators for the specific objective of IP 7b

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Reporting interval
1.	Indicator of road transport accessibility of Eastern Poland (on the basis of ITAI)	synthetic measure	less developed regions	18.36	2013	23.17	MID	2013, 2023 (and twice during the implementation period)

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF UNDERTAKINGS UNDER IP 7B

Support will be allocated to improving transport systems of five voivodeship cities and their functional areas according to the principles laid down in the Partnership Agreement. It is planned to make investments in national and voivodeship roads within the voivodeship capital cities, ensuring their connection with the national road network, including TEN-T. It is also planned to make investment involving construction/reconstruction of voivodeship roads in functional areas, integrating them with the national road system, including TEN-T networks. The investments envisaged for co-financing under IP 7b will involve the need to improve the parameters of planned road infrastructure in comparison with the initial parameters.

Pursuant to the Partnership Agreement, investments under TO 7 will not cover restoration works and they will not include maintenance works on the existing infrastructure. Capital expenses and current/on-going expenses related to maintaining of the transport infrastructure shall be made in accordance with the Act of 16 December 2005 on financing land transport infrastructure (Journal of Laws, No 267 item 2251, as amended) that specifies the obligations of road managers in terms of repair works, maintenance and protection of the infrastructure.

In addition, it will be possible to finance projects that consist in preparing documentation necessary for the implementation of investments under IP 7b of OP EP.

Investments under IP 7b will be implemented in accordance with the principle of sustainable development.

Types of beneficiaries

- Voivodeship capital cities, including in cooperation with local government units located within the functional area of a voivodeship capital city or an ITI implementation area of a voivodeship capital city/General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways;
- Unions and associations of local government units located within the functional area of a voivodeship capital city or an ITI implementation area of a voivodeship capital city incorporating the voivodeship capital city;
- Local government units at the voivodeship level within the framework of the macroregion.

Implementation area

Implementation of undertakings under IP 7b covers five voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, i.e. Białystok, Kielce, Lublin, Olsztyn and Rzeszów, as well as their functional areas or ITI implementation areas of the above-mentioned cities.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

In the framework of IP 7b projects will be selected for co-financing under a contest procedure.

- Co-financing will cover projects that consist in construction/reconstruction of roads ensuring their connection with the TEN-T nodes.
- In the case of joint investments by a voivodeship capital city and a voivodeship, it will be necessary for them to conclude an agreement stating the detailed principles of joint project implementation.
- Preference will be given to undertakings that contribute to reducing congestion, removing bottlenecks in road infrastructure and improving safety as well as the condition of the environment for roads covered by Programme's co-funding. The projects will have to display economic efficiency.

Project selection will take place as a result of evaluation of individual undertakings on the basis of criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation criteria will be non-discriminatory, transparent and will take into account the general rules laid down in Articles 7 and 8 of the General Regulation, i.e. gender equality, non-discrimination, and sustainable development. Preference will be given to undertakings covered by Territorial Contracts.

Detailed criteria on the environment and climate change will be applied at the level of projects. The categories of selection criteria are laid down in the Programme in section 11.1 Sustainable development.

PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Financial instruments are not to be used under IP 7b.

PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Implementation of major projects selected under the contest procedure is possible.

Table 18. Common and programme-specific output indicators for IP 7b

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Total length of new roads (CI 13)	km	ERDF	less developed regions	12	SL 2014	once a year
2.	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads (CI 14)	km	ERDF	less developed regions	70	SL 2014	once a year

Table 19. Performance framework of priority axis II

Indicator type (key implementation stage, financial, output or, where appropriate, product indicator)	No.	Indicator or key implementation stage	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone (2018)	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of indicator relevance
Output indicator	1.	Total length of new roads (CI13)	km	ERDF	less developed regions	0	12	SL 2014	The indicator corresponds to 16% of axis II allocation
	2.	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads (CI 14)	km	ERDF	less developed regions	0	70	SL 2014	The indicator corresponds to 36% of axis II allocation
Key implementation stage	3.	Total length of reconstructed or modernised roads under signed co-financing agreements	km	ERDF	less developed regions	40	-	SL 2014	KIS refers to IP 7b and corresponds to 52% of axis II allocation
Financial indicator	4.	Total amount of certified eligible expenditure	EUR	ERDF	less developed regions	212,528,934	1,077,830,696	SL 2014	The indicators refers to the total allocation under axis II (IP 4e and 7b)

Tables 20-24. Categories of intervention under priority axis II

Fund and category of region: ERDF, less developed regions									
Table 20 Dimension 1 Intervention scope		Table 21 Dimension 2 Form of financing		Table 22 Dimension 3 Territory type		Table 23 Dimension 4 Territorial implementation mechanisms		Table 24 Dimension 6 ESF supplementary theme (ESF only)	
Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)
043	418,104,875.00	01	916,156,091.00	07	916,156,091.00	07	916,156,091.00	-	-
044	22,005,520.00							-	-
030	142,813,709.00							-	-
034	333,231,987.00							-	-

PLANNED USE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Not applicable.

2.3 PRIORITY AXIS III SUPRA-REGIONAL RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

The scope of intervention of priority axis III covers thematic objective 7, investment priority:

7d Developing and rehabilitating comprehensive, high quality and interoperable railway systems, and promoting noise-reduction measures.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 7D

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Increased accessibility of Eastern Poland in terms of railway infrastructure.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Under IP 7d, projects will be implemented on existing railway lines that make up the Eastern Railway Line that connects voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, in line with the *Implementing document to the Transport Development Strategy by 2020 (with perspective by 2030)*. The procedure for and the scope of the works will depend on the specific nature of a given section, its condition and technical parameters as well as the role and significance in the supra-regional system of railway connections. Among other things, electrification of selected sections of lines and other investments aimed at improving the quality of railway services and increasing speed and permissible maximum axle load are envisaged.

Increasing technical parameters and using advanced solutions as well as replacing obsolete elements of the infrastructure will result in an increased speed of transport on the revitalised, rehabilitated or modernised sections of the railway lines, which will improve railway accessibility within the macroregion.

The planned investments in railway infrastructure will contribute to improving technical parameters of the network, including enhanced capacity, safety level and maximum admissible train speed, thus allowing the development of railway transport and improving its competitiveness towards road transport. Reduced car traffic, being the result of railway transport development in the medium and long run, will contribute to a reduction in pollutant emissions in Eastern Poland macroregion.

Establishing faster connections on the priority sections of railway lines and improving the comfort of travel is expected to ultimately contribute to an increase in the number of passengers. Modernisation of the railway infrastructure will improve the access to the main macroregional and external labour markets, as well as public services located in the voivodeship and subregional centres. Moreover, increasing the speed of transport and modernisation of the infrastructure will create conditions for the development of cargo transport, which will become more cost-effective and efficient.

The above measures match the assumptions of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region aimed at reducing the region's remoteness by improving internal and external transport connections (within the region and with other EU territories), enhancing the efficiency of the transport systems and reducing their environmental impact, which is expected to contribute to improving the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region, increasing its accessibility and attractiveness.

Table 25. Programme-specific result indicators for the specific objective of IP 7d

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Indicator of railway accessibility of Eastern Poland (on the basis of ITAI)	synthetic measure	less developed regions	15.71	2013	23.75	MID	2013, 2023 (and twice during the implementation period)

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF UNDERTAKINGS UNDER IP 7D

The envisaged intervention will focus on strengthening the internal and complementing the external connections in the rail transport of Eastern Poland in accordance with provisions specified in the *Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020*. The basic assumption of the intervention is allocating the funds to investments implemented in the sections which contribute to improving transport accessibility in Eastern Poland and at the same time are important in respect of enhancing macroregional development potentials. The intervention covers investments in the railway infrastructure within and outside the TEN-T network. Depending on the needs, the existing railway and passenger infrastructure of macroregional significance will be revitalised, rehabilitated²⁶ or modernised. Measures which are meant to be carried out will be comprehensive, will lead to long-term improvement of the technical condition and will adapt the infrastructure to the needs of the carrier market (e.g. by increasing the maximum admissible axle load and modernising railway stations) and the passengers (a.o. adaptation to the needs of persons with disabilities).

At the same time, within the envisaged undertakings no rolling stock acquisition will be co-funded.

Implementation of undertakings under OP EP was designed to form an additional element of support, reinforcing the results of investments in railway infrastructure implemented or planned to be implemented under OP I&E 2014–2020. At the same time, investments undertaken under EP OP will be complementary to the scope of intervention within Regional Operation Programmes of the Eastern Poland's voivodeships.

OP EP funds will be used towards supporting investments in line infrastructure: revitalisation, rehabilitation or modernisation of railway lines. In addition, in the case of selected projects construction or reconstruction of overhead catenary systems along with auxiliary infrastructure is envisaged.

The above projects will encompass implementation of investments in point infrastructure (passenger service areas, i.a. stops, shelters, footbridges – along with their adaptation for the needs of persons with reduced mobility, railway crossings and other engineering structures), investments in railway traffic control and investments in passenger information systems.

In justified cases, financing of projects that consist in preparing documentation necessary for the implementation of investments under IP 7d of OP EP 2014–2020 will be possible.

Types of beneficiaries

Railway infrastructure manager: PKP PLK S.A.

²⁶ Rehabilitation is as a process resulting in the achievement of the original construction parameters of existing railway infrastructure facilities combined with the long-term improvement of its quality compared to its current state, in line with the application of the requirements and provisions of Regulation No 1315/2013.

Implementation area

Implementation of undertakings under IP 7d covers the area of Eastern Poland, indicated in the Partnership Agreement as the area of strategic intervention (ASI) of the State.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Under IP 7d co-financing will cover projects selected under the non-contest procedure, in accordance with the criteria laid down in the Implementing Document.

Pursuant to the Partnership Agreement, the full contest procedure may be abandoned only in justified cases, i.e. where the contest procedure is ineffective (including in terms of costs) or impossible to apply. In the case of IP 7d, it is the legal obligation to carry out specific tasks by a given entity or group of entities, resulting from the regulations or strategic documents, in particular in the case of a competence monopoly (the beneficiary of OP EP railway projects is PKP PLK S.A).

