

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2013



**Bulgaria –the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IPA Cross-border Programme**

CCI Number 2007CB16IPO007



ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2013

for the
Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IPA Cross-border Programme
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1. IDENTIFICATION

The Annual Implementation Report (AIR) is drawn up in accordance with the provisions under Article 112 of the Commission Regulation № 718/2007.

The current report is the fifth AIR for the Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-Border Programme, CCI Number 2007CB16IPO007 (the Programme) and covers the period from 1 January 2013 till 31 December 2013.

The Managing Authority (MA) for the Programme is the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD) of Bulgaria having as counterpart the Ministry of Local Self Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the National Authority (NA).

Objective concerned:	IPA Cross-border Cooperation	
Programming period:	2007 – 2013	
Programme:	Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme	CCI No. 2007CB16IPO007
Eligible area concerned:	On the Bulgarian side (NUTS III regions): Blagoevgrad district (14 municipalities) and Kystendil district (9 municipalities)	On the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia side (NUTS III regions): North-East statistical region (6 municipalities), East statistical region (11 municipalities) and South-East statistical region (10 municipalities)
Reporting year:	2013	

Date of approval of Head of MA:	21 May 2014
Date of approval of the annual report by the Joint Monitoring Committee:	03 June 2014





2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

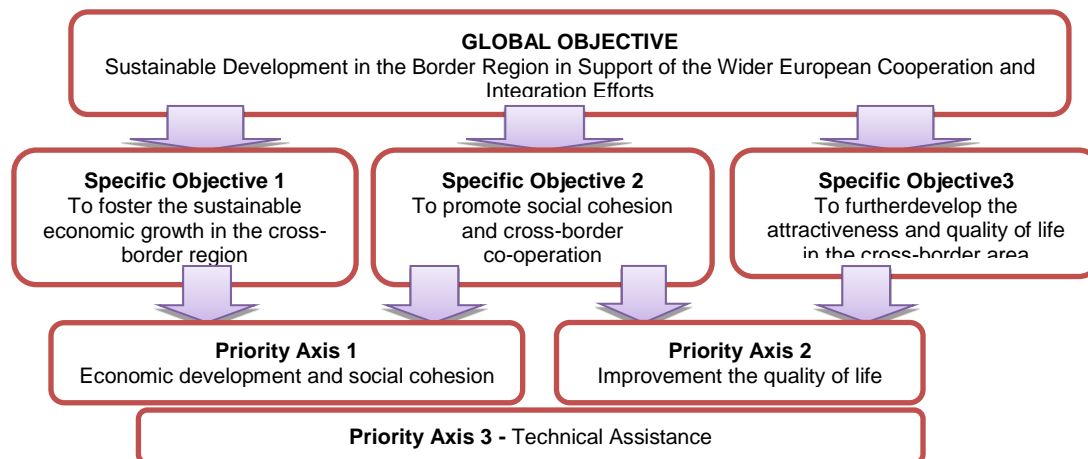
The Programme was approved by the European Commission with Decision C(2007) 6298 on 14 December 2007, amended with Decision C(2010) 3880 on 21 June 2010, Decision C(2012) 4936 on 17.07.2012 and Decision C(2012) 8373 on 14.11.2012 and Decision C(2014) 1536 on 12.03.2014. The description of management and control systems was approved by the Commission with letter ref. No DG REGIO E1 D(2010).

Within the period till December 2013 three open calls for proposals were launched under the programme which attracted a total of 310 applications. These quantitative figures are positive sign for the dynamics of the bilateral collaboration between the two neighbouring countries and show intensity of cooperation at stage of preparation of project proposals. At the same time the big number of common project proposals shows good will and increased interest in launching common cross-border initiatives contributing to the sustainable development of the region.

The number of subsidy contracts signed till the end of 2013 is 91, each involving 2 or 3 project partners and commonly implemented by 208 entities (municipalities, district administrations, non-profit organisations, cultural and educational institutions, etc.) The financed projects cover variety of thematic issues including improving small-scale public infrastructure, protecting the environment, investing in education and knowledge sharing, strengthening research and innovation, enhancing cultural exchange, promoting local and regional governance, etc. Projects under the programme are often relatively small in budget but create valuable cross-border partnership, influence territorial cohesion, contribute for sharing the European values and facilitating integration.

Cross-cutting issues are addressed in the programme through the implementation of specific actions (within the financed projects) contributing to the promotion of equality between men and women; environmental protection, as well as concrete actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent any discrimination.

The objectives and priority axis of the programme are presented in the figure below:





2.1. ACHIEVEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRESS

What has the Programme achieved?

The main results of the Programme achieved so far are:

- *Enhanced sustainable economic development of the border region and increased competitiveness of SMEs by establishing contacts across the border* – illustrated by 197 business and educational linkages created, improved access to new technology, 6672 SMEs involved/addressed in CBC projects, 56 new jobs created, 29 management and job-related training courses organised etc.
- *Improved correlations between people from the two sides of the border, positive changes in attitudes towards neighbours across the border and increased cross-border interaction and mobility* – through implementation of joint cooperation projects in different thematic fields, 13 training places created, 76 joint cultural events carried out, 83 awareness raising campaigns organised and more than 970 people participating in trainings among which 148 – from vulnerable groups. Networking structures or permanent networks created by the Programme are 32 and the majority of partnerships created are further developed and maintained.
- *Better preservation of natural resources and biodiversity* – by 13 partnerships for cases of natural disasters created and 6 permanent networks for environment protection and reasonable utilisation of resources set up, 6 joint environmental management plans developed etc.;
- *Strengthened potential for development of tourism and sustainable use of cultural and eco resources of the border region* – 64 tourist destinations developed, 51 joint tourist services created, 48 surrounding areas of cultural spots improved, 16 joint eco-itineraries created etc.

Thus, the global objective of the Programme - sustainable development in the border region in support of the wider European cooperation and integration efforts, was achieved.

Who has benefitted?

Until the end of 2013, three open calls were organised with 310 applications received and 384 project partners involved. The Programme was selected for participation even when alternative financing instruments were available. 91 subsidy contracts were awarded amounting to 18 370 823 euro, involving 208 project partners. Variety of regional and local entities - municipalities, district administrations, NGO's, cultural and educational institutions, associations and business support organisations, etc. are direct beneficiaries under the Programme. Indirectly, the entire population of the Programme area (more than 980 000 inhabitants according to statistical data for 2012) benefited from the results of the operations financed. Benefits could be described also in terms of building institutional capacity for shared management of EU financial assistance. In light of EU enlargement, the Programme facilitates the strategic planning, institution establishment and fosters the general EU orientation.





What evidence do you have for achievements?

Evidence for achievements is the Annual Implementation Report for 2013 reflecting among others: increasing interest for participation in joint projects; overachievement of the financial target for 2013 by 502 346 euro (Community funding); achievement or overachievement of the majority of targets for 2016 of the Programme result and output indicators. Reliable source of information is the Evaluation Report for on-going evaluation of the Programme (<http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=1&d=555>). Details about successful projects could be found in Annex C and from: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=56>.

2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the Programme:

- **Status of the projects**

1 st Call for Proposals	No. 2007CB16IPO007-2009-1
Launched on 14 September 2009	Budget: € 6 980 436.00
93 project proposals received within the deadline	
Assessment	July 2010 – February 2011
Contracting	May 2011 – August 2011
35 project financed	Total amount € 6 367 922.62

In 2011, under the First Call for Proposals, 35 projects in total amount of **6 367 922,62 euro**, of which 3 Subsidy contracts (ref. No 2007CB161PO007-2009-1-33, ref. No 2007CB161PO007-2009-1-34 and ref. No 2007CB161–PO007-2009-1-76) have been terminated due to withdrawal of project partners. Consequently, during 2013, seven (7) investment projects funded under the First Call for Proposals have been successfully implemented on the total amount of 1 961 290,17 euro. *List of finalised projects under the First Call for Proposals is presented in Annex B attached to the current report.*

The achievement of projects objectives and results are mainly checked during the final monitoring visits based on which it could be concluded that the planned projects activities have been successfully implemented in accordance with the provisions of the subsidy contracts. The cross-border character of implementation of the projects is evident in the constant and active communication and exchange of information between the project partners in terms of developing: Detailed action plans of the projects; Project Procurement Plans; Project Progress Reports; Implementation of joint activities. A lot of partnership relations have been created or prolonged during implementation of joint projects, large number of meetings, seminars, conferences or similar events have been organized.





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In relation with the financial implementation of the projects under First Call for Proposals, some general information as of 31st of December 2013 is presented in the table below.

Financial implementation of First Call for Proposals as of 31st of December 2013

(in euro, IPA and nat.funds)

Priority axis	Contracts	Total contracts amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
PA 1	17	2 824 291	549 981	1 807 172	2 357 153
PA 2	15	3 432 132	684 580	2 195 343	2 879 923
TOTAL	32	6 256 423	1 234 561	4 002 515	5 237 076

Comprehensive financial information is presented in p.2.1.3 and 2.1.4 of the current report.

2 nd Call for Proposals	No. 2007CB16IPO007-2011-2
Launched on 14 June 2011	Budget: € 5 869 638
122 project proposals received within the deadline	
Assessment	October 2011 – February 2012
Contracting	July 2012 April – May 2013
33 project financed	Total amount € 8 203 692.72

**Total amount after budget negotiations with the projects approved for financing*

In 2012-2013, under the Second Call for Proposals 33 projects were financed on the total amount of **8 203 692.72 euro with financial allocation for 2010, 2011 and 2012**, from which 1 Subsidy contract (ref.No 2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-62) has been terminated in order to prevent eventual double financing.

Consequently, during 2013, thirty two (32) projects funded under the Second Call for Proposals and on the amount of 8 036 290.52 euro continued with implementation of which 25 projects (15 of them were soft projects and 17 investment projects). By the end of year 2013, ten (10) soft projects have been successfully completed with approved final reports on the total amount of 947 815.13 euro. List of finalised projects under the Second Call for Proposals is presented in Annex B attached to the current report.

The achievement of projects objectives and results are mainly checked during the final monitoring visits by the JTS. Based on the final visits conducted to the abovementioned 10 soft projects, it could be assessed





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that the planned projects activities have been successfully implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Subsidy contracts. The cross-border character of implementation of the projects is evident in the constant and active communication and exchange of information between the project partners in terms of developing: Detailed action plans of the projects; Project Procurement Plans; Project Progress Reports; Implementation of joint activities. A lot of partnership relations have been created or prolonged during implementation of joint projects, large number of meetings, seminars, conferences or similar events have been organized.

In relation with the financial implementation of the projects under Second Call for proposals, some general information as of 31st of December 2013 is presented in the table below.

Financial implementation of Second Call for Proposals as of 31st of December 2013

(in euro, IPA and nat.funds)

Priority axis	Contracts	Total contracts amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
PA 1	14	3 516 952	703 060	488 232	1 191 292
PA 2	18	4 519 339	903 868	800 356	1 704 224
TOTAL	32	8 036 291	1 606 928	1 288 588	2 895 516

Comprehensive financial information is presented in p.2.1.3 and 2.1.4 of the current report.

3 rd Call for Proposals	No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3
Launched on 3 rd December 2012	Budget: € 3 083 616
95 project proposals received within the deadline	
Assessment	Mar – May 2013
Contracting	December 2013
27 project financed	Total amount € 3 926 809.00*

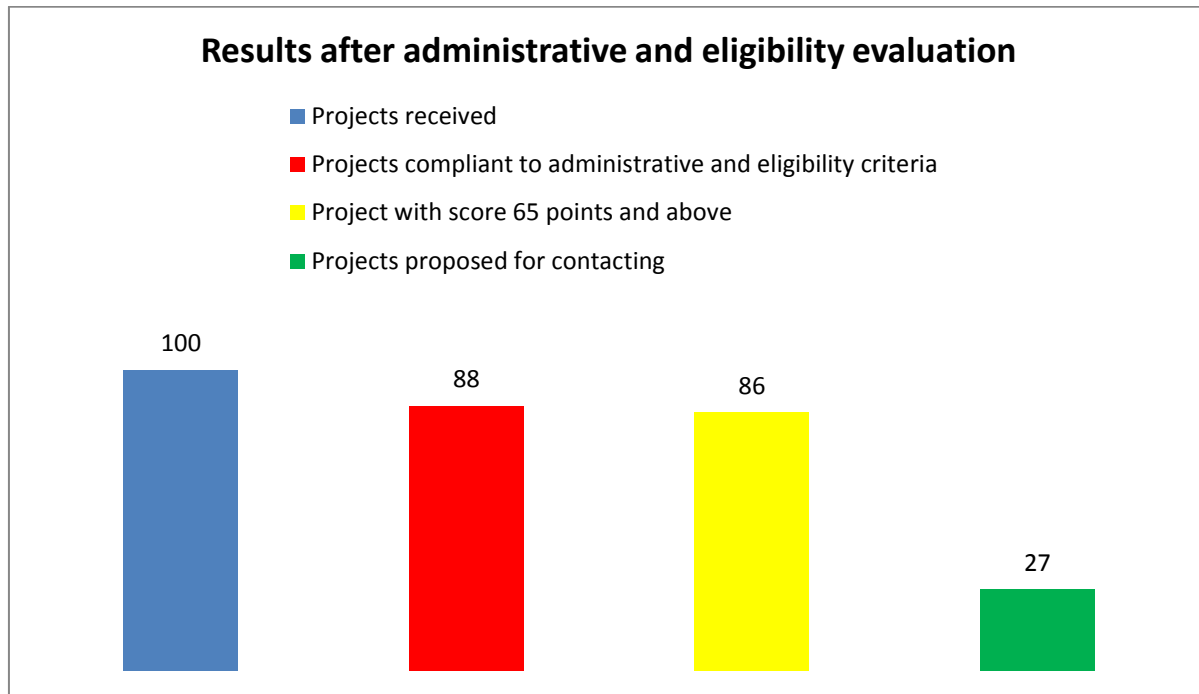
**Total amount after budget negotiations with the projects approved for financing*

The **Third Call for Proposals** under the Programme was launched on 3 December 2012 with deadline for submission of project proposals on 4 March 2013, 16:00 local time. The Third Call for Proposals was announced on the Programme web-page (<http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=62&d=119>), on the website of the Ministry of Regional Development, on the single information web-portal: <http://www.eufunds.bg> and in various electronic and press media.





