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42 projects selected and more than 12 million euro awarded for joint development in Hungary-Croatia Programme

Projects of the first Call for Proposals within the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme have been selected. The 42 projects are looking at a total amount of about 12.3 million euros to be awarded to them. First Subsidy Contracts are expected to be signed in April 2010.

The Hungarian National Development Agency and the Croatian Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management launched the first Call for Proposals of the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme in March 2009.

Within the three-month period of the Call 67 project proposals were received, among which the Joint Monitoring Committee selected 42. The amount of Community funding to be awarded totals at over 12.3 million euros.

Non-profit organizations based in counties from both sides of the Hungarian-Croatian border were eligible for funding. On the Hungarian side the counties Zala, Somogy and Baranya were eligible, and on the Croatian side the following counties were included: Međimurska, Koprivničko-križevačka, Virovitičko-podravska, Osječko-baranjska, Varaždinska, Bjelovarsko-bilogorska, Požeško-slavonska and Vukovarsko-srijemska; with the last four representing the so-called adjacent regions, whose participation in the Programme cannot exceed 20%.

The long-term goal of the Programme is supporting knowledge-based development and culture based on the strong socio-economic connections between the two sides of the border region, as well as promoting successful management of cultural and natural heritage. According to the results of the present Call for Proposals the areas with the most potential for implementation of projects are *Joint Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I)*, *Cross-border education, training and exchange projects* and *People-to-people connections*.

Within the supported actions a large number of projects can be expected to be awarded funding in case that the selected project proposals are successful in meeting the conditions for the signing of Subsidy Contracts. For example, one of the potential projects within the action *Development of landscapes in the Mura-Drava-Danube area* would be 'Revitalization and Landscape Development of Riverine Ecosystem in the Drava-Danube Area', that plans to renew the ecological importance of the habitats in the areas of the rivers' meanders and backwaters that were distorted during the process of changing the river's flow.

Joint Research, Development and Innovation is the area which is targeted by the proposals titled 'Regional Universities as Generators of a Transnational Knowledge Region', elaborating a strategy to synchronize the academic potential with the economic interests and demands of the local community and 'Joint Research and Development of

Energy Efficiency Measures in Cities of Cross-border Region', dealing with one of the top issues of the European Union through the demonstration of ways of increasing energy efficiency in public institutions.

Project proposals titled 'Joining Forces in Discovering, Enhancing and Nurturing the Cultural Heritage of the Project Area through the Joint Organization of Cultural Events' and 'Renewal of Social Connections on Cross-border Area' both aim at enforcing one of the overall objectives of the Programme - building stronger cross-border *People-to-People Connections*.

In order to ensure a true cross-border character of each project, Croatian and Hungarian partners are expected to implement the projects with participation of partners from both sides, their close co-operation and balanced financing.

The launch of the next call for proposals of Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme can be expected in the first half of 2010.

Further information about the Programme, as well as the list of the projects that have been selected for funding can be found on the Programme's website (<http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com>).