Project selection will take place as a result of evaluation of individual undertakings on the basis of criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation criteria will be non-discriminatory, transparent and will take into account the general rules laid down in Articles 7 and 8 of the General Regulation, i.e. gender equality, non-discrimination, and sustainable development. In addition, preference will be given to undertakings covered by Territorial Contracts.

Projects will be evaluated in terms of: location towards the Eastern Railway Line, as indicated in the Implementing Document to the Transport Development Strategy, improvement of railway traffic safety, reduction of transport's environmental impact, reduction of congestion and elimination of transport infrastructure bottlenecks, integration of the transport system, along with economic efficiency.

Detailed criteria on environment and climate change will be applied at the level of projects. The categories of selection criteria are laid down in the Programme under point 11.1 Sustainable development.

PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Financial instruments are not to be used under IP 7d.

PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

A major project planned for implementation under Axis III (listed in Table 46) constitutes an element of the Eastern Railway Line connecting voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, the implementation of which will directly influence the achievement of specific objective IP 7d. Implementation of the project will contribute to significant improvement of technical parameters of the modernized railway line which will lead to an increase in rail transport speed, and therefore will improve the accessibility of the main labour markets in Eastern Poland and public services located in voivodeship and sub-regional centres.

Table 26. Common and programme-specific output indicators for IP 7d

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway lines (CI 12), of which:	km	ERDF	less developed regions	548	SL 2014	once a year
1a	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway lines within TEN-T (CI 12a)	km	ERDF	less developed regions	110	SL 2014	once a year

Table 27. Performance framework of priority axis III

Indicator type (key implementation stage, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	No.	Indicator or key implementation stage	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone (2018)	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator
Output indicator	1.	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway lines (CI 12)	km	ERDF	less developed regions	0	548	SL 2014	The related types of projects account for 100% of allocation under the priority axis III.
Key implementation stage	2.	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway lines in signed contracts on co-financing	km	ERDF	less developed regions	240	-	SL 2014	
Financial indicator ²⁷	3.	Total amount of certified eligible expenditures	EUR	ERDF	less developed regions	55,259,495	388,713,790	SL 2014	

²⁷ Pursuant to provisions of the Regulation 1303/2013 on closure of accounting years, i.e. Article 2(29-30), 79, 84, 137-141, as well as the provisions on final closure of the entire programme, i.a. Article 138 and 141, and pursuant to the provisions of the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 59(2), the expenditure may be certified to the European Commission also after 2013. The assessment of the achievement of the target for the end of 2023 the financial indicator will include also the expenditure certified after 2023 and thus the European Commission will be able to perform the assessment only after the submission of the final closure documents in 2025, including the final report referred to in Article 141 of the General Regulation. The achievement of all other indicators adopted in the performance framework will be assessed based on the data from the final report submitted in 2025.

Tables 28-32: Categories of intervention under priority axis III

Fund and category of region: ERDF, less developed regions									
Table 28 Dimension 1 Intervention scope		Table 29 Dimension 2 Form of financing		Table 30 Dimension 3 Territory type		Table 31 Dimension 4 Territorial implementation mechanisms		Table 32 Dimension 6 ESF supplementary theme (ESF only)	
Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)
025	67,173,598.00	01	330,406,721.00	07	330,406,721.00	07	330,406,721.00	-	-
026	263,233,123.00							-	-

PLANNED USE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Not applicable

2.4 PRIORITY AXIS IV TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Efficient management and implementation of the Programme and effective use of the funds under OP EP.
2. Efficient and correct preparation and implementation of projects by the Programme beneficiaries.
3. Efficient information and promotion system under the Programme.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

1. Optimizing the management and implementation system for Programme's measures and enhancing the administrative capacity of the institutions involved in management and implementation, including monitoring, information, evaluation and control;
2. Enhancing potential of the beneficiaries of the Programme;
3. Propagation of knowledge on supporting the projects from the EU funds among the beneficiaries and society.

Table 33. Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.	Annual average number of training forms per one employee of an institution of the EF implementation system	Number	0.44	2013	2	Monitoring system	Once a year
2.	Assessment of the usefulness of trainings for beneficiaries	Scale 1-5	3.92	2013	4	Surveys	Once a year

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE OF MEASURES

Under priority axis Technical Assistance, measures regarding management and implementation, including monitoring, evaluation, audit and control, as well as measures related to combating of financial fraud to the detriment of the EU and measures consisting in information and promotion of the Programme will be co-financed.

Efficient management and implementation of the Programme and effective use of the funds depend mainly on the administrative capacity of the institutions involved in the implementation of OP EP.

Ensuring comprehensive support and securing adequate staffing and technical facilities for institutions involved in management and implementation is crucial for achieving the assumed objectives. It means targeting the support on raising qualifications of the employees who perform the tasks related to management and implementation, i.e. financing of specialist trainings meeting the needs identified at the level of the Programme implementation (possibility to extend knowledge and upgrade professional qualifications will constitute an additional motivation for employees) and providing the staff involved in implementation of the Programme with optimal technical facilities, i.e. equipment, fittings, materials, as well as tools and information systems. Support under the axis will

consist in meeting the needs related to the institutions' functions in the system, i.e. in meeting the most important needs related to operating costs of the institutions related to implementation of the Programme. The salaries of the employees of the institutions involved in management and implementation will be financed from the Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020.

Moreover, in order to implement OP EP efficiently it is necessary to provide the implementing institutions with content-related support in the form of services necessary for implementation of the Programme, i.e. ensuring support in the field of i.a. advice, translation, public procurement contracts, expert opinions, analyses, studies, opinions and concepts. Measures implemented under the axis will be aimed at supporting the system of monitoring, evaluation, audit and control and the project selection process, as well as organisation of meetings of the Monitoring Committee, working groups and teams allowing for ongoing monitoring and verification of OP EP implementation. Furthermore, Technical Assistance will finance measures aimed at ensuring continuity and smoothness of functioning of the institutions in the transition periods between individual financial perspectives due to the need to undertake measures before the beginning of the eligibility period for the costs under a given perspective and after its conclusion.

Proper preparation of projects by the beneficiaries and their proper implementation will contribute to the effective implementation of the Programme. Therefore, it is necessary to provide support for the beneficiaries as regards preparation and implementation of the projects, i.a. by organising trainings (apart from the beneficiary of railway investments, i.e. PKP PLK, for which the support under Technical Assistance is provided for under Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment).

In order to ensure efficient implementation of the Programme, information and promotion measures will be implemented which will be consistent and compliant with the entire information policy at the level of the Partnership Agreement, i.e. with the *Communication Strategy of the Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020*, the guidelines on information and promotion of operational programmes and the *Communication Strategy of OP EP 2014-2020*.

Under the priority axis, financing will be granted to information and promotion projects supporting the implementation of the Programme, addressed to beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, and, if necessary, to project participants and potential participants. Horizontal information and promotion measures addressed to the general public will be financed from OP TA.

It is also important to implement horizontal policies, such as equal access to information for persons with various disabilities, respect for the environment and cooperation with socio-economic partners.

In accordance with Article 116 of the General Regulation, on the basis of the common communication strategy of the cohesion policy, the Managing Authority will draw up a communication strategy for OP EP, forming a basis for carrying out information and promotion activities for the Programme, subject to approval by the Monitoring Committee.

Support under Technical Assistance of the Programme will be complimentary to the Operational Programme Technical Assistance for the years 2014–2020, taking into account a division of competencies arising from the adopted demarcation line between the programmes.

Beneficiaries

Institutions involved in OP EP implementation

Table 34. Output indicators for axis IV

No.	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data
1.	Number of participants of trainings for institutions	persons	N/A	Monitoring system
2.	Number of evaluations	pcs.	N/A	Monitoring system
3.	Number of participants of trainings for beneficiaries	persons	N/A	Monitoring system
4.	Number of extensive information and promotion measures	pcs.	N/A	Monitoring system
5.	Number of visits to the information portal/website	pcs.	N/A	Monitoring system

Tables 35-37 Categories of intervention

Category of region: less developed regions					
Table 35 Dimension 1 Intervention scope		Table 36 Dimension 2 Form of financing		Table 37 Dimension 3 Territory type	
Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)	Code	Amount (EUR)
0121	22,498,187.00	01	33,997,261.00	07	33,997,261.00
0122	1,999,839.00				
0123	9,499,235.00				

3. FINANCIAL PLAN

Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014-2020 is a national operational programme financed from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

In line with the Partnership Agreement, the allocation of ERDF funds for the Programme amounts to EUR 2,000 million. The minimum level of national financing – estimated on the basis of Article 120 of the General Regulation, providing for the maximum level of co-financing for each priority axis in the less developed regions to be 85% - amounts to EUR 352.9 million at the time of programming. Programme implementation will involve national public and private funds. It is assumed that the final amount of national funds, mainly private funds, at the stage of Programme completion, can be higher, depending on the scope and level of State aid granted under the Programme.²⁸

Certification basis

Total eligible expenditure constitutes the basis for calculating the EU contribution under OP EP.

Categories of regions

The Programme encompasses 5 regions belonging to one category of regions – less developed regions.

Performance reserve

The performance reserve for the Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014-2020 amounts to 6% of its total ERDF allocation. The proportion of the performance reserve by year for each year amounts to (Table 38).

The performance reserve is established for each priority axis of the Programme proportionally to its value, apart from axis IV Technical Assistance, where in accordance with the provisions no performance reserve has been established (by excluding the TA axis, maintaining the required level of the fund in the programme requires an adequate increase of the reserve in the other axes (to 6.1%)).

In the case of priority axis II Modern transport infrastructure, the performance reserve has been divided proportionally between thematic objectives 4 and 7 (table 39).

Thematic concentration

The levels of thematic concentration envisaged in the programme result from the Partnership Agreement and allow to maintain the levels of concentration required by the EU regulations at the level of PA.

²⁸ The provisions of the General Regulation, in particular Article 129, guarantee that regardless of the level of the co-funding rate adopted for the priority axis in Table 39, the value of funds ultimately paid out by the European Commission as at the time of winding up the Programme shall never be higher than the public contribution provided to beneficiaries. Article 130(2) additionally stipulates that in the framework of interim payments, the EC shall always pay out the lower of the two amounts: the amount resulting from multiplying the certification basis from the payment application by the co-financing rate for the priority axis from Table 39 or the amount of public expenditure included in the application. The volume of interim payments will take into account the rules related to the system of annual examination and approval of accounts, which consist inter alia in granting annual advance payments, paying out only 90% of due payments during the year and annual settlement of accounts by balancing the annual advance of paid funds and 10% of retained interim payments.