The assessment sessions took place at the premises of JTS Kyustendil during the period 12 March – 30 May 2013. Results after administrative and eligibility evaluation of project proposals are available in the chart below:



The technical and quality assessment including the conclusions could be summarized as follow:

- *Priority Axis 1 “Economic Development and Social Cohesion”*

The total available budget for this Axis is 1 370 496 euro.

Number of applications proposed for approval/ contracting: **12** (1 investment; 11 soft).

Total amount of applications proposed for approval/ contracting : **1 347 700.82 euro**.

- *Priority Axis 2 Improvement the Quality of Life*

The total available budget for this Axis is 1 713 120 euro.

Number of applications proposed for approval/ contracting: **9** (3 investment; 6 soft).

Total amount of applications proposed for approval/ contracting: **1 674 435.12 euro**.

Totally 63 applications put on a reserve list:

- Priority Axis 1 Economic Development and Social Cohesion - 25 (6 investment; 19 soft);
- Priority Axis 2 Improvement the Quality of Life – 38 (18 investment; 20 soft).

With respect to the results of the quality assessment of the projects submitted under the Third Call for Proposals, and have in mind the fact that a lot of project of very good quality could not be funded due to lack





of funds, the MA and NA proposed savings by the implementation of projects under the First and Second calls to be used for funding of additional 6 projects from the reserved list ranked by their scores.

Based on the proposal the JMC on 10 October 2013 took decision to approve for contracting of 27 (twenty-seven) project proposals under the Third Call for Proposals.

The JMC gave a mandate to the MA, NA and JTS to carry out pre-contracting visits, including negotiations on the budget revisions for the provisionally selected projects for financing under Third Call for Proposals. Pre-contracting site visits for investment projects were conducted during the period 28.10. – 01.11.2013, whereas 7 Bulgarian partners and 7 Macedonian partners were visited in order to check the actual status of the investment sites envisaged for financing under the Third call for proposals.

During the period 06 – 08.11.2013, Budget negotiation procedures with 14 Bulgarian LPs and 17 Macedonian LPs were held by the appointed Negotiation Committee.. The purpose of the negotiation procedures was to optimize project partners' budget breakdowns, based on the specific recommendations provided by the external assessors and following the good practices for sound financial management applied by the MA.

As results of the pre-contracting site visits and the negotiation procedures, **twenty-seven (27) projects have been proposed for conclusion of subsidy contracts** under the Third call for proposals. The contracts have been signed in December 2013.

Contracted projects under Third Call for Proposals

Priority Axes:	Number of Projects	Amounts
Priority Axis 1: Economic development and social cohesion	17	2 093 641.87
Priority Axis 2: Improvement the quality of life	10	1 984 467.13
Total project contracted under Third Call for Proposals:	27	4 078 109.00

List of awarded projects under the Third Call for is presented in Annex B attached to the he current report.

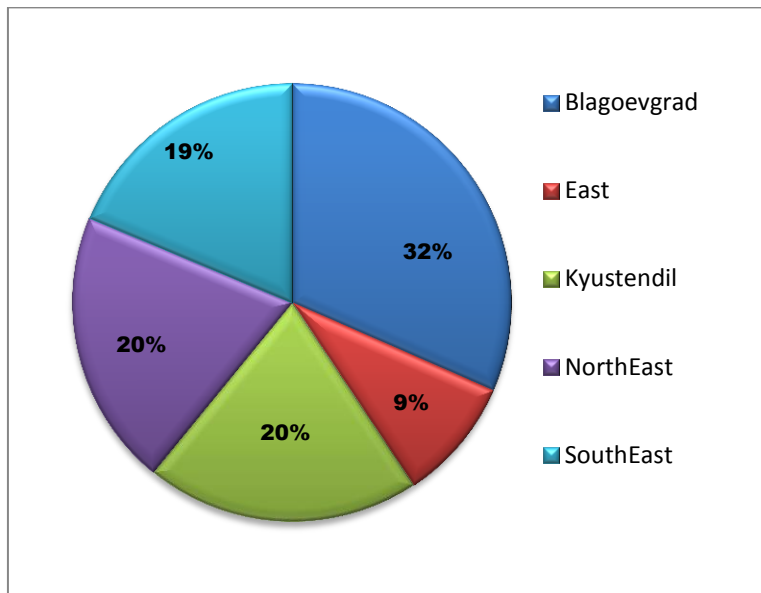
No payments were made to Third call projects until 31st of December 2013.



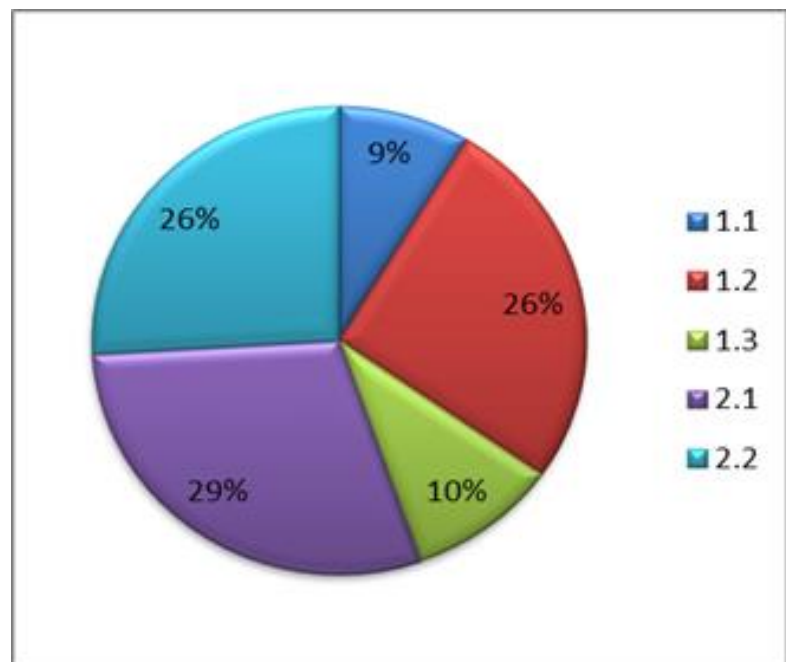


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Distribution of Funds under the Third Call by Regions:



Distribution of Third Call Projects by Measures:



- **Modifications of the subsidy contracts**

During the project life-cycle, due to the certain reasons, the following types of modifications in the subsidy contract concerning the project implementation have been requested by the beneficiaries:

1. Modifications requesting notification to the MA and approval by the JTC;
2. Modifications requesting approval by the MA;
3. Modifications requesting approval by the JMC and signature of Addendum.

The requested minor modifications by the beneficiaries during year 2013 related to prior notification to MA and approval by the JTS were related to changes concerning the project's content (modifications of the approved Application form related to change of the project action plan as well as minor changes in activities). The approval was given together with approval of the respective Progress Report.

The following types of modifications needed written approval by the MA were requested by the beneficiaries:

- Budget changes - modification related to budget reallocation between budget lines in the limit of 10% and modification related to budget reallocation between budget sub-lines. Inclusion of VAT in the separate budget line is another budget change approved by MA.
- Changes in project team are the most frequently requested modification during project implementation. Great number of project members had been replaced in the beginning and during projects' implementation. In order to meet the criteria for replacement, the newly-proposed project members had to demonstrate the qualifications and competences relevant to the ones the members proposed for replacement had.

Substantial changes of the Subsidy contracts have been subject to approval by the Joint Monitoring Committee and signature of addenda. In 2013 these were modifications concerning the extension of the project implementation period. Adenda for extension of implementation periods to 5 (five) projects under the Second Call for Proposals have been concluded with prior approval by JMC. The requests for extension of implementation period are mainly related to delays in projects implementation due to delays in the launch of the tender procedures and contract signature with the selected contractors, delays related to the implementation of the construction works and delays due to changes in the project teams.

Modifications concerning the administrative part of the project (change of bank account, contact details, address for communication) have been made by notification to MA.

2.1.2. Indicators

The indicators which will be used to monitor the progress at Programme level are shown in the table below:

Programme Result Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Joint information services established	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	7	5				
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline*	8										
Increased cross-	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	6	6				



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border movement of people and exchange of goods and services in the region	Target 2016	1.5%											
	Baseline*	46											
New Social Economic enterprises created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	4	0					
	Target 2016	2											
	Baseline*	20											
Improved environment for development of relationships across the border	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3					
	Target 2016	3%											
	Baseline*	18											
Projects actually applied	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	0					
	Target 2016	3%											
	Baseline*	1											
Decreased pollution in the region	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	1	2					
	Target 2016	2%											
	Baseline*	1											
Awareness –raising on environmental protection	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2	8					
	Target 2016	2.5%											
	Baseline*	32											
Increased attractiveness of the region based on preservation of natural resources and cultural heritage	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	9	5					
	Target 2016	2%											
	Baseline*	8											
Increased common cultural capital	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	6	6					
	Target 2016	2%											
	Baseline*	37											

2.1.3. Financial information (All financial data should be expressed in euro)

The total value of the Programme Bu is 19 944 697 euro out of which 16 952 994 euro are European funding and 2 991 703 euro national co-financing from state budgets by both partnering countries. The division of financial support between priorities 2007-2013 is shown in the table below:

Breakdown of priority axes by source of funding (in euro):

Priority	Community Funding	National Public funding	Total funding	Co-financing rate (%)
	(a)	(b)	c=a+b	a/c*100:b/c*100
Priority Axis 1 Economic development and social cohesion	6 781 198	1 196 682	7 977 880	85 :15
Priority Axis 2 Improve the quality of life	8 476 497	1 495 851	9 972 348	85 :15
Priority Axis 3 - Technical Assistance	1 695 299	299 170	1 994 469	85 :15
Total	16 952 994	2 991 703	19 944 697	85 :15

**The table above represents data for the period 2007-2013 according to the approved by the JMC on 12 October 2011 amendment related to new financial allocations covering the period 2012 and 2013 of the Programme which follows the adoption by the EC of the Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework 2012-2013 and approved Programme amendment related to the de-commitment procedure for 2011 (Decision C (2012) 8373 on 14.11.2012).*





- **N+3 Rule** (pursuant to Article 166 of the Council Regulation №1605 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)

The amount that had to be certified during 2013 in order to achieve the requirements of the N + 3 rule is 2 744 330 euro (IPA). The total amount of the IPA funds certified to 31.12.2013 is 3 246 676 euro. All the measures taken by the MA for speeding up the verification process (possibility for additional verifications of expenditures, trainings for beneficiaries, individual consultations etc.) resulted in the higher level of absorption of the funds by the project partners during 2013 over the target.

In the table below it is shown the accomplishment status of n+3 rule by 31 December 2013:

Programme Payment targets*					EC advance payments 2007-2009	EC reimbursements 2007-2012**	Total advance + reimbursements	Amounts to be included in application for payment in order to avoid N+3 Risk		
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013				2014	2015	2016
0	0	605 798	2 690 518	2 744 330	3 296 316	5 165 590	8 461 906	2 799 216	2 855 200	2 912 304

** Cumulated amounts 2007-2013

In comparison with the low amount declared to the European Commission for the previous two years and the challenging target for 2013, it could be regarded as a success that the target for 2013 is overachieved by 502 346 euro (IPA funding) and there is no loss of funds. This was result of the combined efforts of the MA and JTS (both main and branch offices) that palyed a proactive role in the smooth projects' implementation by providing individual consultations, publishing additional guidance and templates of the most frequently used project documents, tender dossiers and day-to-day communication in support to the project partners. From the financial point of view, as of 31 December 2013 the finalized First call projects are 29, and the Second call projects are 3.

- **Data from quality check performed by the Certifying Authority**

During 2013 the "National Fund" Directorate at the Ministry of Finance of Republic of Bulgaria, acting as Certifying Authority (CA) for the Programme has conducted a regular on-the-spot check before certification.

As a result of the common efforts of the joint management structures – MA, NA and JTS four certification report were submitted to CA in 2013 amounting at 3 248 889 euro (IPA funding). Based on the results from on-the spot checks, desk-based checks of the submitted MA's reports on certification, as well as on





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assessment of other available information by the Certifying Authority, 2 213 euro (IPA funding) expenditures were excluded from the total amount proposed for certification to EC by the CA.

2.1.4. Information about the breakdown of use of the funds

During the year 2013 the project beneficiaries submitted to the MA requests for interim and final payments amounted to **5 155 068 euro**.

