



Support to the RCOP Operating Structure with Operational Programme management

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"The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".



**Regional Competitiveness
Operational Programme
2007-2011**

For more information visit the web sites of some of the projects of the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme:

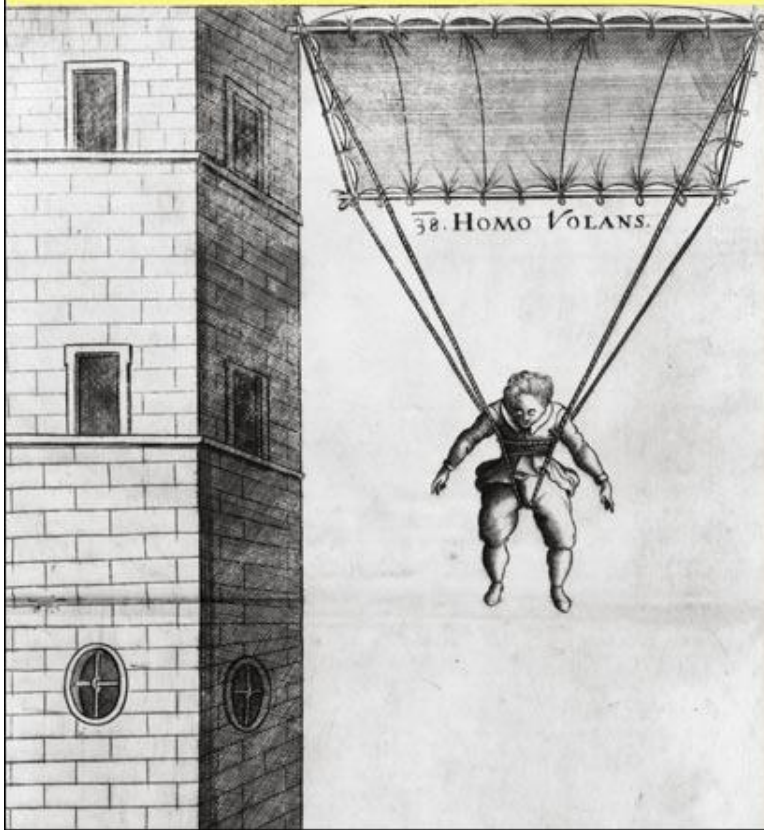
- <http://eposlovanje.eu>
- <http://icpr3.org>
- <http://www.siif-croatia.com>
- <http://www.smepass.hr>



This project is funded by the European Union

A few words about the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme

The Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme 2007–2011 operates in the frame of the European Union's Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) IIIc. The total EU IPA funds allocated to the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme for the period 2007–2011 amount to 75.23 million euro (63.94 million euro EU funds plus 11.28 million euro in national funds). The objective of the OP is to encourage social and economic cohesion in the country and the development of institutional capacity and practical experience in managing investments such as those co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Operational Programme finances projects targeted to the development of new and existing business infrastructure in areas that are lagging in development, strengthening the competitiveness of the Croatian economy and providing technical assistance to the Operating Structure responsible for the implementation of the Operational Programme.



The priorities of the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme

Priority 1 – Improving development potential of the lagging behind regions (EUR 23.32 million)

The operation Business-related Infrastructure is being implemented in the frame of this priority, the objective of which is to provide support to the development of small and medium-sized businesses and to set the stage for the creation of new jobs in underdeveloped regions. Support targets recipients (regional and local self-government, public institutions, state-owned companies, associations, tourist boards) in 10 counties (see illustration) that have been identified as the most underdeveloped, and have less competitive economy.

The key activities of the project are the:

- Development of new and existing business related infrastructure
- Development of regional institutions that support entrepreneurship
- Development and improvement of public tourism infrastructure

AREA OF IMPLEMENTATION



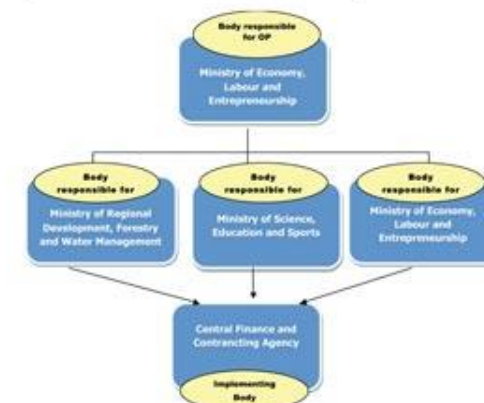
Priority 2 - Enhancing the competitiveness of the Croatian economy (EUR 45.77 million)

The first objective of this Priority is to secure effective business support at all levels to create a positive climate for investment. This will be achieved with much greater ease and speed by strengthening national administrative efficiency, providing consultancy assistance free of charge to SMEs, grants to entrepreneurs, improving cluster development and information of the business community and establishing e-business centres that will provide entrepreneurs with free education in e-business.

The second objective of this Priority is to encourage technology transfer and the creation of infrastructure that will facilitate commercialisation of innovation in order to contribute to competitiveness of high value added sectors of the economy. This will be secured through the Science and Innovation Investment Fund that awards grants to higher education institutions and public research organisations from across the country for activities related to knowledge and technology transfer.

Priority 3 – Technical Assistance (EUR 6.14 million)

The objective of this Priority is to ensure efficient and effective implementation of the Operational Programme and develop institutional capacities for managing EU funds and absorbing IPA and future EU programmes funds in line with the principles of sound financial management and national and EU legislation.



Who implements the Operational Programme?

The Head of the Operating Structure bearing overall responsibility for managing the Operational Programme is a State Secretary at the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, while the Directorate for Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme at the same Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship is the Body responsible for the Operational Programme. Other Operating Structure bodies are the Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, all of them responsible for the implementation of a given Priority/Measure. The Central Finance and Contracting Agency has the role of Implementing Body, i.e., it is responsible for organising tender procedures, awarding and implementing contracts/grants, and making payments to end beneficiaries.