Table 38. Table presenting the total amount of financial resources envisaged as contribution of each of the funds to the Operational Programme Eastern Poland, by year and category of region, with performance reserve (EUR)

Category of region	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		Total	
	Main allocation ²⁹	Performance reserve														
ERDF less developed regions	228,826,505	14,605,947	242,252,310	15,462,913	256,251,318	16,356,467	269,023,543	17,171,716	281,817,234	17,988,334	294,578,478	18,802,882	307,250,612	19,611,741	1,880,000,000	120,000,000
ERDF total	228,826,505	14,605,947	242,252,310	15,462,913	256,251,318	16,356,467	269,023,543	17,171,716	281,817,234	17,988,334	294,578,478	18,802,882	307,250,612	19,611,741	1,880,000,000	120,000,000
Total	228,826,505	14,605,947	242,252,310	15,462,913	256,251,318	16,356,467	269,023,543	17,171,716	281,817,234	17,988,334	294,578,478	18,802,882	307,250,612	19,611,741	1,880,000,000	120,000,000

²⁹Total allocation less performance reserve

Table 39. Financial plan of the Operational Programme Eastern Poland (EUR)

Axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of EU support – Total eligible cost	EU contribution	National counterpart	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding	Co-financing rate	For information	Main allocation ³⁰		Performance reserve		Share of performance reserve (EU support) in the total amount of EU support for priority axis
						National public funding	National private funding				EIB contribution	EU contribution	National counterpart	EU contribution	
						a	b=c+d			c	d	e=a+b	f=a/e	g	
Axis 1	ERDF	less developed regions	846,399,915	719,439,927	126,959,988	48,539,216	78,420,772	846,399,915	85.0%		675,527,073	119,210,661	43,912,854	7,749,327	6.1%
Axis 2	ERDF	less developed regions	1,077,830,696	916,156,091	161,674,605	161,674,605	0	1,077,830,696	85.0%		860,236,163	151,806,382	55,919,928	9,868,223	6.1%
Axis 3	ERDF	less developed regions	388,713,790	330,406,721	58,307,069	58,307,069	0	388,713,790	85.0%		310,239,503	54,748,148	20,167,218	3,558,921	6.1%
Axis 4	ERDF	less developed regions	39,996,778	33,997,261	5,999,517	5,999,517	0	39,996,778	85.0%		33,997,261	5,999,517	0	0	0.0%
Total	ERDF	less developed regions	2,352,941,179	2,000,000,000	352,941,179	274,520,407	78,420,772	2,352,941,179	85.0%		1,880,000,000	331,764,708	120,000,000	21,176,471	6.0%
Total			2,352,941,179	2,000,000,000	352,941,179	274,520,407	78,420,772	2,352,941,179	85.0%		1,880,000,000	331,764,708	120,000,000	21,176,471	6.0%

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Table 40. Financial plan by priority axis, fund, category of region and thematic objective

Axis	Fund	Category of region	Thematic objective	EU support	National counterpart	Total funding
Axis 1	ERDF	less developed regions	3	719,439,927	126,959,988	846,399,915
Axis 2	ERDF	less developed regions	4	440,110,395	77,666,541	517,776,936
	ERDF	less developed regions	7	476,045,696	84,008,064	560,053,760
Axis 3	ERDF	less developed regions	7	330,406,721	58,307,069	388,713,790
Axis 4	ERDF	less developed regions	Technical Assistance OP EP	33,997,261	5,999,517	39,996,778
Total				2,000,000,000	352,941,179	2,352,941,179

Table 41. Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Proportion of total allocation to the operational programme (%)
II – category 043	167,241,950.1	8.36
II – category 044	8,802,207.9	0.44
III – category 025	26,869,439.2	1.34
III – category 026	105,293,249.2	5.26
Total	308,206,846.4	15.41

4. INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL APPROACH

4.1 THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE PROGRAMME

Voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas

The voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas are the main concentration areas of OP EP territorial intervention (and its effects). Several dimensions of this intervention can be identified. First of all, directing the programme at promoting the competitiveness and innovation of economy results in a significant part of support in this area being provided to the main cities of the macroregion. This is due to the fact that the main cities of macroregion along with their functional areas concentrate a large part of its economic and innovation potential. Secondly, OP EP places particular emphasis on the development of transport accessibility of voivodeship centres. The improvement of transport accessibility at the local level will involve the development of transport network (mainly road network) and public transport systems. In addition, taking into account the environmental requirements during the development of transport network and public transport will have a positive impact on the quality of life and environment in these centres. What is more, through the modernisation and revitalisation of railway infrastructure in the macroregion the potential transport accessibility of voivodeship capital cities will be improved.

Other cities (apart from voivodeship centres)

The effects of OP EP will also be visible in other cities of the macroregion. It will be possible by providing support to enterprises. Measures aimed at strengthening the internal connections and expanding the external connections in the rail transport of Eastern Poland will significantly contribute to the improvement of transport accessibility, particularly of subregional centres.

Rural areas

The Programme implementation will also affect the rural areas. It is estimated that approximately EUR 160 million may be allocated to those areas, in line with the regulations applicable to the ERDF. The impact will be mostly indirect. First of all, the improvement of transport accessibility of voivodeship centres will also increase, to some extent, the accessibility of rural areas that surround these centres; it will apply to both, communication with the capital of the region and the main national metropolises. Due to the modernisation and revitalisation of railway infrastructure, these areas will also have better access to the main labour markets, as well as public services located in voivodeship and subregional centres.

Secondly, the planned support for innovation activity and internationalisation of SMEs will concern also the agri-food sector, which is indicated as one of the macroregional specialisations in the SSED EP. Support in this area will be provided to entities operating in the cities and rural areas. It is expected that, as a result of intervention, the competitiveness of the entire sector will increase, including producers of agricultural products, which in turn will strengthen the foundations of economic development of rural areas.

Thirdly, measures aimed at stimulating the cooperative relations between enterprises for developing the attractive tourist products based on the existing potential will support the transformation of economic structure in rural areas by creating jobs outside the agricultural sector.

4.2 APPLICATION OF THE INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL APPROACH

According to the PA, the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) are one of the instruments increasing the efficiency of ESI Funds through the integration of measures in the territorial dimension.

Under OP EP, the urban dimension will be supported through investments for modern transport infrastructure that are implemented in voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland and their functional areas. OP EP does not provide for the implementation of projects under ITI formula. The funds of the Programme will support the complementary projects resulting from the voivodeship ITI Strategy. The ITI Strategy should specify the intervention areas which envisage the implementation of projects complementary to the projects to be implemented in the ITI formula. With regard to complementary projects resulting from the voivodeship ITI Strategy, the measures that may be supported under OP EP include the following:

- Sustainable, low-carbon urban transport (IP 4e)– construction/reconstruction of bus, trolleybus and tram networks, as well as the purchase of low-carbon vehicles/rolling stock; construction/reconstruction of the infrastructure necessary for urban transport, including intermodal interchanges; implementation of new/extension or modernisation of the existing telematics systems for urban transport;
- Improvement of transport systems of voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas (IP 7b) – investments in national and voivodeship roads within the voivodeship capital cities, ensuring their connection to the national road network, including TEN-T; projects involving construction/reconstruction of voivodeship roads in functional areas, integrating them with the national road system, including TEN-T networks.

The complementary projects will be implemented adequately to the mode of project selection established for the given investment priority. The complementary projects selected under the non-contest procedure, for which the MA of OP EP issued a positive opinion, will be eligible for co-financing. The complementary projects selected under the contest procedure may be given preference during selection for implementation, which will be taken into account in the project selection criteria for selected measures of OP EP.

The identification of the complementary projects in the ITI Strategy does not guarantee that they would be implemented and funded from OP EP resources. While drawing up the voivodeship ITI Strategy, the ITI Association submits the document to the MA OP EP for opinion on investments to be financed from the funds of the Programme. Meeting the project selection criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee by such projects at the stage of selecting the investment to be funded and allocation availability constitute the marginal condition.

One of the conditions to be met to receive support for projects under IP 4e will be requirement for applicants to have low-carbon economy plans. Investments to be financed from OP EP funds will have to be included in the ITI Strategy as projects complementary to those implemented in the ITI formula.

The voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, acting individually or in agreement with other local government units of UFA/other entities in the support areas not covered by the ITI Strategy, can apply for support in line with generally accepted rules.

4.3 THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), adopted by the European Commission in June 2009 at the request of the European Council, is the first macroregional EU strategy.

The Strategy defines three main objectives:

- 1) Save the Sea;
- 2) Connect the Region ;

3) Increase Prosperity.³¹

The Operational Programme Eastern Poland implements mainly the third strategy objective i.e. to increase prosperity. According to the Action Plan for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region³², this objective covers the promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation, trade and growth based on digital technologies, which in turn will contribute to improving the economic competitiveness of the region with respect for the principles of sustainable development.

Through the implementation of measures related to increasing the innovation and entrepreneurship in the macroregion, OP EP will contribute to the achievement of the above-mentioned objective of the EUSBSR. The support will be also provided for interregional cooperation and internationalisation of business activity.

The support for transport infrastructure under the Programme is related to the implementation of the second objective of the EUSBSR, i.e. to connect the region. The intervention under OP EP will concern the improvement of road and railway accessibility of Eastern Poland. The measures will comply with the assumptions of the EUSBSR regarding the improvement of both internal and external transport connections.

The Action Plan for the EUSBSR identifies 17 priority areas (PA). The measures planned under OP EP belong to two priority areas.

PA SME – Promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the growth of SMEs

OP EP will include measures consisting in support for innovation of enterprises in terms of creation of new products and services. Furthermore, the intervention will focus on the creation of new business models and increasing the access of SME from Eastern Poland to innovation-promoting services provided by innovation centres. The projects consisting in creating conditions conducive to establishment of SME through support for development of new business concepts will also be implemented.

The measures will be implemented under axis I (IP 3a, 3b, 3c).