*Priority axes by source of funding
(in euro, IPA and National funds)*

	Amount of the payment claims to the MA	Amount of Community and National contribution	Amount of contribution by the beneficiaries	Amount of payments made by the MA	Total certified amount by CA (for year 2013)
Priority axis 1	2 105 890	2 036 493	69 397	1 063 343	1 456 645
Priority axis 2	2 792 249	2 783 016	9 233	1 702 935	2 247 812
Priority axis 3	256 929	256 929	0	147 765	195 171
Grand total	5 155 068	5 076 438	78 630	2 914 043	3 899 628

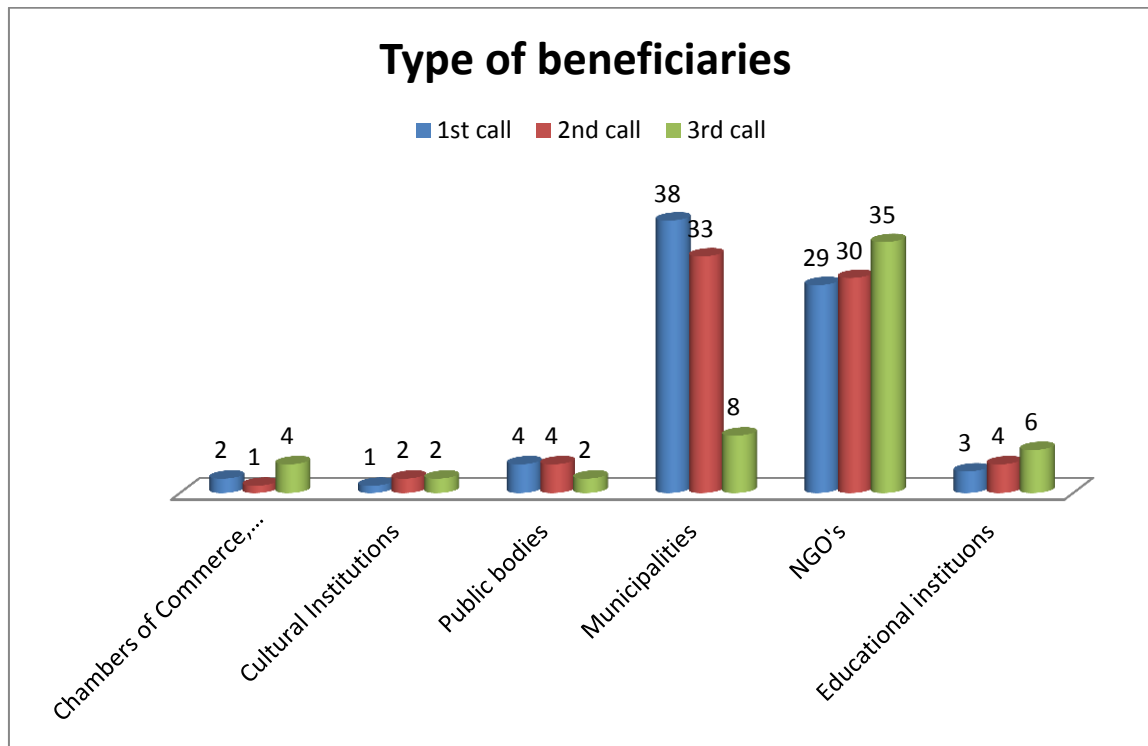
The projects under implementation within the First and Second calls for proposals are 91 for the total amount of 18 370 823 euro). In relation with the financial implementation of the projects under the First, Second and Third calls for proposals, the information as of 31 December 2013 (in euro) is presented in the table below:

Calls for proposals	Contracts	Total contracts amount <i>(IPA + national co-financing)</i>	Advance payments <i>(IPA + national co-financing)</i>	Interim and final payments <i>(IPA + national co-financing)</i>	Total payments <i>(IPA + national co-financing)</i>	Comparison total payments to total contracts amount <i>(IPA + national co-financing)</i>
1 st Call for Proposals	32	6 256 423	1 234 561	4 002 515	5 237 076	83.71%
2 nd Call for Proposals	32	8 036 291	1 606 928	1 288 588	2 895 516	36.03%
3 rd Call for Proposals	27	4 078 109	0	0	0	0%
Total	91	18 370 823	2 841 489	5 291 103	8 132 592	44.27%

2.1.5. Assistance by target groups

Wide range of target groups benefitted from the implementation of the programme such as citizens from the border region (including vulnerable groups), local and regional authorities, NGOs, cultural and educational institutions. Variety of entities carried out project activities, distributed by target groups (state of play as of 2013) as shown in the next chart:





2.1.6. Assistance repaid or re-used

Not applicable

2.1.7. Qualitative analysis

From a programme management point of view, during 2013 efforts were concentrated on ensuring a sufficient speed in the implementation of the programme in order to avoid de-commitment and to forward the dissemination activities. At the end of 2013, the total contracted amount was **18 370 823 euro and 44.27% of the total contracted amount have been already paid to beneficiaries.**

The delay in starting of the Programme was successfully overcome with significant progress in the contracting rate and the good financial results gathered in absorption of the programme's funds. In comparison with the low amount declared to the European Commission for 2011, the de-commitment situation in 2012 and the challenging target for 2013 (see the table above), it could be regarded as a success that the target for 2013 is overachieved by 502 346 euro (Community funding) and there is no loss of funds. This was result of the combined efforts of the MA, NA and JTS (both main and branch offices) that played a proactive role in the smooth projects' implementation by providing individual consultations, publishing





additional guidance and templates of the most frequently used project documents, tender dossiers and day-to-day communication in support to the project partners.

The level of absorption of funds was apparently increased in 2013 based on the optimization of the financial control process and the improvement of the FLC systems on the territories of the both countries. Based on the audit findings and recommendations given by the on-going evaluators, the MA has elaborated pool for the free-lance controllers in Bulgaria in accordance with their specialization by financing Instrument (IPA or ERDF). Additionally, the MA has adopted procedure for appointment of the controllers for the project's lifetime with regularly updated checks. As a result of the improvement of the control procedures, the process from the submission of a request for FLC verification until the reimbursement of the payment claim was accelerated and the period for its execution was shortened up to 90 days. Thus the financial control process could be assessed as efficient considering the overall duration of the process.

The projects under Programme priority axes are selected by two open calls for proposals and one call for proposals is open to restricted number of supported activities, to which public bodies and non-profit organisations from the border region can apply. Towards the end of 2013, 91 contracts under three calls for proposals were concluded.

Frequency of project partners among different Programme target groups shows the following distribution: 5 cultural institutions, 7 chambers of commerce, 10 public bodies, 13 educational institutions, 79 municipalities and 94 non-governmental organisations.

The contracted projects are almost equally distributed between the two programme's Priority axes. The investment projects supported under both calls for proposals comprise about half of all financed projects, and to these projects was allocated about 80% of the Programme funding. This reflects the demand for support and the priority given to investment projects by JMC.

The distribution of the support by partner country is quite equitable. The supported projects have quite wide regional scope. Out of 50 eligible municipalities, projects are implemented on the territory of 39. The total population of the municipalities, which benefit from the Programme, is 90% of the target region population. The distribution of funding by eligible target region is to a large extent proportionate to the regional population and territory.

The horizontal themes are also taken into consideration through the standard format of the application form developed in the context of the Programme. The MA procedures for ensuring compliance and integration of the horizontal priorities are in line with the established best practices. In the selection process, priority is given to projects contributing to horizontal objectives and in implementation, compliance and integration to the horizontal priorities is reported by beneficiaries and verified by the controllers and JTS.





During 2013, no significant problems were encountered for the programme implementation and no risks events were identified for the programme performance.

With regard to the preparation of the Programme 2014 - 2020, the year 2013 was assigned to the wide discussion for the geography of the IPA programmes, which Bulgaria will manage in the new programming period. The initial European Commission proposal for combining of the eligible territories of the three current IPA programmes with Serbia, the former Republic of Macedonia and Turkey as bilateral programmes into one quadrilateral CBC programme "Bulgaria Gateway" was not accepted by some of the partnering countries. Discussions were finalized with the favourable position of the European Commission (letter with Ref. Ares(2013)3245606-15/10/2013) and their favorite opinion for continuation of the bilateral character of the three IPA programmes between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and the former Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey. Shortly after that, the first meeting of the Joint Working Group for preparation of the Bulgaria – the former Republic of Macedonia IPA CBC programme 2014 - 2020 took place in Sofia on 14 November 2013. A service contract for Programme preparation was signed on 28 November 2013 with Project Planning and Management Consortium.

2.2. INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY LAW

There are no problems encountered relating to the compliance with Community law in the implementation of the Programme.

The Programme has been prepared in accordance with Community Strategic Guidelines 2007 – 2013 priorities – especially in the area of improving of the attractiveness of the cross-border region and further developing of the human resources.

The Programme is compliant with the main EU strategic documents, notably with the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies, targeting sustainable development, equal opportunities and cross-border partnership.

The overall strategic goal and the priority axes of the Programme are fully compliant with main Bulgarian and Macedonian national strategies and programmes, which are indicated in the Programme document. In order to ensure sound financial management of the Programme, the MA initiated a respective procedure and Decree No 222 of Council of Ministries for eligibility of expenditures was adopted on 11 September 2009.

The **Memorandum of Understanding** between both partnering countries for the implementation of the Programme was signed on 31 August 2010. The document lays down the general rules for the implementation and financial management of the Programme as well as defines the bodies involved in the management and control and allocation of functions (responsibilities and rights) within each body involved into the implementation of the Programme.





2.3 SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND MEASURES TAKEN TO OVERCOME THEM

No significant problems for the programme implementation were encountered during 2013.

The risk of de-commitment was successfully avoided in 2013 and the financial targets were overachieved on the base of the joint efforts made by the MA, NA and JTS for speeding up the programme implementation and the relevant procedures. The measures taken for avoiding de-commitment are related to:

- Effective coordination between the Programme authorities as regular meetings and close cooperation;
- Scenario for achieving the financial targets and programmes objectives discussed regularly between Programme authorities;
- Overcontracting of the accumulated savings under the programme.
- Improvement of the relevant monitoring, verification and control procedures in order to be reduced the administrative burden;
- Quarterly based risk assessment for identification of projects and themes/situations at risk;
- Action plan in regards to the recommendations given by the on-going evaluation;
- Facilitation of the beneficiaries in project generation and implementation by the JTS through variety of actions as trainings, open days, day-to-day consultations, close monitoring during the project lifetime and guidance for programme procedures and PRAG rules.

2.4 CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (IF RELEVANT)

The **Programme document** drafted jointly by the two countries through a large partnership with national, regional and local stakeholders was approved by the European Commission with Decision C(2007) 6298 on 14 December 2007, amended with Decision C(2010) 3880 on 21 June 2010, Decision C (2012) 4936 on 17.07.2012, Decision C (2012) 8373 on 14.11.2012 and Decision C (2014) 1536 on 12.03.2014. It sets out the general framework of intervention of IPA in the Programme cross-border area.

In line with Article 166 of Council Regulation (EC, EURATOM) 1605/2002 and Article 5 of the Financial Agreement between the European Commission and Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in 2013 the European Commission has started the procedure for automatic de-commitment of funding of total amount of 464 180 euro from IPA under the Programme. Based on the implementation of the projects under the First call for project proposals, the MA prepared revised financial plan and amended the Programme. The amendment has been approved by the European Commission by Decision C (2014) 1536 on 12.03.2014.





2.5 COMPLEMENTARITY WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Complementarity with other financial instruments is ensured through mechanisms foreseen in the programming document. The coordination of the Programme with other plans / programmes financial instruments is provided by the national coordination structures in both participating countries.

The representatives of national coordination structures participate in JMC sessions. Representatives from ministries managing sectoral programmes also participate as observers in JMC sessions ensuring coordination and avoiding overlapping. Another useful tool for this purpose is the Management Information System of the Programme.

- **Coherence of the Programme with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region**

Geographically, Bulgaria with its whole territory is within the target areas of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, while the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia part is outside it. Thus, the Programme area is partially covered by the Strategy for the Danube Region. However, project activities implemented on Bulgarian territory are coherent to the objectives of the three of the pillars and seven of the priority areas of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

For example, 24 of the contracted projects are coherent to the objectives of *Pillar A 'Connecting the Danube Region'*, the majority of which (20 projects) support the objectives of the Priority area 3 'To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts' and the remaining relate to Priority area 2 'To encourage more sustainable energy'.

To the Strategy for the Danube Region *Pillar B 'Protecting the environment'*, 11 of the supported projects have relevance to the management of environmental risks (Priority area 5) or preserving biodiversity and landscapes (Priority area 6).

To the objectives of *Pillar C 'Building Prosperity'* are relevant 38 projects supported. Of these, 10 projects are coherent with the objectives of priority area 7 'To develop the Knowledge Society', 13 projects – Priority area 8 'To support the competitiveness of enterprises', and 15 projects – Priority area 9 'To invest in people and skills'.

Detailed information about some projects which are relevant for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region was presented in the previous AIR.

2.6 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

Monitoring of the Programme is focused on ensuring quality of implementation and compliance with applicable rules and procedures. The Description of management and control systems ensuring reliable accounting, monitoring and financial reporting system The European Commission issued a letter ref No DG





REGIO E1 D (2010) with positive assessment on the Description of management and control systems (in accordance with Article 115 and 116 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007) on Programme.

- **Implementation manuals and Management Information System (MIS)**

Programme Implementation Manual (PM)

The legal basis for elaboration of the Programme Manual (PM) is, as a general rule, the EC regulations and decisions implementing the IPA and the programming documents concerning the programme. The PM and its annexes and appendixes describe in detail the specific rules and procedures for implementation of the Programme. It has been jointly developed by the MA, NA and Joint Technical Secretariat.

In order to improve the consistency and to facilitate the implementation of management and control procedures, the Managing Authority has elaborated a common manual (IPA CBC Manual) for the three IPA CBC Programmes, managed by the Bulgaria.

During the reporting period some amendments concerning specific rules, procedures, chapters and annexes have been made. The system for revisions, updates, modifications and development of the Programme Manual aims to tackle with amendments in the three IPA Programmes (where applicable), legislative modifications or unexpected socio-economic development, which has a direct impact on the implementation of the Programmes. During 2013, amendments to the IPA CBC Manual were approved in May and June 2013 related to optimization and clarification of the procedures; reflection of the recommendations given by the Certifying Authority and Audit Authority; improvement of the monitoring and risk assessment procedures, in order the distribution of tasks between responsible bodies (MA and JTS) to be clearly distinguished and to avoid delays in the management process, etc.

Project Implementation Manual (PIM)

The Project implementation manual (PIM) is a guiding tool prepared by the MA, NA and JTS to help the beneficiaries in the process of project management and implementation. PIM is prepared as a guide-book, which consists of several main topics, as: Legal and Institutional Framework, Contracting and contract's modifications, Project's implementation, Procurement, Financial Management and Control, Information and Publicity, Monitoring and audit of the project, etc.

During the year 2013, some amendments and clarifications were made to the PIM for the projects funded under the Second call for Proposals and its annexes, as reflected into versions 2/February 2013, 3/March 2013 and 4/November 2013. The amendments were caused by substantial changes of thresholds for public procurement procedures (2013) as well as some uncertainty with regard to applicable regulations.

In 2013, PIM for projects funded under the Third Call for Proposals was also elaborated and published.

The updated and improved Project implementation manuals are available at Programme's web-page: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/en/page.php?c=19>.