PA Transport

Support will be provided to projects related to road infrastructure in national and voivodeship roads within voivodeship capital cities, ensuring their connection to the national road network, including TEN-T, and investments consisting in construction/reconstruction of voivodeship roads in functional areas, integrating them with the national road system, including TEN-T network. In additions, investments will be carried out in selected existing railway lines covered by the specific concept of integrating the voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, the so-called Eastern Railway Line. The measures will contribute to improvement of transport connections, increasing the efficiency of transport systems and reducing their environmental impact.

The measures will be implemented under axis II (IP 7b) and axis III (7d).

In addition, coordination mechanisms ensuring complementarity between OP EP and EUSBSR will be strengthened by means of establishing enhanced connections between the MA OP EP and institutional structures of the EUSBSR. A representative of the Focal Point for the Priority Area Transport will be invited to the meetings of the MC of OP EP to improve the exchange of information about the measures planned, implemented and monitored under OP EP and the EUSBSR.

Furthermore, mechanisms of coordination between OP EP and the ETC programmes, similar to those used in the years 2007-2013, will be applied also under the 2014-2020 perspective. They include the

³¹Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; Brussels, 23.3.2012, COM(2012) 128 final.

³²According to the draft document from February 2013.

cooperation under the PA Coordination Committee, which consists of representatives of the MA of all operational programmes and the cooperation in the MC of OP EP, which will include a representative of the MA ETC, thus supporting the coordination between projects implemented under individual programmes.

5. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Under OP EP, there will be no measures which focus directly on preventing poverty, discrimination or social exclusion. Intervention under the Programme may indirectly contribute to limiting the above phenomena and mitigating their effects.

6. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF AREAS AFFECTED BY SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS

Due to supra-regional nature of its intervention, the OP EP does not provide for dedicated intervention focused on specific needs of areas affected by unfavourable natural conditions. It is assumed that support granted under OP EP may indirectly contribute to reducing demographic handicaps in the Eastern Poland macroregion.

It is assumed in particular that measures that envisage providing support for start-ups in the macroregion, implemented under Investment Priority 3a, would result in reducing the negative migration balance in Eastern Poland. One of the identified development problems of Eastern Poland, which affects the macroregion's demographic situation, is the permanent outflow of its population to other regions of the country and abroad. This problem concerns mainly holders of university degrees (in particular those aged 25–34). This group accounts for almost a half of the negative net migration in Eastern Poland. The support instrument envisaged under OP EP, i.e. start-up platforms for the new ideas, is aimed at creating conditions conducive to setting up of SMEs in Eastern Poland. The aim of this support should mainly consist in removing the barriers hindering young people from starting their own businesses in the macroregion and counteracting brain drain and labour migration.

7. INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

7.1 INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Table 42. List of institutions involved in the Programme implementation

Authority/institution	Name of authority/institution and department or unit	Head of authority/institution (position or post)
The institution granting the designation	The ministry supporting the minister responsible for regional development, Department of Certification and Designation	Minister responsible for regional development
Managing Authority	The ministry supporting the minister responsible for regional development / Department of Supra-Regional Programmes	Minister responsible for regional development
Certifying Authority	The ministry supporting the minister responsible for regional development / Department of Supra-Regional Programmes	Minister responsible for regional development
Audit Authority	Ministry of Finance, Department for Protection of EU Financial Interests	Minister responsible for public finance
Institution responsible for receiving payments from EC	Ministry of Finance, Paying Authority Department	Minister responsible for public finance

7.2 MEASURES INVOLVING THE RELEVANT PARTNERS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

The institutional system under the Programme corresponds to the institutional system for the cohesion policy, described in the Partnership Agreement.

The Managing Authority is the minister responsible for regional development. The Managing Authority is also the Certifying Authority. The adopted organisational arrangements will ensure the division of functions between the authorities which is required by the regulations. Some tasks will be delegated to Intermediate Bodies, whose roles and functions are defined by relevant inter-institutional arrangements. The Intermediate Bodies under the OP EP will include: the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development and the Centre for EU Transport Projects. When making such a delegation of tasks to IB, the Managing Authority retains, nevertheless, full responsibility for the Programme implementation. If the tasks related to implementation of selected support instruments under the OP EP are entrusted to the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, the Agency will be able to begin their implementation, provided that the measures laid down in the *Action Plan related to preparation of the PARP for implementation of operational programmes*, which constitutes an annex to the Programme, are completed. Until the measures defined in the Plan are implemented, no expenditure under support instruments implemented by the PARP will be certified to the EC.

Intermediate Bodies of Second Level may also be appointed, if necessary. Tasks will be delegated only if it would result in improving Programme implementation effectiveness and efficiency.

The rules of the management, control, monitoring, evaluation, information, promotion and IT systems under the Programme result from the Partnership Agreement and relevant Regulations.

Organisational arrangements and procedures under the PA and individual programmes will ensure independence of the body responsible for designation from the bodies subject to designation (MA/CA) and the appropriate division of functions. In practice, the organisational regulations of the ministry supporting the minister responsible for regional development will ensure independence of the designating body from the MA/CA by means of entrusting the tasks of the designating body to a different organisational unit of the ministry than the organisational unit performing the functions of the MA/CA of OP EP and ensuring that those organisational units are supervised by different, independent members of the ministry management (undersecretaries of state).

The procedures of institutions involved in the Programme implementation will also cover the area of fraud prevention and combating, in line with the requirements of Article 125(4)(c) of Regulation 1303/2013 and the European Commission's *Guidance for Member States and Programme Authorities - Fraud Risk Assessment and Effective and Proportionate Anti-Fraud Measures*. The results of the risk analysis carried out in line with the above Guidance will be taken into account while drawing up the annual Programme control plans.

PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME

In January 2013, the Task Force for preparation of Eastern Poland Programme for 2014-2020 started its work. The first meeting of the Tasks Force was held on 9 January 2013 and involved a discussion on assumptions to the draft Programme for Eastern Poland. The adoption by the Council of Ministers of the *Assumptions to the Partnership Agreement*, which stipulate that the Ministry of Regional Development will perform the role of the Managing Authority for the national operational programmes financed from the Cohesion Policy funds, enabled the formal beginning of work on the preparation of the Programme. The organisation of the working groups, their thematic scope and composition were defined by the Order of the Minister of Regional Development No 4 of 11 February 2013 *on the establishment of Working Groups to support the development of national operational programmes financed under the Cohesion Policy and the coordination of intervention under thematic objectives*. It provided the basis for establishing the **Working Group for preparation of Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014-2020**.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned Order of the Minister of Regional Development, the Working Group consisted of representatives of:

- competent organisational units of the Ministry of Regional Development;
- competent ministers listed in the Assumptions to the Partnership Agreement;
- voivodeship authorities;
- scientific circles;
- experts in fields relevant to the scope of the appropriate operational programme;
- social and economic partners;
- NGOs;
- other entities.

The socio-economic partners that were invited to consulting the Programme provisions³³ were selected on the basis of the following issues:

- thematic area of organisation's activity;

³³ The list of socio-economic partners is presented in Chapter 12.3.

- assessment of institutional capacity, i.e. expertise and experience that guarantee high quality of substantive contribution;
- previous cooperation with MA OP DEP within the framework of the Monitoring Committee of Operational Programme for 2007-2013.

During all meetings of the Task Force and the Working Group, the subsequent version of the programme were presented in great detail, the work schedule for preparing the PA, operational programmes and territorial contracts was discussed, as well as the progress of work and the most important stages of the preparation of the OP EP 2014-2020. The comments sent by the members of the Task Force and the Group were also examined.

The comments submitted by the members of the Group had a significant impact on the scope of the Programme, formulation of specific objectives and selection of indicators.

In addition to the meetings of the Working Group, many working meetings with stakeholders and representatives of potential beneficiaries were organised. The meetings took place in the form of consultation and focused on the selected areas within the expected support.

Eastern Poland voivodeships, to which OP EP is dedicated, played a special role in drafting its provisions. Voivodeship representatives participated in the work of the Working Group (and the Task Force earlier on) – they consulted the assumptions, the outline and subsequent versions of the Programme.

Ex-ante evaluation

The opinions of the representatives of socio-economic partners operating in the support areas of OP EP were collected and analysed also as part of ex ante evaluation of the Programme. Three focus group interviews (FGI) were held with entrepreneurs, research units and BEI and representatives of public institutions (they involved representatives of the Offices of the Marshal from each of the regions covered by the Programme and representatives of the largest cities – capitals of individual voivodeships).

During the interviews with the three above groups, participants were asked to express their opinion on whether public intervention was necessary in the areas identified as needs/challenges in the diagnosis. They were also asked to prioritise the socio-economic challenges and needs of Eastern Poland identified in the diagnosis. Discussions also concerned the accuracy of the proposed objectives of the operational programme in the context of the identified/defined socio-economic challenges and needs.

Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment

In order to evaluate the potential and actual effects of OP EP implementation, draft Environmental Report for Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014-2020 was prepared. It provides the basis for proceedings related to strategic environmental impact assessment. The document was submitted for public consultation that took place between 17 October and 8 November 2013.

The electronic version of the draft Environmental Report for Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014-2020 was published on the website of the Programme Development of Eastern Poland (www.polskawschodnia.gov.pl). Hard copies of the documentation were available in the Ministry of Regional Development.

Public consultation on the document was open. All interested parties could submit their comments and opinions via an on-line form launched at the website www.polskawschodnia.gov.pl.

In the framework of the consultation, on 6 November 2013 a consultation conference was organised at the Ministry of Regional Development, during which the contractor presented the draft Environmental Report for Operational Programme Eastern Poland 2014-2020.

Public consultation of OP EP

All stakeholders were invited to participate in public consultation on OP EP, in particular the representatives of government administration and local government units, socio-economic partners and non-governmental organisations.

The public consultation on OP EP took place between 20 September 2013 and 25 October 2013 via an on-line form available at the website of the Programme Development of Eastern Poland 2007-2013, in a section set up specifically for public consultation: www.polskawschodnia.gov.pl/konsultacje-popw, where the electronic version of the draft OP EP was published on the day when the consultations started. Comments were also sent in the paper form.

Information on public consultation, such as the starting and ending dates and how to submit comments, was published on **20 September 2013**, also in the form of press announcements (in Gazeta Wyborcza national daily and in regional dailies).

In the framework of the consultation, a series of consultation conferences was organised in all five voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland:

- Białystok – 1 October 2013,
- Olsztyn – 2 October 2013,
- Lublin – 8 October 2013,
- Rzeszów – 9 October 2013,
- Kielce – 10 October 2013.

The conferences were open to the public and participation was free of charge. The persons who wished to participate in the conferences registered their participation on-line.

The framework agenda of each conference was similar. The meetings consisted of three basic parts:

- Presentation of the socio-economic diagnosis of Eastern Poland and strategic lines of action in the macroregion stemming from the *SSED EP*;
- Presentation of draft OP EP;
- Discussion with the participants.

The total number of participants of all meetings amounted to 535. They were, inter alia, socio-economic partners, entrepreneurs, representatives of NGOs and representatives of general government administration.

During the consultation process, many comments and recommendations were submitted, which allowed to verify the content of the Programme. The comments focused, inter alia, on the following:

- Expanding the group of beneficiaries of individual axes;
- The possibility of implementing measures under axis III outside the functional areas of voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland;
- Inclusion of subregions from Mazowieckie and Małopolskie Voivodeships that neighbour Eastern Poland voivodeships in the Programme;
- Extending the set of measures that can be implemented under individual axes;
- The possibility to finance road types other than voivodeship roads.

The most important conclusions from consultation meetings:

1. Conference participants expressed positive opinions on dedicated support for the Eastern Poland macroregion.
2. Expectations as to the scope of support granted under the Programme were extensive. It was postulated, inter alia, that axis III should support also cities being poviats capitals. Meeting participants emphasised that the Programme is an additional, but not the only, type of support for Eastern Poland voivodeships. Eastern Poland is the area of strategic intervention under national programmes.
3. Conference participants welcomed the proposals of measures for entrepreneurs. *Start-up platforms for the new ideas* aroused particular interest. It was emphasised that support for entrepreneurs was the most important from the point of view of achieving Programme objectives. It was suggested that support under the measure should not be limited to university graduates and that the age criteria should be extended.
4. It was postulated to define regional envelopes under axis III. The issue of delimiting functional urban areas was raised.

Draft OP EP has been modified to accommodate the opinions and comments submitted during the consultation.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

After approval of the Programme, pursuant to Article 48 of the General Regulation, the partners will receive assurance of real participation in the process of its monitoring and evaluation, primarily as members of the Monitoring Committee. The main task of the Committee will be to review the programme implementation and progress made towards achieving its objectives i.a. based on the financial data and value of physical progress indicators. Pursuant to Regulation, the Committee will be accepting the annual and final report. The tasks of the Committee will also include the approval of evaluation plan for the Programme, the analysis of progress in the plan implementation and monitoring of follow-up measures taken as a result of evaluation.

The Monitoring Committee also envisages involving partners in:

- periodic progress review in terms of research on the specific objectives, identified under the Programme, based on the presented documents,
- analysis of Programme implementation results, particularly of objectives identified for each priority axis and the results of evaluations related to monitoring of the Programme implementation,
- submitting the proposals of changes to the Programme or its analyses to the Managing Authority.

In addition, partners will be involved in the implementation of OP EP: by approving the project selection criteria within the framework of work of the Monitoring Committee and by participating in the process of consulting the legal acts and programme documents, necessary for implementing the measures co-financed under the Programme.

The representatives of socio-economic partners may be also involved in evaluation studies in line with the objective and scope of evaluation.

In addition, the **Steering Group for Eastern Poland** will be established to enhance cooperation between the bodies responsible for implementation and monitoring of programmes which are carried out in the Eastern Poland macroregion.

8. COORDINATION SYSTEM

8.1 COORDINATION OF INTERVENTION IN EASTERN POLAND IN THE YEARS 2014-2020

Intervention under OP EP is subject to special coordination with the measures under regional operational programmes of Eastern Poland voivodeships and, due to the fact that Eastern Poland is designated as ASI of the state, under other relevant national programmes.

The **Steering Group for Eastern Poland**, operating within the Inter-ministerial Team for Programming and Implementing Structural Funds and the European Union Cohesion Fund, is the main instrument for coordination of intervention financed from the EU funds in Eastern Poland. The task of the Group is to ensure coordination and complementarity of support for measures implemented under operational programmes in the macroregion. The work of the Group includes planning, implementation and monitoring of the effects of intervention. The effects of work of the Group will be presented at the meeting of the Inter-ministerial Team and the Partnership Agreement Coordination Committee.

A representative of the minister in charge of regional development is responsible for organisation and chairing the work of the Group.

The representatives of the MA of OP EP, the MA of ROP of Eastern Poland voivodeships and relevant national operational programmes participate in the work of the Group.

Recommendations and instruments agreed within the Group are used accordingly to the scope of individual programmes within the framework of work of the MC which examines the recommendations of the Group which have an impact on a given programme.

Depending on the identified needs, the Group will focus in particular on developing recommendations for the most important proposals of project selection criteria, rules of financing under similar types of intervention in individual programmes, coordination of issues related to monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the programmes, etc.

Furthermore, the meetings of the Group will serve as a forum to exchange opinions, information and experience of partners involved in implementation of individual OP in Eastern Poland.

In order to enhance coordination and ensure appropriate exchange of information, the representatives of the MA of ROP EP and the MA of OP EP will participate in each other's **Monitoring Committees**.

8.2 COMPLEMENTARITY OF INVESTMENT PRIORITIES UNDER OP EP WITH MEASURES OF OTHER OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF THE 2014-2020 FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE

The areas with the greatest capacity in terms of complementarity of OP EP with other Cohesion Policy programmes are presented below.

COMPLEMENTARITY OF OP EP WITH OP ID, ROPs, OP DP, OP KED

Thematic objective 3

Investment Priority 3a

Operational Programme Intelligent Development

The OP ID will support the development of equity financing instruments for SMEs, in particular by means of venture capital funds, business angels networks, seed capital and private equity funds. The above support will be available to enterprises that received support under the measure *Start-up platforms for the new ideas*, after the start-up phase, for further development of the business, using a wide range of loan and equity instruments.

Regional Operational Programmes

ROPs will provide support for investments related to development of business incubators, including academic entrepreneurship incubators. The improvement of quality and the extension of services of business incubators under the ROP measures will complement the start-up entrepreneurship support system by providing the possibility to use business incubators and their services as part of the partner participation in the implementation of Start-up platforms.

In addition, the support provided to the existing enterprises will allow the beneficiaries of OP EP to use the ROP support after the start-up phase and in the form adjusted to their needs.

Operational Programme Knowledge, Education and Development

The support of OP KED under TO 8, addressed to natural persons who wish to set up their own business, will be complementary to the OP EP measure. The support will be addressed mainly to young persons aged up to 29 years (unemployed, not economically active and job seekers) who are particularly disadvantaged on the labour market and require comprehensive and individualised support. The intervention of OP KED under TO 10, aimed at increasing the quality of higher education, expanding knowledge, skills and qualifications of students and graduates, will also be complementary to the OP EP measure. It is a very important element in terms of ideas submitted for support under the measure Start-up platforms.

The above-mentioned programmes will supplement OP EP support for the creation of conditions conducive to the development of new, innovative business ideas in Eastern Poland.

Investment Priority 3b

Operational Programme Intelligent Development

The intervention under OP ID related to internationalisation of companies in terms of R&D and innovation activity, as part of National Smart Specialisations, is a complementary measure to OP EP in terms of SME internationalisation. Combined with the creation of new business models under OP EP, it will provide a comprehensive offer for enterprises depending on the phase of their development.

Operational Programme Digital Poland

The measures related to extending the access to internet and popularisation of the use of ICT will significantly reduce the access barriers to foreign markets, in particular for SMEs. In the case of international operations, ICT may contribute to a considerable reduction of additional costs which SMEs must incur when starting the activity in international markets.

Regional Operational Programmes

The measures involving support for investment in SME under ROP are complementary to the measures aimed at internationalisation of their operations under OP EP in two complementing aspects:

- Investment support (infrastructure, machinery and equipment, etc.) will increase the production (and services) capacity of companies and improve the competitiveness of their products and services. This will create the conditions conducive to expansion in foreign markets.
- The expansion of operations in foreign markets will increase operating revenue which should result in an increased profitability and effectiveness of investment support.

ROPs for Eastern Poland will offer preferences for companies which developed their investment strategies for internationalisation under OP EP in order to implement them by purchasing necessary fixed assets.

Investment Priority 3c

Operational Programme Intelligent Development

The development of R&D potential will be complementary to the measures related to implementation of innovative solutions under IP 3c of OP EP. The expected complementarity in this case consists in the fact that the increase in the R&D units' potential will be conducive to cooperation between those units and enterprises in the field of R&D and implementation of innovation. Therefore, it will strengthen the supply side of the innovation system. The extensive supply of potential innovation and R&D services (in particular high quality services) may result in an increased interest on the part of enterprises in taking advantage of those opportunities. In consequences, increased activity of enterprises in the field of innovation may be expected, thus directly implementing the objective of IP 3c of OP EP.

Regional Operational Programmes

Under ROP, in complementarity with OP EP, R&D projects will be implemented by enterprises which, combined with intervention dedicated to implementing innovative solutions under OP EP, will create a comprehensive system of support for SMEs in the macroregion.

Under ROP, in complementarity with OP EP, R&D projects will be implemented by enterprises which, combined with intervention dedicated to implementing innovative solutions under OP EP, will create a comprehensive system of support for SMEs in the macroregion.

Thematic objective 4

In the context of projected results of OP EP intervention in the field of TO 4, complementary activities aimed at developing green networks of urban transport, carried out under other OP, are particularly important.

Investment Priority 4e

Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment

The OP I&E focuses on support for voivodeship centres, excluding **voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland**.

OP EP provides for co-financing of particularly important and comprehensive investments in public transport in voivodeship capitals of Eastern Poland and their functional areas or the areas of implementation of ITI of the abovementioned voivodeship capital cities, included on the list of complementary projects in the ITI Strategy.

The intervention under the OP I&E does not cover the voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland, but is addressed to cities of regional and subregional significance, including cities in Eastern Poland macroregion, which will contribute significantly to achieving synergies in developing green networks of urban transport in the entire macroregion.