Management Information System (MIS)

In order to facilitate the overall implementation of the Programme, at both programme and project level, the Management Information System is created as practical tool for performing the task of the relevant authorities (Managing Authority, National Authority, Certifying Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat). The information system is operational and under updating its functionality. The system's scope covers all joint programme and project level tasks as follows:

- *Programme and call for proposals management:* the adequately recorded programme data creates the basis for all sorts of further monitoring activities. Thus programme data like priority structure, budget, indicators etc. are recorded in order to facilitate programme-level monitoring and aggregations.

- *Project module:* functionality of the project section ensures tracking the whole life-cycle of projects including TA projects as the system facilitates the management and monitoring of a great number of project related tasks (contract and modification data, implementation data - management of progress reports and request for FLC, etc.).

- *Financial management:* the financial section is also a crucial part of the system's functionality. It ensures the sound management of Community funds.

- *Reporting:* in addition to the project applications and contracts data, a section for programme reporting and evaluation will be established during the current functionality's updating of the system.

Additionally in 2013 the following changes were implemented:

- Patch 1.4.12021013 – Reorganization of Calls, Projects and update of the mapping of XLS files in the MIS

- Patch 1.4.01042013 – Security and interface improvements, suggested by the audit authority

- Patch 1.4.15042013 – Changes in the work-flow of application forms processing

- Patch 1.4.11062013 – Online form for application for access in MIS, additional interface enhancements

- Patch 1.4.09122013 – Reports section is added with several tabular reports and ability to export data in Excel and PDF formats.

- **Monitoring measures and risk assessment procedure**

The overall monitoring at the projects level is carried out by the JTS with main office located in Kyustendil, Bulgaria and a branch office placed in Strumica. The JTS implements the main monitoring tools – on the spot checks and checks of PPR, verifying the proper implementation of the projects in conformity with the provisions of the Subsidy Contract, objectives of the Application form and Programme rules.





During the reporting period, *Initial monitoring meetings* were held in the period from July to September 2013 in the premises of the JTS (Kyustendil and Strumica) of 12 projects under the Second Call for proposals financed with 2012 programme financial allocation. The main purpose of the initial monitoring visits is to be checked the available resources for the project implementation, to be discussed the readiness for the tender procedures and the project implementation strategy; and to be performed the initial risk assessment and etc.

During the year 2013, on the basis of the Risk assessment analysis and Risk response plan 4 *ad-hoc monitoring visits* of the projects under the First and Second calls for proposals have been performed by JTS. The subject of the monitoring visit is the progress of the project to be checked in compliance with the terms and conditions set out in the implementation plan and the physical check to be performed of the investment activities and services delivered. In the period between 17 April and 31 May 2013, JTS has organized technical meetings in Kyustendil, with project beneficiaries from the Second call facing delays or difficulties in implementation. During these meetings it was discussed thoroughly the problematic issues as the appropriate resolving measures were formulated.

During the year 2013, on the basis of the Annual Working Plan for Monitoring, 21 *final monitoring visits* have been performed – 14 under First and 7 under Second Calls for proposals. Elaborated annexes 11.4.1 *Monitoring site visit reports by JTS* have been uploaded in MIS – for detailed information. All of given recommendations were implemented and checked projects were classified with different type of risk according the stage of their implementation.

Risk assessment procedure

Risk assessment is a continuous, forward-looking process and should address issues that could endanger achievement of the planned objectives. A continuous risk management approach is applied to effectively anticipate and mitigate the risks that have critical impact on each project, as well as the cumulative effect of all risks on Programme level.

The risk assessment under the programme is carried out by a Risk Management Group (RMG) consisting of MA and JTS representatives. The main task of the RMG is to perform risk assessment through determination a baseline categorization of potential risks events and subsequent analysis and assessment. The RMG prioritizes the identified risks and provide a Risk response plan to reduce the likelihood or consequences of the risk impact. The Scope of the assessment covers the following main aspects:

✓ **Institutional Risks.** Assessment of the project partners' technical capacity to manage the project (incl. leadership, structures, human resources, formal and informal management systems, contractual commitments, assignment of responsibilities, quality of work product, communications between the partners, etc.);





✓ **Operational Risks.** Review and assessment of whether the performance characteristics (i.e. planning and organization of project activities; implementation procedures, methods, standards and systems; measurable estimates of project outcomes; coordination of activities between groups; documenting the project, etc.) are in line with accepted project management practice;

✓ **Procurement Risks.** Assessment of the risks related with subcontracting management, i.e. whether subcontracting was well defined and planned; whether the procurement processes were documented properly and the selection process was carried out objectively; and whether the procurement rules were well understood and strictly applied;

✓ **Financial Risks.** Assessment of the financial liabilities associated with the project, including operational and maintenance costs, PPs' own contribution, financial reporting, etc.

For the risk assessment needs of project/programme level Risk Management Group /RMG/ has been established with order № RD-02-14-565/18.06.2013 and consists of Chairperson /representative of CBC External Borders Department/ and representatives of Financial Management and Control Department and JTS, Kyustendil.

After first risk assessment session of the RMG in September 2013 (based on the elaborated by JTS quarterly Analysis of the project progress under the Second call and presented progress reports) were detected risk categories/criteria in the following levels: Institutional, Operational, Procurement and Financial risk. Annexes 11.9 *Risk assessment* has been prepared for the 14 risky projects. Information has been summarized within the Annex 11.10 *Summary Project Risk Assessment Report*. 3 projects have been assessed as risky in the Institutional risk level in the risk category *Project management and project partnership*. 13 projects have been assessed as risky in the Operational risk level in the following risk categories: *Contract modifications; Project Implementation and reporting*. 3 projects have been assessed as risky in the Procurement risk level in the risk category *Sub-tendering procedures*. 8 projects have been assessed as risky in the Financial risk level in the risk category *Financial implementation*.

Second risk assessment session of the RMG was held in January 2014. Identified risky projects under the Second call have been assessed.

The RMG proposed risk reaction and measures which determined options and actions to reduce the likelihood or consequences of risks impact on the project's objectives under the Second call. JTS Kyustendil carried out the actions of the risk response plan and observed the planning and organization of projects activities, timetable and outcomes in the subject of early warning about substantial delays in projects implementation or problems with achievement of the projects objectives.

Where the risks occurred the MA/JTS took the following **measures** to mitigate the risks impact for the projects under the Second call:





- Informing LP /PPs/ about their risk rating – gave statements of risk assessment for detected risky levels – with out. letters, by fax;
- Requiring clarification from the LP /PPs/ about the detected risky event/s;
- Requiring information from the LP /PPs/ about the measures taken to overcome the problem/s;
- Sending letters by fax to LPs /PPs/ with recommendations to overcome the problem/s (letters for strengthen the management of the project activities and financial discipline; reminder letters, related with timely implementation/forthcoming finalization of the projects);
- Discussing measures/gave statements to overcome the problem/s with the LP /PPs/ by phone (as alternative financial sources, improvement the quality of the submitted reporting documents – PPRs, RfPs, changes in the project time schedule, extension of the project implementation period, etc.);
- Uploading questions & answers section and samples of the most frequently used documents (Project progress reports; Request for payments; Time sheets etc.; Tender dossiers for the different types of procurement procedures) on the programme web site;
- Providing timely and individual consultation of project teams in project implementation issues (tender procedures, preparation of the PPRs, RfPs, etc.);
- Participation as observers in the tender opening sessions;
- Organization of technical meetings for beneficiaies in JTS premises to discusse and avoid potential risks/problems in project implementation;
- Organization and conduction of ad hoc monitoring visits on the spot.

- **First Level Control system**

According to the Description of the Management and Control System, the MA implements control on the ongoing projects through First level control (FLC) system. The FLC system is developed in accordance with Art. 16 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 in order to make possible in the framework of the Programme to verify:

- Delivery of the products and services (as described in the approved Application Form which is the reference point for the approval decision regarding the activities and finance; and/or the project subsidy contract – which sets the legal background for the implementation of the project.);
- Soundness of the expenditure declared;
- Compliance of such expenditure with Programme, EC and national rules.

Bulgaria set up a decentralized FLC system and the same approach was adopted by the partnering country. In Bulgaria the First level control is carried out by Controllors selected by the DG “Territorial Cooperation Management” within the Ministry of Regional Development in accordance with respective national rules, authorized by the Ministry in its capacity of Managing Authority for the Programme.





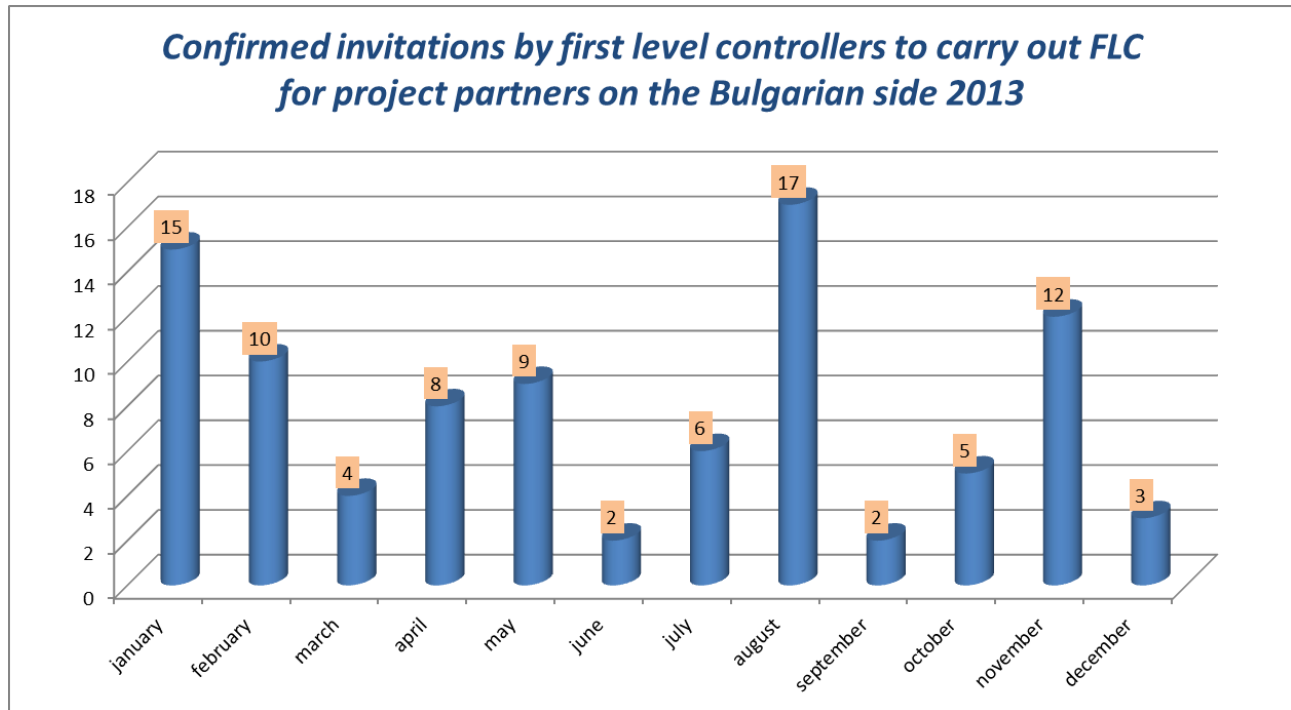
According to the Description of the Management and Control System, control over performance of the first level controllers is at two levels:

- 100% formal cross-check of the documents presented by First Level Controllers;
- Quality control on a “sample basis” in percentage of the number of the controllers who have executed FLC within quarterly period. The first level controllers covered by the sample are subject to documentary and/or on-the-spot quality checks. The quality control over performance of the first level controllers is carried out by documentary check, on-the-spot checks on a sample basis and checks in result of received notice/signal for potential irregularity and/or appeals from project partners.

During the year 2013, the FLC system was duly implemented for the purposes of verification of expenditures for amounts spend by the project partners implementing projects signed under the First and the Second call for proposals. Within the reporting period, the MA took measures for improvement of the system, based on the audit findings and in order to enhance effectiveness of the FLC controllers performing verifications for Bulgarian project partners. Within the established pool of external independent controllers separation depending on the type of territorial cooperation programmes for which FLC is carried out was introduced, consequently a list of “IPA specialised” first level controllers was established in order to enhance performance and facilitate them in operating with single set of rules, procurement requirements, reporting templates, etc. The possibility to avoid rotation of first level controllers who carry out verifications for single subsidy contract was considered in order to enhance effectiveness taking into account that the first level controller who is aware with the contract performing first on-the-spot visit will be in position to perform more efficient verifications on the same subsidy contract than another controller who need to get aware with the project at later stage of implementation. Consequently, the controllers included in the list for IPA Programmes, were assigned to perform all verifications under the same project. In order to optimise the efficient use of resources, for the subsidy contracts under the Second and Third call for proposals the first level control is performed on six months periods with an option a request for FLC to be allowed on three months basis depending on the spent amounts.

Within the year 2013, 82 requests for First level of control were submitted by project partners. The chart below represents the flow of invitations to First Level Controllers on monthly basis for the Bulgarian side.

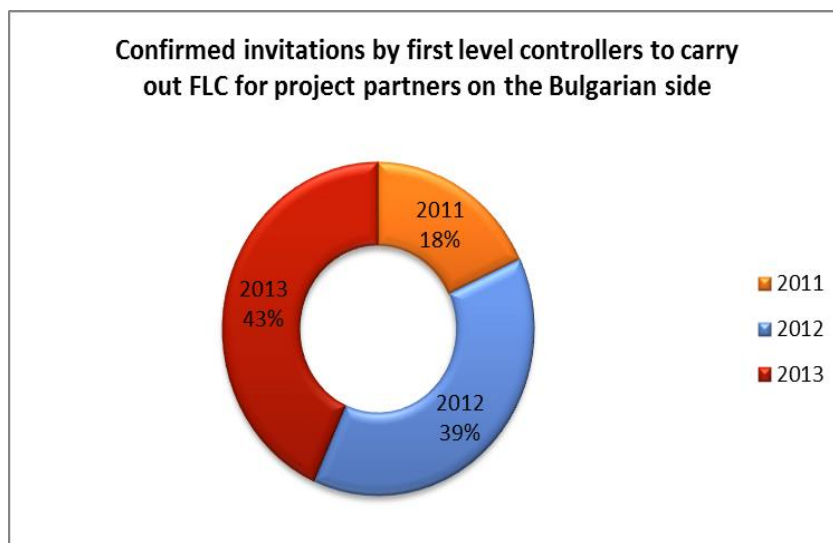




During 2013, the Bulgarian First Level Controllers encompassed 93 on-the-spot visits on the premises of respective project partners in Bulgaria which represented 40 projects.

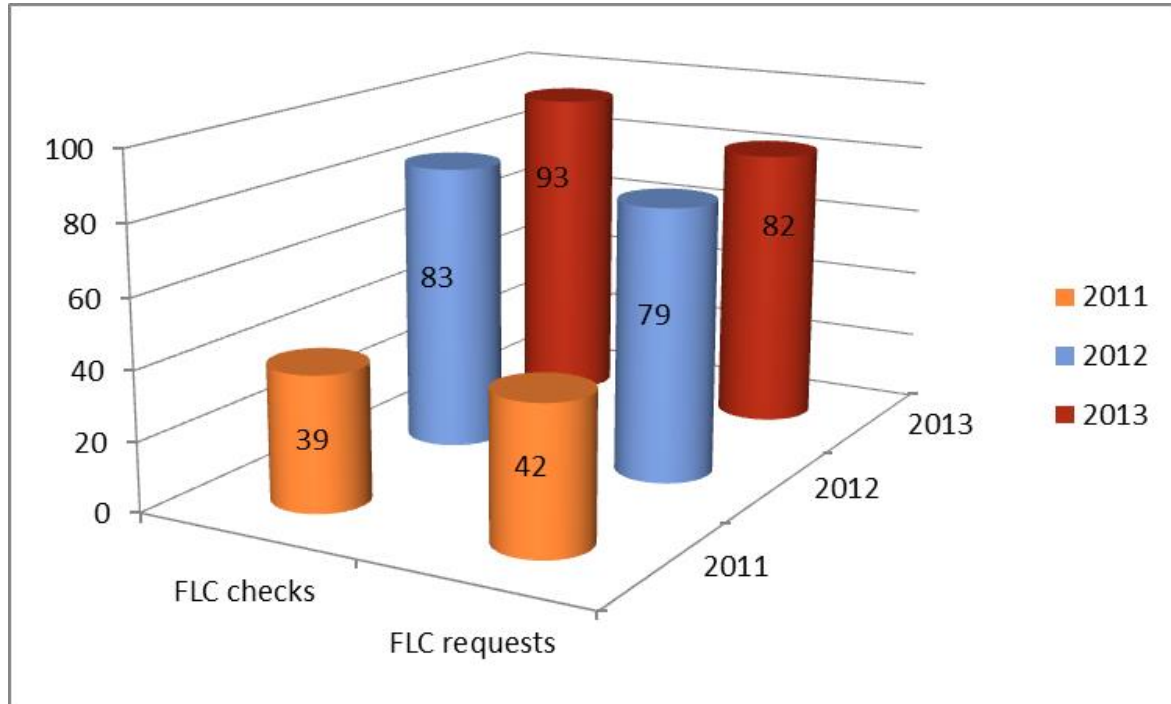
Comparison related to intensity of the First level control workload

The confirmed invitations in 2013 for FLC for Bulgarian project partners within the programme are 82 which represents share of 43%.





The summarized data related to confirmations by First level controllers for performing FLC on Bulgarian project partners under the programme show dominated share for year 2013 in comparison with 2012 and 2011.



In terms of sufficient increase of workload the trend is positive but regarding the rhythm of financial absorption on quarterly basis, there is no sufficient level of predictability regarding the number of submitted requests for FLC on behalf of the respective lead partners implementing subsidy contracts.

- **Audits under the Programme**

System audit

In accordance with the Annual audit plan of AEUFEEA, the AA performed the third system audit under the Programme in the period August – October 2013. The system audit objective was to obtain reasonable assurance about the effective functioning of the management and control systems of the Managing Authority, National Authority, FLC system and JTS under the Programme in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) 718/2007. The audit was carried out at the Managing Authority – General Directorate “Territorial Cooperation Management” at the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria and in the National Authority - Ministry of Local Self-Government of Republic of Macedonia.





The audit activities were performed by joint audit team, including auditors from AEUFEEA and Audit Body - AA for audit of instrument for pre-accession assistance - for the checks on the territory of Republic of Macedonia. The scope of the audit includes the key requirement 7 „Necessary preventive and corrective action where systemic errors are detected by the audit“. The audit team examined the respective control activities undertaken by the MA and NA during the period from 30 July 2012 to 30 July 2013.

The preliminary results of the checks of the NA, FLC system and JTS Antenna on the territory of Republic of Macedonia were communicated with NA's management and sent to the Audit authority on 28 February 2014. The Audit Body gave an assessment of the management and control systems at the NA, the FLC system and the JTS Antenna, according to the four-level scale, at level 1 – Works well, only minor improvements are needed.

Based on the overall analyzes carried out the assessment of the Audit Authority regarding the scope of the audit assignment is „Works well, only minor improvements are needed“ (grade 1).

Audit of operations

Within the 2013 the AEUFEEA has conducted audit of operations for assurance that the certified expenditures are correct and the underlying transactions are legal and regular. During the audit mission expenditures certified in the period 01.01.2012 - 31.12.2012 were checked. The AA has underlined three findings with financial impact, amounted to 7 050,95 euro, for which the relevant corrective measures have been undertaken by MA.

- **Evaluations under the Programme**

Multi-annual Evaluation Plan for the Programme was elaborated and approved by JMC on 11 May 2011. The Evaluation Plan defines and explains the overall coordination arrangements for the on-going evaluation process under the programme. Following the evaluation plan, the Programme is subject to three evaluations aiming to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance and the strategy and implementation of the Programme, taking due attention to sustainable development issues and horizontal objectives.

Evaluation of the communication plan

The first programme evaluation was performed in 2011 and aimed at examination of the level of achievement of the objectives set out in the Communication plan for the period of 2007 - 2010. Detailed information about the findings and recommendation from the internal analysis was presented in the Annual implementation report for 2012.





Examination of output and results indicators which are going to be achieved in result of project implementation under First and Second Call for proposals

As result from the internal analyses of the output and result indicators in 2011 and 2012 performed by the MA, several measures were implemented in view of improving Programme performance:

- Methodology for output and result indicators under the Programme was uploaded to the Programme web-page and recommendation for using the Methodology during the preparation of project proposals was incorporated in the Guidelines for applicants under the Third Call for proposals.
- Risk assessment on a quarterly basis was carried out in order to take timely and adequate measures to mitigate and overcome any shortcomings during implementation of the subsidy contracts.
- In the Guidelines for Applicants for the Third call for proposals there is an exhaustive list of eligible activities, to achieve concentration of resources to priorities, which were not sufficiently well addressed by the projects, funded under the first two calls for proposals. The list of eligible activities is targeted according to indicators that were identified as underachieved, for example: eligible projects under the Third call for proposals will be with focus on ICT and knowledge economy under Priority Axis 1 and with focus on protection and management of environment – under Priority Axis 2.

A precise and reliable source of information about the state of achievement and relevance of all Programme output and result indicators is the Final report for on-going evaluation of the Programme (Consortium ECORYS-FED, Final Evaluation Report) which is available from the Programme web-site at: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=1&d=555>.

On-going evaluation of the Programme

A global price service contract for “Elaboration of On-going evaluation of Bulgaria - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA CBC programme (2007-2013)”, with reference number 2007CB161IPO007-TA-2012-2 was concluded between the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and the Consortium ECORYS-FED on 13.11.2012 with a duration of the contract of 8 months.

The purpose of the ongoing evaluation was to assess the interim results of the Programme implementation and the effectiveness of the Programme implementation system; and to elaborate recommendations for improvements, contributing to the successful implementation of the Programme and the preparation for the new programming period.

The main sources of information of the evaluation included desk research and primary data collection. The desk research included review of European and national strategic documents; Programme management documents; project documents; monitoring databases.





Primary data was collected through various qualitative and quantitative methods, including in-depth interviews, on-the-spot visits to projects, online survey of beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants, online survey of first level controllers.

Findings concerning relevance, consistency and complementarity of the Programme objectives

- The changes in the contexts since the adoption of the Programme have no significant effect on the strength, weaknesses opportunities and threats of the border region. The Programme remains relevant to the needs of the target region.
- The Programme amendments towards the end of 2012 were small and had not affected its strategy.
- The external coherence of the Programme with EU and national strategic documents, existing at the time of the elaboration of the Programme, was confirmed as high by the ex-ante evaluation and remains strong. The programme is coherent and complimentary with the new strategic documents - Europe 2020 Strategy and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

Findings concerning progress in contracting and payment of funds

- The investment projects supported under both calls for proposals comprise about half of all financed projects, and to these projects was allocated about 80% of the Programme funding. This reflects the demand for support and the priority given to investment projects by JMC.
- The distribution of the support by partner country is quite equitable.
- The supported projects have quite wide regional scope. Out of 50 eligible municipalities, projects are implemented on the territory of 39. The total population of the municipalities, which benefit from the Programme, is 90% of the target region population. The distribution of funding by eligible target region is to a large extent proportionate to the regional population and territory.

Recommendations for the next period

- Clear demarcation between spheres of interventions and between Priority axes.
- The Programme indicators to be broken down by gender, where possible.
- All tourism related actions to be programmed under one sphere of intervention only.





- A border-regions tourism strategy to be elaborated, which to outline destinations and services with highest potential for tourism development, to identify priorities and to integrate tourism projects that will be supported in the future.
- The MA to consider giving priority to projects, proposing strengthening or extending of existing networks and building on successful projects.
- The support to projects that over-rely on external expertise and fail to provide for building sufficient capacity of the partner organisations to be limited.
- The requirement for mandatory inclusion of soft actions under the investment projects to be reconsidered, as it leads to support of soft actions with low level of sustainability.

An executive summary and a full list of conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation Report, including recommendations related to quality and effectiveness of the project generation, selection and contracting process; quality and effectiveness of the project implementation rules and systems; first level control system, and quality of the Programme monitoring system are available from the Programme web-site at: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=1&d=555>.

According to the timetable of activities, the Final Evaluation Report was submitted on 15 July 2013, approved by the JMC with protocol of 07.10.2013 and finally accepted by the Contracting Authority with letter of approval dated 17.10.2013.

An Indicative plan to implement the recommendations elaborated within the contract for “Ongoing evaluation of Bulgaria – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross border Programme (2007-2013)” was prepared and discussed internally by MA at a workshop in Borovets, Bulgaria (13 – 15 December 2013).

2.7 National performance reserve (where applicable and only for the annual implementation report submitted for 2010)

Not applicable.

3. IMPLEMENTATION BY PRIORITY

3.1 PRIORITY AXIS 1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION

Objective

To increase the overall competitiveness of the cross border economy and to improve social development and social cohesion

Sphere of intervention 1.1 “Economic Development”

Sphere of intervention 1.2 “Social Cohesion”

Sphere of intervention 1.3 “Project Preparation”





3.1.1. Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

- **Information on the physical and financial progress of the priority**

According to the revised financial plan for the period 2007-2013 funds available for Priority axis 1 amounted to 7 977 880 euro (out of which 6 781 198 euro - IPA funding and 1 196 682 euro - national co-financing).

The projects under the Priority axis 1 were selected by open calls for proposals, to which public bodies and non-profit organisations from the border region can apply. In total 48 projects were financed.

Under the First Call for proposals, the projects implemented under Axis 1 were 17, out of which 9 under the Measure 1.1 “Economic Development”, 7 under Measure 1.2 “Social Cohesion” and 1 project under Measure 1.3 “Project preparation”. The total value of the First call contracts under Priority axis 1 amounts to 2 824 291 euro. All First call projects under Priority axes 1 were successfully completed by the end of 2013. During the reporting period 3 contracts under Priority Axis 1 were finalised.

Under the Second Call for proposals, the projects implemented under Axis 1 were 14, of which 5 under the Measure 1.1 “Economic Development”, 9 projects under Measure 1.2 “Social Cohesion”. No projects were financed under Measure 1.3 “Project preparation”. The total value of the Second call contracts under Priority axis 1 amounts to 3 516 952 euro. Within the reporting period 5 out of 14 projects were successfully completed.

Under the Third Call for proposals, the projects implemented under Axis 1 were 17, out of which 7 under the Measure 1.1 “Economic Development”, 8 projects under Measure 1.2 “Social Cohesion”. 2 projects were financed under Measure 1.3 “Project preparation”. The total value of the Third call contracts under Priority axis 1 amounts to 2 093 641.87euro.

The majority of contracted projects cover measures 1.1 and 1.2, while under measure 1.3 there are only 3 contracted projects.

The number of the contracted projects as of 31 December 2013 is shown in the table below:

Priority axis	Sphere of intervention	1 st Call	2 nd Call	3 rd Call	Total
Economic development and Social cohesion	1.1. Economic Development	9	5	7	21
	1.2. Social Cohesion	7	9	8	24
	1.3. Project preparation	1	0	2	3
					48





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Financial progress of projects under Priority axis 1 as of 31 December 2013 (in euro)

(in euro, IPA and nat.funds):

Call for Proposals	Contracts	Total contracts amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
1 st Call for proposals	17	2 824 291	549 981	1 807 172	2 357 153
2 nd Call for proposals	14	3 516 952	703 060	488 232	1 191 292
3 rd Call for Proposals	17	2 093 642	0	0	0
TOTAL	48	8 434 885	1 253 041	2 295 404	3 548 445

➤ Sphere of intervention 1.1 Economic development

The objective of this sphere of intervention is to use and mobilize all opportunities in the field of economy, to enlarge the field of actions, to increase market possibilities and to create new steady partnerships. This sphere has a key role for enhancement of the innovative development, through development of research and technology, cooperation and marketing. Creation of networks and clusters as flexible instruments for cooperation among research, development, qualification and other institutions will contribute for economic growth of the region.

Indicators which will be used to measure the progress of this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. For 2013, the values of indicators for the First and the Second Call are presented in the brackets separately, for example 6+5, where 6 is the value of the indicator from the First call and 5 – from the Second call.