Regional Operational Programmes

The support from the regional level will be provided in the form of ITI mainly to voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas for investments complementary to OP EP. Furthermore, ROP provides for support for green public transport, also as ITI, in subregional centres.

The classification of investments to be carried out under OP EP as projects complementary to those carried out within ITI from ROP funds under the ITI Strategy is a mechanism ensuring the complementarity of investments in the field of urban transport to be co-financed from the OP EP and ROP funds. Under IP 4e, this complementarity mechanism allows to plan projects complementary to IT with a large physical and financial scope (so-called core projects) to be implemented under OP EP, while the investments planned at the regional level will be only complementary.

Thematic objective 7

In the scope of TO 7, complementary activities carried out under the OP presented below will concern investments in reconstruction of road and railway network, which will improve the accessibility of Eastern Poland voivodeships.

IP 7b

Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment

The OP I&E supports projects concerning national roads with cities with poviats rights, **excluding the voivodeship capital cities of Eastern Poland.**

As regards national roads, OP EP does not provide for co-financing of projects whose beneficiary is the General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways (GDDKiA). The road projects to be implemented under the OP I&E will focus on construction of expressways and additionally on construction of external ring roads by GDDKiA which may be deemed transit roads. The assumed effect of those investments is the reduction of time of travel to the macroregion/voivodeship capitals of Eastern Poland.

Regional Operational Programmes

ROPs provide for road investments in the entire territory of voivodeships, excluding voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas where investments will be financed from OP EP. If the allocation under IP 7b of OP EP is fully used, the projects located in voivodeship capital cities and their functional areas may be financed from ROP.

The abovementioned activities planned at the regional level are thus complementary to the projects which are to be implemented under OP EP.

The Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) Strategies will ensure coordination of activities and control of planning of investments to be carried out at both the regional level (ROP) and the national level. The investments to be carried out under IP 7b of OP EP are complementary, but are not a part of ITI; they are also included, though not obligatorily, in Territorial Contracts.

IP 7d

Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment

The OP I&E supports investments in railway network and train station infrastructure within and outside TEN-T and modernisation of rolling stock for supra-regional (including long-distance) connections. Moreover, the said national programme provides funds for construction, reconstruction, modernisation of infrastructure and purchase/modernisation of rolling stock for public rail transport in functional areas of cities, while OP EP does not provide for purchase of rolling stock.

As regards the demarcation line of the planned infrastructural investments, the rail projects of both OP I&E and OP EP were included in the Implementing Document for the *Transport Development Strategy by 2020 (with perspective by 2030)* on the lists drafted for projects of national importance to be co-financed from OP I&E funds and macroregional projects to be implemented under OP EP. The inclusion of investments in the Implementing Document ensures the demarcation line between the programmes and guarantees that one and the same project will not receive the co-financing twice, from two different OP.

Regional Operational Programmes

In terms of railway infrastructure, the support at the regional level will be provided primarily to projects concerning railway lines of regional importance (railway infrastructure and train station infrastructure) and involving purchase and modernisation of rolling stock. In some cases, the support will also be provided for elements of the railway network of cross-border importance (railway infrastructure of border crossings) on the territory of the region concerned.

OP EP does not provide for purchase of rolling stock or support for organisation of transport within the macroregional transport corridor, but the rolling stock purchased under ROP 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 will be used also on railway lines modernised using the funds of OP EP.

The abovementioned activities planned at the regional level are thus complementary to the projects which are to be implemented under OP EP.

The projects co-financed under OP EP were included in the *Implementing Document for the Transport Development Strategy by 2020 (with perspective by 2030)*.

9. EX ANTE CONDITIONALITIES

9.1 IDENTIFICATION OF EX ANTE CONDITIONALITIES FOR THE PROGRAMME AND ASSESSMENT OF THEIR FULFILLMENT

Pursuant to the General Regulation, the EU funds will be mobilised subject to the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities, i.e. ensuring certain prerequisites which enable an effective implementation of programmes co-financed from the EU funds. The prerequisites usually entail ensuring a relevant strategic framework for individual investment priorities or transposition and implementation of selected elements of the EU legislation. In line with Annex XI to the General Regulation, there are two types of conditionalities: general and thematic.

General conditionalities apply to all intervention from the CSF funds and their aim is to promote the horizontal principles of the EU (combating discrimination on grounds of disability, sex and other), compliance with horizontal EU regulations on State aid, public procurement and environmental impact assessment, as well as to ensure high quality systems of monitoring, collection and management of statistical data.

Thematic conditionalities are directly related to eleven thematic objectives along with their assigned investment priorities. While general conditionalities, due to their nature, are analysed at the level of the Partnership Agreement, the responsibility for fulfilment of thematic conditionalities belongs to (national and regional) operational programmes.

The detailed self-assessment of fulfilment of general and thematic conditionalities is presented in Annex 2 to the Programme.

The following table presents the ex ante conditionalities applicable under OP EP.

Table 43. The list of applicable ex ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment

Ex ante conditionality	Priority axes	Ex ante conditionality fulfilled	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents)	Explanations
GENERAL CONDITIONALITIES						
1. Anti-discrimination The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	I - IV	Partially	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund-related activities	Yes	Act of 3 December 2010 on the implementation of certain provisions of the European Union on equal treatment http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20102541700	
			Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti-discrimination law and policy	No	Agenda for equal opportunities and non-discrimination under the 2014-2020 EU funds.	The Agenda was submitted to the European Commission by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development on 12 August 2014.
2. Gender equality The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	I - IV	Partially	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI Fund related activities	Yes	Act of 3 December 2010 on the implementation of certain provisions of the European Union on equal treatment http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20102541700 Agenda for equal opportunities and non-discrimination under the 2014-2020 EU	The Agenda was submitted to the European Commission by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development on 12 August 2014.

			Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming	No	funds.	
3. Disability The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCPRD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	I - IV	Partially	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes	Yes	Act of 3 December 2010 on the implementation of certain provisions of the European Union on equal treatment http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20102541700 Agenda for equal opportunities and non-discrimination under the 2014-2020 EU funds.	The Agenda was submitted to the European Commission by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development on 12 August 2014.
			Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCPRD as reflected in Union and national legislation, as appropriate	No		
			Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCPRD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the preparation and the implementation of the programmes	Yes		

4. Public procurement The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	I - IV	Yes	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	Yes	Act amending the Act - Public Procurement Law, including the adjustment to the judgment of the Court of Justice of the EU in case C-465/11, i.e. amendment of Article 24(1)(1) and Article 24(1a) of the PPL http://www.uzp.gov.pl/cmsws/page/?F;248;ustawa_pzp.html
			Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures	Yes	
			Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds	Yes	
			Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules	Yes	
5. State aid The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	I - IV	Yes	Arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules	Yes	The so-called SHRIMP database (System for Scheduling, Registration and Monitoring of State Aid), http://www.uokik.gov.pl/kompetencje_prezesa_uokik_w_zakresie_pomocy_publicznej.php Act of 30 April 2004 on the procedural issues regarding State aid (i.e. Dz. U. of 2007 No 59, item 404, as amended) http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20070590404
			Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds	Yes	
			Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union State aid rules	Yes	
6. Environmental legislation relating to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	I - IV	Yes	Arrangements for the effective application of directives with respect to environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environment impact assessment (SEA)	Yes	Act amending the Act - Water Law and certain other acts http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20140000850

The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.					Act on providing information on the environment and its protection, the participation of the society in environmental protection and on environmental impact assessments http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20081991227 Regulation of the Council of Ministers on the types of projects likely to have significant effects on the environment http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20130000817 Act amending the Act – Geological and Mining Law and certain other acts (Dz. U. item 1238) http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20130001238	
			Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the EIA and SEA Directives	Yes		
			Arrangements to ensure sufficient administrative capacity	Yes		
7. Statistical systems and result indicators The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select measures, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact	I - IV	Yes	a) Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation; arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data. 	Yes	In the case of indicators coming from official statistics - Act on official statistics of 29 June 1995 (as amended - http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19950880439). In the case of indicators that are not taken from official statistics (e.g. from evaluations), the managing authority ensures the mechanisms of appropriate data quality control and statistical validation.	Institutions responsible for fulfilling the criterion: Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Infrastructure and Development , Managing Authority of OP EP

evaluation.			<p>b) An effective system of result indicators including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy measures financed by the programme; the establishment of targets for these indicators; the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data. 	Yes		Institutions responsible for fulfilling the criterion: Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Infrastructure and Development , Managing Authority of OP EP
			<p>c) Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.</p>	Yes	<p>Act of 11 July 2014 on the principles of implementation of the cohesion policy programmes, financed under the 2014-2020 financial perspective</p> <p>http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20140001146</p>	Institutions responsible for fulfilling the criterion: Ministry of Infrastructure and Development , Managing Authority of OP EP
Thematic conditionalities						
3.1 Specific measures have been carried out to underpin the promotion of entrepreneurship taking into account the Small Business Act (SBA).	I	No	Measures have been put in place with the objective of reducing the time and cost involved in setting-up a business taking account of the targets of the SBA;	Yes	<p>1. S24 system on the website</p> <p>2. Act on the National Court Register isap.sejm.gov.pl</p> <p>3. Article 29, Article 25(3), Article 14(1) of the Act on freedom of economic activity isap.sejm.gov.pl</p>	<p>1. https://ems.ms.gov.pl/</p> <p>2. http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/proc7.nsf/ustawy/2094_u.htm</p> <p>3. http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/</p>

			Measures have been put in place with the objective of reducing the time needed to get licenses and permits to take up and perform the specific activity of an enterprise taking account of the targets of the SBA;	No	4. Act amending the Acts regulating the practising of certain professions isap.sejm.gov.pl 5. Act on facilitating access to certain regulated professions isap.sejm.gov.pl	m.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20041731807 4. http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20130000829 5. http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20140000768
			A mechanism is in place to monitor the implementation of the measures of the SBA which have been put in place and assess the impact on SMEs.	No		
7.1. Transport: The existence of a comprehensive plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment in accordance with the Member States' institutional set-up (including public transport at regional and local level) which supports infrastructure development and improves connectivity to the TEN-T comprehensive and core networks.	II	No	(1) The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which complies with legal requirements for strategic environmental assessment	No	Plan of transport investment (roads) of OP EP along with the list of projects.	
			The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which sets out the contribution to the single European Transport Area consistent with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, including priorities for investments in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the core TEN-T network and the comprehensive network where investment from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund is envisaged; and – secondary connectivity. 	No		
			(3) The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which sets out a realistic and mature pipeline for projects for which support from the ERDF	No		

			and the Cohesion Fund is envisaged.			
			(4) The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which sets out measures to ensure the capacity of intermediary bodies and beneficiaries to deliver the project pipeline.	No		
7.2. Railway: The existence within the comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks of a specific section on railway development in accordance with the Member States' institutional set-up (including concerning public transport at regional and local level) which supports infrastructure development and improves connectivity to the TEN-T comprehensive and core networks. The investments cover mobile assets, interoperability and capacity-building.	III	Yes	The existence of a section on railway development within the transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks as set out above which complies with legal requirements for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and sets out a realistic and mature project pipeline (including a timetable and budgetary framework).	Yes	Transport Development Strategy by 2020 (with perspective by 2030). Implementing Document to the Transport Development Strategy by 2020 (with perspective by 2030) which constitute the investment plan for projects co-financed from the EU funds.	
			Measures to ensure the capacity of intermediary bodies and beneficiaries to deliver the project pipeline.	Yes	The Implementing Document includes the defined elements with regard to railway investments, such as information on ensuring appropriate capacity of intermediary bodies and beneficiaries to deliver the project pipeline.	