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Business and educational linkages created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	50	136	11 (6+5)				
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	9										
Communities & institutions participating in knowledge economy	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	5	2 (2+0)				
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Awareness campaigns of the benefits of ICT and new media	Achievement	0	0	0	0	2	12	1 (0+1)				
	Target 2016	20										
	Baseline	9										
ICT training	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	10	2 (0+2)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	9										
Access to and usage of new technology	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	32	4 (0+4)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	0										





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SMEs involved/ addressed in CBC projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	130*	6138*	404 (10+394)				
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	50										
Institutions/ bodies benefiting of programme activities	Achievement	0	0	0	0	11	136	66 (12+54)				
	Target 2016	50										
	Baseline	194										
New jobs created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	52	4 (1+3)				
	Target 2016	50										
	Baseline	30										

The table above represents data on the grounds of contracted projects level and successfully finalized activities

*The information is presented by the beneficiaries in PPR. The number consists of 4900 SMEs included in a business catalog under project 2007CB16IPO007-2009-32, financed under First Call for Proposals.

➤ Sphere of intervention 1.2 Social Cohesion

Objective of this sphere of intervention is to overcome the separating effect of the border and to promote correlations between the two sides. The activities in this sphere are aiming to contribute to the increase of social cooperation growth through strengthening of connections and cooperation between different actors serving as a backbone to various cross-border initiatives.

The indicators which will be used to measure the Progress of this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. For 2013, the values of indicators for the First and the Second Call are presented in the brackets separately, for example, for example 0+2, where 0 is the value of the indicator from the First call and 2 – from the Second call.

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Joint cooperation projects on development of skills and knowledge	Achievement	0	0	0	0	7	6	2 (0+2)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	15										
Training places created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	2	5	6 (0+6)				
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	7										
Management and job-related training courses	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	19	9 (2+7)				
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	51										
People participating in training	Achievement	0	0	0	0	26	679	268 (32+236)				
	Target 2016	350										
	Baseline	1460										
People with enhanced skills	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	326	139 (1+138)				
	Target 2016	200										
	Baseline	1460										





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Business to education linkages	Achievement	0	0	0	0	2	13	1 (0+1)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	3										
People from vulnerable groups trained	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	105	43 (0+43)				
	Target 2016	20										
	Baseline	26										
Scientific exchange and transfer of know-how	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	5	2 (0+2)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	4										
Networking structures created/developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	8	16	2 (0+2)				
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	11										
Joint plans for cooperation in sphere of human management	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	2	1 (0+1)				
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	13										

* The table above represents data on the grounds of contracted projects level and successfully finalized activities.

➤ Sphere of intervention 1.3 Project preparation

Objective of this sphere of intervention is to prepare mature projects to apply under other EU and national financial sources. The indicators which will be used to measure the progress of this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below:

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Feasibility studies	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	1	0+0				
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	0										
Preliminary and detailed design works	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	0+0				
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	1										
Project environmental assessments	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0+0				
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	0										

• Qualitative analysis

Majority of the projects were based on balanced and adequate partnerships and demonstrated clear link between activities and results. There was a variety of activities financed under Priority axis 1, which resulted in broad range of outputs.





Irrespective of their delayed start, which led to multiple project changes (project staff, budget or duration), majority of the projects under the First call for proposals were successfully implemented and the planned outputs were delivered. Envisaged activities were realized with the involvement of the target groups.

The objective for the development of business co-operation, clustering and networking was addressed by six projects, which delivered economic surveys, joint strategies and technical and business infrastructure rehabilitated. Programme targets of outputs related to this objective were overachieved already by the First call projects.

Few projects under the First and Second call targeted the objective for boosting innovation and knowledge economy in the border region, and Programme targets on indicators related to innovation were underachieved. For that reason, the list of eligible activities under the Third call for proposals was designed to target knowledge economy and ICT. Overall, the supported First and Second call projects created joint information services and business and educational linkages, having some contribution to innovation and knowledge economy.

The Programme targets on indicators related to human resource development are overachieved by the First call project only, though indicators are numerous.

The objectives for integration of vulnerable groups were addressed by four projects. The Programme has one indicator related to this objective (training of vulnerable groups), which is overachieved by about 50%.

All details related to the achieved outputs could be found in the database of the MIS of the programme (<https://mis-007.mrrb.government.bg>). The information is available in the relevant progress reports as well as from the programme web-site at: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=56>.

3.1.2. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems were encountered in 2013.





3.2 PRIORITY AXIS 2 IMPROVEMENT THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Objective

To stipulate cooperation for protection of nature and specific fields of environment, protection of historical and cultural heritage as well as provision of assistance in emergency cases.

Sphere of intervention 2.1 "Utilisation of eco resources"

Sphere of intervention 2.2 "Utilisation of cultural resources"

3.2.1. Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

- **Information on the physical and financial progress of the priority**

According to the revised financial plan for the period 2007-2013 funds available for Priority axis 2 amounted to 9 972 348 euro (incl. 8 476 497euro Community funding and 1 495 85 euro National funding).

The projects under the Priority axis 2 were selected by open calls for proposals, to which public bodies and non-profit organisations from the border region can apply. In total 43 projects were financed.

Under the First Call for proposals, the projects implemented under Axis 2 were 15, out of which 3 under the Measure 2.1 "Utilisation of eco resources" and 12 under Measure 2.2 "Utilisation of cultural resources". The total value of the First call contracts under Priority axis 2 amounts to 3 432 132 euro. All First call projects under Priority axes 2 were successfully completed by the end of 2013. During the reporting period 4 contracts under Priority Axis 2 were finalised.

Under the Second Call for proposals, the projects implemented under Axis 2 were 18, of which 13 under the Measure 2.1 "Utilisation of eco resources", 5 projects under Measure 2.2 "Utilisation of cultural resources". The total value of the Second call contracts under Priority axis 2 amounts to 4 519 339 euro. In 2013, under the Second Call for Proposals, 8 contracts have been contracted with the allocation for 2012. Within the reporting period 5 out of 18 projects were successfully completed.

Additionally, 10 projects were contracted under the Third Call for proposals, out of which 6 under the Measure 2.1 "Utilisation of eco resources", 4 projects under Measure 2.2 "Utilisation of cultural resources". The total value of the Third call contracts under Priority axis 2 amounts to 1 984 467.13 euro.

The contracted projects equally cover both measures. The number of the contracted projects as of 31 December 2013 is shown in the table below:





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Priority axis	Sphere of intervention	1 st Call	2 nd Call	3 rd Call	Total
Improvement the Quality of Life	2.1. Utilisation of eco resources	3	13	6	22
	2.2. Utilisation of cultural resources	12	5	4	21
					43

Financial progress of projects under Priority axis 2, as of 31 December 2013

(in euro, IPA and nat.funds):

Call for Proposals	Contracts	Total contracts amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
1 st Call for proposals	15	3 432 132	684 580	2 195 343	2 879 923
2 nd Call for proposals	18	4 519 339	903 868	800 356	1 704 224
3 rd Call for Proposals	10	1 984 467	0	0	0
TOTAL	43	9 935 938	1 588 448	2 995 699	4 584 147

➤ Sphere of intervention 2.1 Utilisation of eco resources

The objective of this sphere of intervention is to contribute to the preservation of natural resources biodiversity by applying environmental friendly approaches in all fields and increasing awareness to secure the sustainable use of resources. On the other hand there is cooperation potential in the field of eco-resources use for the development of the region (eco-, green-, rural-tourism, etc.).

The indicators which will be used to measure the progress of this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. For 2013, the values of indicators for the First and the Second Call are presented in the brackets separately, for example 1+13.

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Number of joint environmental friendly projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	3	10	14 (1+13)				
	Target 2016	20										
	Baseline	6										
Joint Eco-itineraries created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	3	12 (1+11)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	8										
Joint tourist services created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	1	8 (1+7)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	7										
Partnerships for cases of natural disasters established	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2	11 (0+11)				
	Target 2016	2										





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Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
	Baseline	1										
Joint environmental management plans	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3 (0+3)				
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	15										
Permanent networks for environmental protection and reasonable utilization of resources	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3 (0+3)				
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	1										
Environmental awareness campaigns	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	7	16 (1+15)				
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	18										

* The table above represents data on the grounds of contracted projects level and successfully finalized activities

➤ Sphere of intervention 2.2 Utilisation of cultural resources

The objective of this sphere of intervention is to foster the cross-border cooperation in the field of cultural affairs and thus contribute to the improvement of quality of life in the region. The development of cultural tourism potential will also lead to a reasonable and sustainable use of the opportunities of the region.

The indicators which will be used to measure the progress of this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. For 2013, the values of indicators for the First and the Second Call are presented in the brackets separately, for example 4+2.

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Number of projects concerning common cultural heritage	Achievement	0	0	0	0	12	16	6 (4+2)				
	Target 2016	20										
	Baseline	37										
Tourist destinations created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	43	21 (19+2)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	33										
Tourist services created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	24	18 (12+6)				
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	37										
Surrounding area of cultural spots improved	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	41	7 (7+0)				
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	26										
Joint cultural events carried out	Achievement	0	0	0	0	6	48	28 (13+15)				
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	20										
Events popularizing	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	38	27				





intangible cultural heritage and traditions								(14+13)				
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	21										
Awareness campaigns	Achievement	0	0	0	0	5	38	22 (7+15)				
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	55										

* The table above represents data on the grounds of contracted projects level and successfully finalized activities

- **Qualitative analysis**

The majority of the project interventions under Axis 2 have a clear link between activities and results. They address mainly the investment needs of the target region.

Most of the projects have not had serious implementation problems, threatening project results. Changes referring to extension of project duration and modification in the timetable of activities were not problematic on project level, but on Programme level led to later absorption of funds. During 2013 almost all planned outputs have been delivered or it is expected to be delivered in 2014.

The objective for eco, rural and cultural tourism development was addressed by several projects from both First and Second calls for proposals (mainly investment projects), which contributed to improvement of tourism attractiveness of the region by reconstruction of museums, construction of centres for interpretation of cultural heritage, improvement of surrounding of the cultural sites and their accessibility. These projects contributed as well to the development of tourism services and joint cultural and awareness events. By the end of 2013, almost all programme output indicators related to tourism development were achieved by the implementation of the projects under the First and Second calls for proposals.

The objective for cultural cooperation strengthening was targeted by several projects, both investment projects, referring to cultural infrastructure improvements and soft ones. Apart from the investment components, under the supported projects were conducted a number of joint cultural events (concerts, planners, festivals, music and theatre performances, exhibition, etc.). All projects implemented under priority axis 2 are expected to deliver their planned outputs. The projects have clear contribution to improving the access of people in the cross-border region to cultural services. According to the preliminary findings by the external evaluator, all outputs indicators related to this objective are expected to overachieve their targeted values for the whole Programming period.

3.2.2. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems were encountered in 2013.





4. MAJOR PROJECTS (IF APPLICABLE)

Not applicable – no major projects were financed under the Programme.

5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The aim of the Technical Assistance (TA) is to ensure an effective and efficient programme management and information flow, thus improving the quality of cross-border cooperation and management tools. The priority axis “Technical Assistance” finance the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the programme as well as activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for implementing the programme, promotion of the Programme, awareness raising, pro-active project generation, etc.

- **Sphere of intervention 3.1 Overall administration and evaluation of the Programme**

The objective of this sphere of intervention ensures:

- Support to the MA and JTS for tasks related to preparation of the necessary documents, appraisal and selection of projects, monitoring and evaluation of activities, control and audit of the Programme including daily allowances, travel accommodation costs covering the expenses for the participants from both countries (representatives of the MA, JTS, CA, AA, JMC, persons who are not directly involved, for example interpreters, drivers etc.) in events concerning the programme.
- Determine administrative costs concerning the JTS (Main and Branch offices) including rent of premises, repair works furniture and equipment, expenditures for electricity, heating, phones, water, consumables etc. and also staff remuneration costs for the JTS (Main and Branch offices).

- **Sphere of intervention 3.2 Publicity and communication**

The objective of this sphere of intervention ensures:

- Preparation, translation and dissemination of the Programme related information and publicity materials including but not limited to the programme website, official Programme documents, procedure manuals, bulletins, brochures, posters, etc.; as well as expenses for consumables as paper, files, folders, cases, diskettes, compact disks, etc.
- Organisation of public events as conferences, seminars, workshops, round table discussions, trainings for beneficiaries, networking and awareness-raising events, partner search forums etc. including rent of halls and equipment (audio-, video-, translation- equipment), expenses for





interpreters, lecturers, trainers (should not be persons involved in the programme); expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, business dinners and lunches for all participants in the events;

- Purchase of advertising materials, such as CDs, USBs, hats, bags, note books, folders etc. as well as expenses for publications on media: radio, TV and press.

For the period 2007-2013 amount of 1 695 299 euro Community funding is available for this Priority axis "Technical Assistance".

In order to implement the activities under Priority axis 3 – Technical assistance, an Annual technical assistance plan is prepared by the MA, together with the other structures involved in the Programme implementation. The Annual Technical Assistance Plan is designed to provide detailed information about the Programme related activities envisaged to be carried out by the Managing Authority (MA), the National Authority (NA) and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) under Priority axis 3 - Technical assistance of the Programme and is subject of approval by the JMC.

Total budget forecast for 2013 was amounted to 601 316 euro, from which 401 890 euro allocated for MA and 199 426 euro for NA. The detailed indicative breakdown of budget for 2013 was approved by JMC on 27.12.2012.

The 2013 TA budget encompasses administrative expenditures, travel and accommodation expenditures, meetings, trainings, promotional events, information and publicity, external expertise, supply, maintenance of equipment and other expenditures.

The main activities carried out under priority axis "Technical assistance" within 2013 are as follows:

- **Organisation of public events as conferences, seminars, workshops**

Information days under the Third Call for proposals

Two Info days events and one Partnership forum in the border region were conducted.

European Cooperation Day

For celebration of the European Cooperation Day Joint Technical Secretariat organised a happening "Together in tradition and future," which was held on September 21, 2013 in Kyustendil (Bulgaria).

Project implementation trainings

Two training sessions for project teams of the financed under Second and Third Call for proposals have been organized during 2013.