9.2 DESCRIPTION OF MEASURES TO FULFIL EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES, RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND TIMETABLE

Table 44. Measures to fulfil applicable general ex ante conditionalities

General ex ante conditionalities	Criteria not fulfilled	Measures to be taken	Deadline	Institution responsible
1. Anti-discrimination	Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti-discrimination law and policy	Adoption of the Agenda for equal opportunities and non-discrimination under the 2014-2020 EU funds by the PA Coordination Committee	Q1 2015	Ministry of Infrastructure and Development
2. Gender equality	Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming			
3. Disability	Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in Union and national legislation, as appropriate			

Table 45. Measures to fulfil applicable thematic ex ante conditionalities

Thematic ex ante conditionalities	Criteria not fulfilled	Measures to be taken	Deadline	Institution responsible
3.1 Specific measures have been carried out to underpin the promotion of entrepreneurship taking into account the Small Business Act (SBA)	Measures have been put in place with the objective of reducing the time needed to get licenses and permits to take up and perform the specific activity of an enterprise taking account of the targets of the SBA	Entry into force of the Act amending the Acts regulating the access to certain professions - third round of deregulation	1 May 2015	Ministry of Justice
	A mechanism is in place to monitor the implementation of the measures of the SBA which have been put in place and assess the impact on SMEs.	Implementation of an electronic consultation platform Impact Assessment Guidelines Completion of the pilot SME test	1 July 2015 1 July 2015 31 December 2015	Ministry of Economy
7.1. Transport: The existence of a comprehensive plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment in accordance with the Member States' institutional set-up (including public transport at regional and local level) which supports infrastructure development and improves connectivity to the TEN-T comprehensive and core networks.	(1) The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which complies with legal requirements for strategic environmental assessment (2) The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which sets out the contribution to the single European Transport Area consistent with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, including priorities for investments in: 2. the core TEN-T network and the comprehensive network where investment from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund is envisaged; and	Drawing up the plan of transport investment (roads) of OP EP along with the list of projects.	from Q1 2015 to Q3 2016	Ministry of Infrastructure and Development

	3. secondary connectivity.			
	(3) The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which sets out a realistic and mature pipeline for projects for which support from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund is envisaged			
	(4) The existence of a comprehensive transport plan or plans or framework or frameworks for transport investment which sets out measures to ensure the capacity of intermediary bodies and beneficiaries to deliver the project pipeline			

10. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS FOR BENEFICIARIES

The Polish government makes continuous efforts to cut red tape imposed on citizens and economic operators. These efforts are made in particular to lessen the burdens imposed on enterprises and entrepreneurship. The measures taken aim at creating favourable conditions for their development by i.a. strengthening competitive advantages and consequently achieving stable economic growth in the long-term perspective. These measures are mainly intended to improve access for enterprises to capital, strengthen entrepreneurial attitudes, strengthen business environment from the institutional, organisational and financial point of view, as well as to eliminate information gap by making available the analyses on the competitiveness of industry sectors.

The measures produce tangible outcomes which result in a steady improvement of Poland's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business.

The EU funds also have a positive impact on conducting economic activity in Poland, which was confirmed in numerous evaluation studies. Therefore, it is necessary to work out the rules which will allow the beneficiaries to apply for the EU funds without having to bear undue administrative burdens.

During the 2014-2020 financial perspective, the institutions responsible for the implementation of Cohesion Policy in Poland will continue the measures aimed at the introduction of the widest possible catalogue of simplifications for the beneficiaries of the EU funds. Administrative burdens may be reduced only in the areas that are governed by the national regulations of MA or IB. It should be emphasised that the implementation system of the EU funds for 2014-2020 was planned so as to continue reducing the burdens for beneficiaries and improving their institutional capacity.

The burdens imposed on the beneficiaries concerns mainly the following stages related to applying for co-financing and to project implementation:

- submission of application for co-financing – in particular filling in and submitting the application in an appropriate form;
- clearing of the project – in particular filling in the payment applications; in the years 2014-2020 it will be possible to electronically submit the payment applications in line with Article 122(3) of CPR;
- reporting obligations – in particular informing the institution granting the support about the project implementation and results;
- control of the project – in particular the obligations related to keeping the project documentation and making it available to the auditors pursuant to Article 140 of CPR. These obligations will be reduced in the 2014-2020 perspective to the extent to which the documents related to project will be kept in the central SL 2014 IT system.

The planned simplifications under OP EP will focus mainly on:

- introducing the IT system compliant with the e-cohesion requirements that enables the electronic communication between beneficiaries and institutions of the OP EP managing and implementation system and reduces the number of documents submitted in paper form;
- ensuring access for beneficiaries to comprehensive information via the extensive information points network of individual funds, including the functioning of a single web portal for all operational programmes;
- using the flexible forms of project financing including pre-financing;
- using all available forms of lump sum and flat-rate financing;

- applying the flat rate (the rate used for the purpose of decreasing the level of financing) with regard to selected net revenue generating projects;
- simplifying the procedures for selecting the projects and improving the selection procedure and criteria so that the beneficiaries can assess in advance whether their projects could positively pass the assessment procedure;
- reorganising the reporting process so that it concentrates on gathering the most important data for monitoring purposes.

It should be emphasized that the above-mentioned simplifications will be introduced already at the stage of support programming. Documents specifying processes related to the implementation and management of the Programme will also regulate matters related to application of simplifications. They will be developed in the first half of 2015, at the latest. Furthermore, with regard to the IT system compliant with e-cohesion requirements, relevant activities related to the tendering procedure for the creation of the above-mentioned tool have already been taken.

However, in relation to other problem areas, identified during the programme implementation, the measures will be taken to eliminate the source of problems (as in the previous financial perspectives).

11. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

11.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The prerequisite for the sustainable development is a competent combination of relations between economy, society and environment in order not to upset the environment capacities to provide its services in the future. According to the priority of the Europe 2020 strategy, sustainable development should be based on the promotion of a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.

Interventions planned under OP EP will contribute to achievement of climate objectives defined in the Europe 2020 strategy by supporting measures aimed at efficient use of resources and reduction of CO₂ emissions. Enterprises that increase efficient energy use (minimize energy waste and losses) reduce the costs of their operations which will improve their position in the market. By implementing clean innovative technologies, eco-management and eco-marketing, they contribute to promotion of green and sustainable economy. The construction of comprehensive green, integrated urban transport networks and improvement of the standard of existing railway lines provide conditions for using more environmentally friendly means of transport.

In line with the principle of sustainable development, the procedure of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) has been carried out for draft OP EP in order to reduce the potential and actual impact of the Programme implementation on the environment.

The planned implementation of individual categories of intervention under OP EP should aimed at synergy of economic, social and environmental objectives, both at the level of individual priority axes and at the level of objectives of individual projects.

The sustainable development principle refers also to the ability of maintain stability and durability of projects in the situation of climate change³⁴ manifested by increased frequency and intensity of weather phenomena. Since climate change is considered to be a potential risk for project implementation, the projects should include solutions increasing the resilience of infrastructure to extreme phenomena or preventing the risk of their occurrence. This should be taken into account in the cost of the entire life cycle of investment, i.e. not only at the stage of project implementation, but also its further maintenance.

In the context of OP EP assumptions, the implementation of the sustainable development principles should be analysed also with regard to urban mobility. The connection of all available means of transport in the city and in suburban areas ensures flexibility of travel and achievement of the optimum time of travel. The efficient and functional urban transport infrastructure also reduces congestion, facilitates the reduction of energy consumption and thus contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, the practical dimension of the sustainable development principle with regard to planning documents (e.g. low-carbon economy plan, ITI Strategy, Implementing Document to the Transport Development Strategy) establishing the framework of measures, will be visible in strategic environmental assessments.

Adequately to the type of measures under OP EP, the level of their compliance with the sustainable development principle may be assessed based on selection criteria in the following categories:

³⁴ Climate change has direct impact on the temperature and circulation of water in the environment and is visible in the increased frequency of occurrence and intensification of weather events such as storms, heats, droughts and hurricanes. Climate change indirectly affects the water availability, its quality and the likelihood of present and future threats such as floods or fires.

- a) Environmental impact assessment – having a decision on environmental conditions (taking into account the issues related to i.a. climate change and biodiversity).
- b) Resilience to climate change – the planning of the location of projects took into account the occurrence of natural disasters resulting in damage or destruction of the infrastructure built, also with regard to key national strategic documents on adaptation to climate change and threats to national security.
- c) Adaptation to climate change – prevention of damage or premature wear of materials used during project implementation, adjustment to conditions of periodic high solar exposure, rainstorms or sudden thaws.
- d) Climate change mitigation – reduction of (gas and particulate matter) pollutant emission to air.
- e) Resource efficiency – rational management of available energy or space resources, reduction of waste and sewage.

Detailed indicators related to adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, as laid down in the SEA summary, may be added and monitored at the level of individual projects, if they are relevant and appropriate.