Trainings for the Programme staff

During 2013, MA, NA and JTS staff attended training events organized by INTERACT in order to acquire practical knowledge and information, to share their experience with colleagues from other European territorial cooperation programmes in the field of management techniques, financial issues, European regulations, communication, strategic orientation, policy development, etc.

Training session for First Level Controllers

Training for the First Level Controllers was organised in Sofia, Bulgaria on 31 May 2013. Training session encompass three main modules related to requirements regarding documentations, check-lists and reporting of activities carried out by First level controllers, financial issues, frequent errors and lessons learnt, public procurements and PRAG rules, etc.

- **Expenditures for external expertise**

In 2013 the technical assistance budget was used for remuneration of external assessors appointed to perform quality assessment of project proposals received under the Third Call for Proposals as well as First Level Controllers.

The service contract with the Consortium ECORYS-FED for “Elaboration of On-going evaluation of Bulgaria - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA CBC programme (2007-2013)”, with reference number 2007CB161IPO007-TA-2012-2 and total budget of 43 400 euro was successfully completed in October 2013. The Evaluation Report was considered and also approved by a written procedure by the JMC with protocol of 07.10.2013. The balance payment of 17 360 euro was paid to the Consultant in November 2013. Final Evaluation Report is available from the Programme web-site at: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=1&d=555>.

On 28.11.2013 a price service contract for Preparation of Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme 2014 – 2020, with identification number EuropeAid/133413/D/SER/Multi – Lot 2, was signed between the MA (the Ministry of Regional Development of Bulgaria) and Project Planning and Management Consortium (a consortium of Project Planning and Management Ltd (BG) as leading partner and: ÖeAR Regionalberatung GmbH (AT), Consulting & Management Ltd. (SK), Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR) (AT) and Pliska Consulting Ltd. (BG). The contract duration is 7 months and the budget amounts to 68500 euro. An advance payment of 41 100 euro was paid to the Consultant in December 2013.

During 2013 maintenance and upgrade of the new programme website and maintenance of MIS were supported by the TA budget.





- **Programming for the period 2014-2020**

A Joint Working Group composed of authorized representatives of both partnering countries was established as partnership structure with a strategic decision making role for the period of Programme preparation to periodically review the progress made in the preparation of the Programme and make proposals and comments concerning the respective parts of the Programme. The JWG has the responsibility of approving the main stages of the programme preparation and the Programme as a whole.

The preparation of the Programme 2014 – 2020 officially started with the first meeting of the Joint Working Group that took place in Sofia on 14 November 2013. The Team leader of the consultancy team attended already the first JWG meeting, provided support and established working relations with the programming bodies in the very beginning of the process. All documents and deliverables related to preparation of the new programme are available from the Programme web-site at: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=66>.

Within the framework of the service contract for the new programme preparation a Task Force has been established comprising representatives of MA, NA and JTS to support the programming process by exercising the following main tasks: to coordinate the work of the JWG and the Consultant; to follow and report on the implementation of decisions made by JWG; to support, supervise and coordinate the work of the Consultant; to stimulate and coordinate the dialogue among relevant stakeholders and to link it to the preparation process;

The purpose of the service contract is to elaborate the Programme 2014 – 2020 in harmony with the legal framework, taking into account the specificities of the programme area, by observing the principle of partnership and multi-level governance.

Expenditures for the JWG meetings are also supported by the TA budget.

6. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

The focus of the information and publicity strategy is centred on increasing the awareness and promoting the positive work of the Programme. For the purposes of implementation of the information and publicity strategy, a detailed Communication Plan is elaborated and approved simultaneously with programme approval. The aim of the Communication Plan is to ensure broad dissemination of the information about the programme, to guarantee the transparency of the programme's implementation and to increase the awareness of the local stakeholders about the programme's possibilities. The implementation of the Communication plan is responsibility of the Managing Authority, National Authority and JTS.

During 2013 various tools for information and publicity were used to reach the wide audience:





- ✓ Programme website;
- ✓ Promotional materials;
- ✓ Information seminars;
- ✓ Mass media campaign;
- ✓ Active training.

- **Programme Website**

During 2013 the official website of the Programme www.ipa-cbc-007.eu was one of the main publicity tools used to promote the Programme and disseminate the relevant information. The whole range of information concerning the Programme (e.g. general information, priority axes, documents, questions and answers etc.) was presented in a user-friendly version of the sitemap structure, which allow the users to find the necessary information more easily. One of the most important improvements on the website, which is integrated with the MIS system is the Project Database established for funded projects (displaying an interactive region map of the Programme) and which ensure the transparency and it is a prerequisite for raising awareness of positive contributions by the European Union.

The website has been regularly updated with relevant information on the Programme. The JTS is responsible for the maintaining and updating of the Programmes web site with the relevant information about the Programme. The “News” section was particularly useful to both general public and the potential beneficiaries since it was continuously updated with information on all relevant events, trainings, info-days, and news in general.

In order to ensure broad publicity, information on the Programme has been also disseminated through regional and national websites as well as on the websites at the European level:

- www.mrrb.government.bg - Ministry of Regional Development of Bulgaria
- www.eufunds.bg – EU Structural Funds website

The website partners search tool is also very useful in facilitating the integration among actors and promoting joint activities and ideas.

- **Promotional materials**

In 2013 tender procedure for elaboration and preparation of promotional materials was not conducted. As a result conducted in 2012 tender procedure we have got sufficient number of leaflets, brochures, cardboard folders, conference business folders, binders, agenda organizers, pens, umbrellas, USB drives, calendars for 2013.





The materials have been used for promotion the Programme on various occasions (trainings for potential applicants and beneficiaries, the JMC meetings, European Cooperation Day 2013, etc.). All the materials follow the visual guidelines set in the Communication Plan as well as the “Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions” of EC.

The “Visibility Rules of IPA CBC Programme CCI N-2007CB16IPO007” also is one of the main visibility tools during 2013 for the purpose of helping the beneficiaries in the process of project implementation and specifically communication and visibility. The manual is a comprehensive collection of rules, recommendations and best practices from a variety of sources, and is strictly in line with “Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions” of EC and the basic “Project Implementation Manual” rules.

- **Information days**

The Third Call for proposals under the Programme was launched on 3 December 2012. Following the launch of the Call, the Joint Technical Secretariat in cooperation with MA and NA have organized two „Info days“ events and one „Partnership forum“ in the border region.

The first „Info day“ event was held in Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria) on 16 January 2013. The second „Info day“ event was held on the next day in Stip (MK). Nearly 270 potential beneficiaries were trained on Project Preparation and received detailed information about the Third Call for proposals, such as assessment of submitted proposals, eligibility criteria, guidelines for applicants etc. During this training, the potential beneficiaries were informed about the specificity of preparation of application package (Application form and Annexes) , as well as on the general requirements for submission of the proposals.

Additionally, on 23 January 2013 in Strumica (MK), the JTS organized “**Partnership forum**” where more than 110 potential applicants have met all together as well as with other economic, social and environmental partners from the border regions. During the “Partnership forum”, beneficiaries under the Third Call of proposals have shared their partnering experiences and the potential applicants have exchanged information on their partner needs as well as their project ideas.

- **European Cooperation Day**

For celebration of the European Cooperation Day Joint Technical Secretariat organised a happening “Together in tradition and future,” which was held on September 21, 2013 in Kyustendil (Bulgaria).

“Borders do not cause differences, they enable the convergence ...” was the motto of the happening.

The event was opened in the Regional Historical Museum “Academic Yordan Ivanov” – Kyustendil with children’s drawings “You and I draw Europe ”, arrangement of the paintings of the artists in the form of “A colorful Balkan rug” conducting happening and deliver a performance of Bulgarian and Macedonian students in the vocal and dance art - “Games of grandparents”.





In addition to the promotion through the Programme website and the websites of the official institutions directly related to the Programme, both the Programme and the projects funded received a good deal of media attention through specific Programme press-releases (in all the three languages), online publications (other than on the Programme website), radio advertisements, video and television clips, publicities in local and national newspapers.

- **Project implementation trainings**

Two trainings for project teams of the financed under Second and Third Call for proposals have been organized during 2013. **Trainings of the project teams** were organised by the JTS and took place in Kyustendil (Bulgaria) on 21 May 2013 (projects contracted on 2013 under the Second Call) and in Strumica (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) on 20 December 2013 (projects contracted under the Third Call). All project teams were trained on all the aspects of project implementation, when the main topics were:

- Financial and technical implementation of the financed projects;
- Contract modifications;
- Sub-contracting procedures;
- Financial implementation and irregularities.

In the period from 17 April to 31 May 2013, JTS has organized **technical meetings** in Kyustendil (Bulgaria), with project beneficiaries from the Second call facing delays or difficulties in implementation. During these meetings it was discussed thoroughly the problematic issues as the appropriate resolving measures were formulated.

During 2013 variety of activities included in the Communication plan have been organized and performed accordingly: various types of promotional materials have been disseminated to the target audience, the Programme Web site has been redesigned and maintained, and trainings for beneficiaries have been successfully organized. The mass media campaign and the participation of different events greatly contributed to the successful promotion of Programme and the Call for proposals. The Programme' visual identity and graphics standards have been maintained and widely disseminated to all the Programme's stakeholders.



Indicators for communication and publicity measures

	Activity	Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	
Programme website	General Information	Number of web-site visits	0	0	8190	8731	29 009	29350	24367					
		Target 2016	2000 per year											
		Baseline	0											
	Partners' search facility	Number of web-site visits	0	0	8190	8731	29 009	29350	24367					
		Target 2016	2000 per year											
		Baseline	0											
		Number of new potential PPs in the database	0	0	0	0	20	111	114					
		Target 2016	20 per call											
	Contact details	Baseline	0											
		Number of web-site visits	0	0	8190	8731	29 009	29350	24367					
		Target 2016	2000 per year											
	Information for mass media	Baseline	0											
		Number of press releases	0	0	0	0	6	6	4					
		Target 2016	2 per year											
	Baseline	0												
Leaflets		Number of leaflets produced	0	0	0	0	0	1000	0					
		Target 2016	500 per call											
	Baseline	0												
	Number of leaflets disseminated	0	0	0	0	0	90%	10%						
	Target 2016	80% of leaflets produced												
Brochures	Baseline	0												
	Number of brochures produced	0	1000	0	0	0	500	0						
	Target 2016	500 per year												
	Baseline	0												
	Number of brochures distributed	0	25%	55%	20%	0%	89%	10%						
Posters & Banners	Target 2016	80% of brochures produced												
	Baseline	0												
	Number of official events	0	2	0	0	2	3	3						
	Target 2016	Min. 2												
	Baseline	0												
Other promotional materials (gadgets)	Number of materials prepared for promotion of the programme	0	1050	0	0	300	300	0						
	Target 2016	200 per call												
	Baseline	0												
	Number of materials distributed	0	60%	0	0	33%	95%	100%						
	Target 2016	80% of the materials produced												
Information seminars	Baseline	0												
	Number of organizations/bodies represented	0	0	227	0	110	0	117						
	Target 2016	40 per call												
	Baseline	0												
	Number of persons attended	0	0	76	80	199	0	270						
Target 2016	Min.60 per call													
	Baseline	0												



		Increase in the number of proposals submitted	0	0	0	0	29.7%	0	-	29.8%*				
		Target 2016	Min.3% compared to previous call											
		Baseline	0											
	Thematic seminars/ workshops	Number of organizations/bodies attending	0	0	76	80	74	73	76					
		Target 2016	20 per event											
		Baseline	0											
Publicity campaign	Print media campaign	Number of newspapers publishing issue(s) concerning the programme	0	1	2	2	2	2	4					
		Target 2016	4 per year											
		Baseline	0											
	Press conferences	Number of press conferences held	0	1	2	0	1	1	1					
		Target 2016	2 for the duration of the Programme											
		Baseline	0											
	Press releases	Number of press releases	0	1	5	4	6	6	4					
		Target 2016	1 per call											
		Baseline	0											
	Press Advertisements	Number of press advertisements published	0	0	16	0	2	2	2					
		Target 2016	2 per call											
		Baseline	0											
	Internet media advertisement	Number of advertisements/eBanners	0	0	0	0	2	2	1					
		Target 2016	2											
		Baseline	0											
	eNewsletter	Number of eNewsletters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
		Target 2016	2											
		Baseline	0											
	Publication in regional initiatives and fora	Number of events	0	0	0	0	0	1	1					
		Target 2016	1											
		Baseline	0											
TV campaigns	Number of TV advertisements aired	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
	Target 2016	1 for the duration of the Programme												
	Baseline	0												
Radio campaigns	Number of radio advertisements aired	0	0	0	0	0	1	1						
	Target 2016	1 per country for each Call												
	Baseline	0												
Active training	Training for beneficiaries	Number of participants	0	0	0	0	105	52	110					
		Target 2016	20											
		Baseline	0											
	Number of trainings	Number of trainings	0	0	0	0	1	2	2					
		Target 2016	Min 1											
Baseline	0													





Training of the MA/NA/JTS	Number of participants	0	0	0	0	16.6% of the JTS staff	33.3% of the JTS staff	20% of the MA/NA/JTS				
	Target 2016	min 50% of the total staff										
	Baseline	0										
Controllers performing FLC trainings	Number of participants	0	0	0	0	55	94	27				
	Target 2016	min 30										
	Baseline	0										
	Number of trainings	0	0	0	0	3	3	1				
	Target 2016	min 1										
External assessors trainings	1) Number of participants	0	0	0	0	0	10	0				
	Target 2016	min 10										
	Baseline	0										
	Number of trainings	0	0	0	0	0	1	0				
	Target 2016	min 1										
	Baseline	0										

**Reducing the number of submitted projects was due to restrictions imposed on the application opportunities. Under the Third call for proposals an institution/organization may submit only one (1) project proposal either as Lead Partner or Project Partner.*





ANNEXES TO THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2013

ANNEX A

Programme web site, Programme trainings in 2013, Publicity/Media campaigns

Programme web site

The official Programme web site was effectively released in August 2009. The address of the web site is: www.ipa-cbc-007.eu

The Programme's dedicated internet website has provided with general information on the Programme, on the financing opportunities, format and content of the applications, evaluation and selection criteria, procedures to follow etc., useful contacts, partner search facility; it has provided with the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to the operations, information on the activity of the Joint Monitoring Committee, and other relevant committees: decisions, reports etc., as soon as they become available to public.