The monitoring of and reporting on expenditure related to the achievement of climate change objectives will also be ensured under OP EP. This will concern the following categories in OP EP: 025 and 026 – Railways and 043 and 044 - Urban transport, each with the weight of 40%.

11.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

OP EP will be implemented in line with principle of combating discrimination based on sex, age, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. All institutions involved in the preparation and implementation of the Programme will be obliged to respect this principle and to disseminate it within the framework of performed functions. In addition, it will be forbidden to co-finance the projects that have a negative impact on combating the discrimination.

This principle is respected during the preparation of programme provisions by involving social partners in the Programme preparation and considering the issue of equal opportunities in ex ante evaluation. Next, this principle will be taken into account during the Programme implementation, particularly during the project selection and implementation. Detailed information regarding the contribution of Programme to the promotion of solutions preventing discrimination, including all initiatives aimed at inclusion of this principle while selecting and implementing projects, will be presented in the documents specifying the provisions of the Programme.

The issue of promoting solutions preventing the discrimination must take into account the nature of projects supported under the Programme. In most cases those projects will remain neutral to this principle. In areas, where the application of non-discrimination principle will be possible and justified, the implemented projects will contribute to its promotion both at the level of programming and implementing and throughout the entire lifetime of projects.

Examples of practical application of the equal opportunities principle, which may be used during the implementation of the Programme:

1. Inclusion of the assumptions for universal design during the Programme implementation.
Universal design is an approach in which the focus is moved from the “object” to the “user”. The user perspective is always taken into account, so that the investments to be implemented are corresponding to the needs of various group of recipients.
2. Promotion of specific solutions which are good practices for integration and inclusion of people with various disabilities, as well as the elderly, in social life.

Projects implemented under OP EP will have to take into account the needs of groups with various disabilities. The infrastructural projects should include appropriate solutions that enable all people to use them, also in the created infrastructure (e.g. through voice and visual warning signals).

3. "Straight" inclusion of equal opportunities policy and preventing discrimination in the announced contests.

Where appropriate, the contests announced under OP EP should take into account sex, age or (dis)ability. This implies the need to formulate the assumptions for equality and antidiscrimination at the stage of announcement of competitions, organisation of information meetings for potential applicants, organisation of trainings and consulting meetings for potential applicants.

4. Education on assumptions for horizontal policy.

Training and consultancy in the field of implementation of the equal opportunities principle (both for persons employed in managing authorities and intermediate bodies, as well as for potential applicants)

5. Promotion of good practices.

Promotion of good practices and practical solutions adaptable in Poland that are corresponding to the principle of equal opportunity and preventing discrimination and adequate to the intervention area of OP EP.

6. Inclusion of sex, age and (dis)ability criterion in studies.

Inclusion of sex, age and (dis)ability criterion in the studies prepared for the purpose of the Programme implementation. Different criteria will be taken into account, if appropriate for the purpose of the study.

7. Promotion of Programme and projects implemented under the Programme, organised in an equal and anti-discriminatory way.

8. Monitoring system that allows to verify the achieved results in terms of the equal opportunities principle.

11.3 EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

The principle of equal opportunities is one of the horizontal principles of the European Union. The equality between women and men is particularly important. The equality is understood as a state in which all people have the same social value, equal rights and equal responsibilities, are provided with equal access to goods and services, as well as equal opportunities for development. The gender equality policy of the EU aims at achieving the real equality between women and men. This means not only equality in legal sense but most of all the equality between women and men in the labour market, access to education, goods and services and finally the participation of women and men in the decision-making process.

OP EP 2014-2020 will be implemented in line with the equal opportunities principle, including the principle of gender equality in the meaning of Community and national law, which will be reflected in the programming, implementing and monitoring process. The requirement to promote the equality between women and men will take into account the specific nature of projects envisaged under OP EP. In most cases, the implementation of projects under OP EP will be largely neutral to this principle. Measures taken under OP EP will not be addressed to a specific group of women or men. At the same time, also in cases when the promotion of equality between women and men will be possible and justified, the projects will take into account the gender equality principle.

The implementation of the principle of equal opportunities of women and men at the Programme implementation stage will be carried out simultaneously with the implementation of the equal opportunities principle (described above).

The **horizontal principles** of sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination (including equality between women and men) were taken into account at the stage of programming and will be observed at the stage of OP EP implementation, also by means of including them in the project selection criteria, monitoring, control and evaluation. OP EP Evaluation Plan will include an evaluation of the implementation of horizontal principles by beneficiaries, collection of data for the purpose of such evaluation and the method of using the recommendations therefrom. The results of evaluation will be submitted to the MC OP EP, persons making strategic decisions, institutions involved in planning, reprogramming and implementing the Programme, and will also be provided to beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of the OP EP.

11.4 OTHER HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO THE PROGRAMME

State aid

If support meets the requirements of State aid, it will be granted pursuant to applicable State aid regulations. State aid under the Programme will comply with procedural and material regulations on State aid applicable at the time of granting the State aid.

Delocalisation

In the case of aid from ESIF granted to a large entrepreneur, the Managing Authority undertakes to obtain a declaration from that entrepreneur that the financial contribution from the funds will not result in a considerable loss of jobs in the existing locations of this entrepreneur within the European Union due to the implementation of the co-funded project.

Financial instruments

The use of financial instruments should be considered in the case of supporting investments that are potentially financially viable. The decision to make a contribution to a financial instrument from an operational programme will be preceded by an ex ante evaluation in accordance with Article 37 of the General Regulation.

12. ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

12.1 LIST OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Table 46. List of major projects

Project	Planned notification/submission date (year, quarter)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority axis/investment priority
Works on railway No 68, 585, Lublin-Stalowa Wola-Rozwadów section, including electrification	Q3 2017	Q2 2016	Q4 2019	III/7d

12.2 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Table 47. Performance framework of the Programme (summary table)

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation stage	Measurement unit (where appropriate)	Milestone 2018 r.	Target value 2023 r.
I	ERDF	less developed regions	Number of supported enterprises (CI1)	pcs.	250	2,260
I	ERDF	less developed regions	Number of supported enterprises in signed co-funding agreements	pcs.	430	-
I	ERDF	less developed regions	Total amount of certified eligible expenditures	EUR	150,987,454	846,399,915
II	ERDF	less developed regions	Total length of new roads (CI13)	km	0	12
II	ERDF	less developed regions	Total length of reconstructed or modernised roads (CI 14)	km	0	70
II	ERDF	less developed regions	Total length of reconstructed or modernised roads under signed co-financing agreements	km	40	-
II	ERDF	less developed regions	Total amount of certified eligible expenditures	EUR	212,528,934	1,077,830,696

III	ERDF	less developed regions	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway lines (CI 12)	km	0	548
III	ERDF	less developed regions	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway lines in signed contracts on co-financing	km	240	-
III	ERDF	less developed regions	Total amount of certified eligible expenditures	EUR	55,259,495	388,713,790

12.3 RELEVANT PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME

I. Members of the Working Group for the development of OP EP 2014-2020

Local government units from Eastern Poland:

1. Office of the Marshall of Lubelskie Voivodeship
2. Office of the Marshall of Podkarpackie Voivodeship
3. Office of the Marshall of Podlaskie Voivodeship
4. Office of the Marshall of Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship
5. Office of the Marshall of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship
6. Białystok Municipal Office
7. Kielce Municipal Office
8. Lublin Municipal Office
9. Olsztyn Municipal Office
10. Rzeszów Municipal Office

Central government offices (ministries, government agencies):

11. Ministry of Finance
12. Ministry of Economy
13. Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
14. Ministry of Science and Higher Education
15. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
16. Ministry of Sport and Tourism
17. Ministry of the Interior
18. Ministry of the Environment
19. Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy
20. National Centre for Research and Development (NCRD)
21. Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency
22. Polish Agency for Enterprise Development
23. Polish Tourism Organisation
24. Public Procurement Office
25. Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego

Non-governmental organisations, employers' representatives, trade unions, civil society institutions and expert organisations:

26. Business Centre Club
27. Trade Unions Forum
28. The Foundation of Environmental and Resources Economists
29. Confederation of Polish Employers / Employers of the Republic of Poland
30. NSZZ "Solidarność"
31. National Federation of Polish NGOs
32. All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ)
33. PKPP Lewiatan
34. Council of the Federation of Scientific and Technical Associations NOT
35. Polish Business and Innovation Centres Association
36. Voivodeship Social Dialogue Commission in Białystok
37. Voivodeship Social Dialogue Commission in Lublin
38. Voivodeship Social Dialogue Commission in Olsztyn
39. Voivodeship Social Dialogue Commission in Rzeszów
40. Voivodeship Social Dialogue Commission in Kielce
41. Association of Rural Gminas of the Republic of Poland
42. Polish Craft Association

II. Participants of ex ante evaluation

43. Instytut Innowacji i Technologii Politechniki Białostockiej Sp. z o. o.
44. Science and Technology Park in Białystok
45. The Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce
46. The Institute of Agrophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences
47. Białystok University of Technology
48. Kielce University of Technology
49. Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego MARR SA Mielec
50. BioControl Sp. z o. o.
51. FM BRAVO Sp. z o. o.
52. Odlewnie Polskie SA
53. Podlaska Regional Development Foundation
54. Podlasie Employers' Association
55. Rzeszowska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego SA
56. SMF Poland Sp. z o. o.
57. Technology Incubator in Stalowa Wola
58. Lublin Development Foundation
59. Office of the Marshall of Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship
60. Podlaskie Voivodeship Road Authority in Białystok
61. Office of the Marshall of Podkarpackie Voivodeship
62. Voivodeship Road Authority in Olsztyn
63. Olsztyn Municipal Office
64. Municipal Road Authority in Kielce

13. ANNEXES

- 1. EX-ANTE EVALUATION REPORT WITH EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
- 2. FULFILMENT OF EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES FOR THE EUROPEAN FUNDS FOR 2014-2020, ALONG WITH ACTION PLAN**
- 3. INFORMATION ON THE PROCEDURE FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**
- 4. DIAGNOSIS OF CHALLENGES, NEEDS AND CAPACITY OF AREAS COVERED BY OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME EASTERN POLAND 2014-2020**