The web site also encloses information for mass media – press releases, announcements, news, events, awareness campaigns, photo-gallery, and contact person.

The web site includes comprehensive information on the Programme and its Priority axes, accompanied by all documents concerning Programme implementation. The web site has been regularly updated with relevant information on the Programme (events, news, documentation etc.). The web site also includes a tool for partners search with project partner database, thereby facilitating the integration among actors and promoting joint activities and ideas.

During 2013 the web site was one of the main publicity tools used to promote the Programme and disseminate the relevant information. The "News" section is particularly useful to both general public and the potential beneficiaries since it is continuously updated with information on all the relevant events, trainings, info-days, and news in general.

In order to ensure broad publicity, information on the Programme has been also disseminated through regional and national websites as well as on the websites at the European level:

www.mrrb.government.bg - Ministry of Regional Development, Bulgaria

www.eufunds.bg – EU Structural Funds website,

<http://www.mls.gov.mk/> – Ministry of Local Self-Government, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (National Authority).





As it is clearly visible from the statistical data provided, the website activity has greatly increased in 2011, 2012 and 2013. In fact, during the first two months of 2013 greater number of visits was recorded than during the first two years of Programme implementation, 2009 and 2010, but in 2013 due to the fact that JTS communication officer position was free and because website was updated only by the Managing Authority, and the fact that even at the start of the year published Third Call for proposals and the end of the year were the published results and documents related to the Third Call for proposals, the number of visits was reduced to 24,367.

Number of updated post in the Programme website by months:

2013

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	2	2	1	1	3	0	0	1	3	2	3

Total: 24

Number of visits to the Programme website in 2013 by months:

2013

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
4.098	4.258	2.322	1.774	1791	1.592

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1.525	1.282	1.185	1.824	1.608	1.108

Total 24.367

Number of visits to the Programme website for the period 2009-2013:

Year 2009	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013
8 190	8 731	21,006	29 350	24,367

The number of visits to the Programme web site indicates that the promotion of the Programme has been very effective during 2013. The high number of visits to the web site can be explained with projects under implementation and interest by potential applicants to the Third Call for proposals which was open on beginning of December 2012 and results and documents related to the Third Call for proposals published on end of the year. Compared by the activity during 2012, the number of visits to the Programme web site has reduced by 4983 visits or approximately 17%.





Project Preparation Information days under the Third Call for proposals

Blagoevgrad and Stip on 16 and 17 January 2013



“Partnership forum” in Strumica on 23 January 2013





Project implementation trainings in 2013

Training session "Project implementation" for project teams of contacted projects under the Second Call for project proposals carried out on 21 May 2013 in the town of Kyustendil



Training session "Project implementation" for successful beneficiaries under the Third Call for project proposals carried out on 20 December 2013 in the town of Strumica





European Cooperation Day - 21 September 2013 in Kyustendil





For celebration of the European Cooperation Day the Joint Technical Secretariat organised a happening "Together in tradition and future," which was held on September 21, 2013 in Kyustendil (Bulgaria).

"Borders do not cause differences, they enable the convergence ..." was the motto of the happening.

The event was opened in the Regional Historical Museum "Academic Yordan Ivanov" – Kyustendil with children's drawings "You and I draw Europe ", arrangement of the paintings of the artists in the form of "A colorful Balkan rug" conducting happening and deliver a performance

The event was open by Mr. Nikolay Dochev, Head of Joint Technical Secretariat. Official guest of the manifestation were HE Mr. Blagoj Hadziski ambassador of Republic of Macedonia in Bulgaria and HE Mr. Ivan Petkov ambassador of Republic of Bulgaria in Skopje.





JMC and technical meetings during 2013

JMC meeting in Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria) – 10 October 2013



Technical meeting in Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria) MA/NA/JTS – 9 October 2013





ANNEX B List of projects

- List of completed projects under the First Call for Proposals (within 2013)

	Project №	Project name	Lead Partner	Partner 2	Partner 3 / 4	Area of intervention	Type of project (investment/I B)	Total value of the paid amount	EU funding (85%)
1	2007CB16IPO00 7-2009-1-04	Culture - bridge of cohezion	<i>Municipality of Snadanski (BG)</i>	Municipality of Novo Selo (MK)	N/A	2.2	investment	253 724.67	215 665.93
2	2007CB16IPO00 7-2009-1-40	Cultural Exchange – Sharing Differences Towards United Cultural Development	<i>Municipality of Nevestino</i>	Municipality of Dojran	N/A	2.2	investment	240 126.76	204 107.68
3	2007CB16IPO00 7-2009-1-46	Education, environment, Europe...United Europe	<i>Municipality of Lipkovo</i>	Municipal secondary school “ Goce Delcev “ Kumanovo	Ecological forum Association	1.2	investment	264 830.94	225 106.26
4	2007CB16IPO00 7-2009-1-53	Cultural Heritage – a Bridge to Joint Future	<i>Municipality of Dupnitsa</i>	Municipality of Kriva Palanka	N/A	2.2	investment	249 882.01	212 399.69
5	2007CB16IPO00 7-2009-1-55	Improvement of Tourist Infrastructure of Boboshevo and Kratovo	<i>Municipality of Boboshevo</i>	Association for Protection of Environment, Cultural, Historical Sights and Health – Izvor, Kratovo	N/A	2.1	investment	230 622.40	196 028.98
6	2007CB16IPO00 7-2009-1-81	Cross Border Educational Network for Children with Disabilities	<i>Centre for development of the East Planning Region - Shtip</i>	Municipality of Gotse Delcev	N/A	1.2	investment	239 732.71	203 772.75
7	2007CB16IPO00 7-2009-1-84	Business Incubator – Economic Development and Visibility of Border Region	<i>Municipality of Berovo</i>	Municipality of Strumyani	N/A	1.1	investment	215 603.54	183 262.96





• List of completed projects under the Second Call for Proposals (within 2013)

	Project №	Project name	Lead Partner	Partner 2	Partner 3 / 4	Area of intervention	Type of project (investment/I B)	Total value of the paid amount	EU funding (85%)
1	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2 - 10	European Knowledge and Qualification Network in the CBC region BG-MK	<i>Social Integration and Mutual Aid Association - Kyustendil</i>	Association Alpha Club To Survive - Blagoevgrad Branch	Municipality of Gevgelija	1,2	Soft	82 478.95	70 107.09
2	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2 - 12	Social cohesion through investments in Human resources	<i>Alliance for regional and civil initiatives- ARCI - Blagoevgrad</i>	Foundation for small and medium enterprises development - Kumanovo	NA	1,2	Soft	72 130.99	61 311.33
3	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-21	Business has no borders	<i>Bulgarian Management Association - Blagoevgrad</i>	SPECTAR-Kriva Palanka	STRATOS FOUNDATION - Simitiy	1,1	Soft	82 630.07	70 235.49
4	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-26	Together in the traditions and future	<i>"St. St. Cyril and Methodius" Secondary School, Kyustendil, Bulgaria</i>	Municipal Elementary School "Nikola Karev", Probistip	Bratstvo 1869 Community Centre - Kyustendil	2,2	Soft	87 078.53	74 016.71
5	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-39	Cultural Heritage of Our Ancestors – Spiritual Mainstay of Our Common European Future	<i>Regional History Museum " Academician Yordan Ivanov " - Kyustendil</i>	Municipality of Kriva Palanka	NA	2,2	Soft	89 124.66	75 755.92
6	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-86	Savoring Unique Nature – Bicycle-tourism in support of nature	<i>Center for Rural Development "Bujrum" - Kumanovo</i>	European Integration Agency - Branch Kyustendil	PP3 Association Business Information and Consulting Centre - Sandanski PP4 "We the Women Movement" Asociacion	2,1	Soft	98 964,00	84 119,40
7	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-90	Networking and transfer of knowledge for sustainable economic tourism development	<i>Foundation for local and IT development- Gevgelija</i>	Business Incubator Gotse Delchev, Entrepreneurship Promotion Center (BI-GD)	NA	1,1	Soft	91 582.90	77 845.46





8	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-92	e-Commerce in support of exports from the cross-border region Strumica - Kyustendil	<i>Center for Development and Promotion Promo Idea (PI) - Strumica</i>	National Association of Small and Medium Business - NASMB	NA	1,1	Soft	97 324,30	82 725,66
9	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-101	Traditional knowledge for sustainability - a cross border network for utilization and protection of wild and cultivated plant diversity of East Macedonia and South West Bulgaria	<i>Agricultural Association Machinery Ring - Probishtip</i>	"European Institute" Foundation - branch Blagoevgrad	N/A	2,1	Soft	76 088.89	64 675.55
10	2007CB16IPO0 07-2011-2-106	Joint Applicable Research for Natural Resources Preservation	<i>Municipality of Pehchevo</i>	Municipality of Simitli	N/A	2,1	Soft	82 029.76	69 725.28





List of contracted projects under the Second Call for Proposals - 2012 allocation (as of 31 December 2013)

	Project №	Project name	Lead Partner	Partner 2	Partner 3 / 4	Area of intervention	Type of project (investment/I B)	Total value of the project	EU funding 85%
1	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-02	Sharing of experience and information in wine production industry - a way for cross-border economic development	Association Regional Center of Cooperation SPECTAR - Kriva Palanka	Eurointegra Association / (Eurintegra Association - Kresna - Sandanski branch)	Union of enologists in Bulgaria / (Union of enologists in Bulgaria - Blagoevgrad branch)	1,1	Soft	99 945,73	84 953,87
2	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-03	Nature for people and people for nature	Directorate of Rila Monastery Nature Park	Environmental association Planetum	NA	2,1	Soft	77 159,84	65 585,86
3	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-06	Digital Culture for Regional Cohesion: An innovative data base for raising the awareness in the cross-border area on the regional and European dimension of culture and its better joint utilization	No Frontiers 21 Century Association	Assembly of Associations for Technical Culture - National Technique of Strumica	NA	2,2	Soft	99 533,83	84 603,76
4	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-29	NETworking for Efficient and Sustainable Civil Society Across the Border	European Institute - branch Blagoevgrad	Center for intercultural Dialogue	NA	1,2	Soft	94 420,00	80 257,00
5	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-31	All children learn together - Cross-border network of inclusive schools	Centre for Development of the Third North-East Planning Region	Municipality of Dupnica	NA	1,2	investment	498 896,58	424 062,09
6	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-44	Mapping of cultural heritage in the municipalities of Strumyani, Bulgaria and Karbinci, FYRoM and stimulation of the development cultural tourism through integrated tourist products	Association "In Focus"	Municipality of Karbinci	N/A	2,2	Soft	99 995,53	84 996,20
7	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-52	Sustainable Tourism and Ecology promotion Under Partnership	Municipality of Razlog	Municipality of Gevgelija	N/A	2,1	investment	499 873,91	424 892,82





8	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-64	Improvement of the quality and access to social services in the municipalities of Strumyani and Karbinci	<i>Municipality of Strumyani</i>	Municipality of Karbinci	N/A	1,2	investment	499 452,37	424 534,51
9	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-89	Valorization of Renewable Energy Sources in the Cross-Border Area	<i>Zrnovci municipality</i>	Municipality of Belitsa	NA	2,1	Soft	94 499,79	80 324,82
10	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-98	A cross-border approach to tourism development based on water resources	<i>Municipality of Lipkovo</i>	Municipality of Satovcha	N/A	2,1	Investment	491 875,16	418 093,89
11	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-107	Forms of Cooperation among craftsmen and SME's for joint participation in local cultural and economic events in Municipalities Kustendil, Strumica and Kriva Palanka	<i>Foundation for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises - Strumica</i>	Regional Chamber of Skilled Crafts - Kyustendil	Agency for Regional Development - Kriva Palanka	1,1	Soft	97 528,08	82 898,87
12	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-110	Cultural tourism - bridge between the population in the cross-border region of garment and Bosilovo	<i>Municipality of Garmen</i>	Municipality of Bosilovo	N/A	2,2	Investment	196 194,51	166 765,33





List of contracted projects under the Third Call for Proposals (as of 31 December 2013)

	Project №	Project name	Lead Partner	Partner 2	Partner 3 / 4	Area of intervention	Type of project (investment/I B)	Total value of the project	EU funding (85%)
1	2007CB16IPO007 - 2012 - 3 - 05	Rock'n Pop the Borders	<i>Partners Dupnitsa Association</i>	Regional Center for sustainable development - Kratovo	N/A	2,2	Soft	82 119,49	69 801,57
2	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-10	Integrated Human Resources Development in the Bulgaria-Macedonia cross-border region	<i>Stratos Foundation - Belitza</i>	Association Civil Centre for Sustainable Development, Kriva Palanka EGRI	NA	1,2	Soft	79 621,07	67 677,91
3	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-11	<i>Entrepreneurs Club</i>	<i>Bulgarian Management Association - Blagoevgrad</i>	Association Regional Center of Cooperation – SPECTAR, Kriva Palanca	NA	1,1	Soft	75 307,38	64 011,27
4	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-13	Together for cleaner world	<i>Regional Initiative Association - Branch Razlog</i>	Association of Agriculture Producers, Kumanovo	NA	2,1	Soft	96 885,21	82 352,43
5	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-14	Activating Heritage in CBR BG-MK	<i>Municipality of Stip</i>	Bulgarian Agency for Regional Development, Blagoevgrad	NA	2,2	Soft	98 627,11	83 833,04
6	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-19	Congressional network and center for vocational and technical skills	<i>American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad</i>	Goce Delchev University - Stip	N/A	1,2	Investment	274 198,61	233 068,82
7	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-20	Cross Border Centre for Human Resources Development	<i>Civil Initiative for Local Development Foundation - Kyustendil</i>	Assosiation Euro-vision - Strumica	Association "Development of Children and Youth in Dupnitsa"	1,2	Soft	98 200,38	83 470,32
8	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-23	Common Culture, Traditions and History - a Bridge to our European Future	<i>Municipality of Bansko</i>	<i>Municipality of Gevgelija</i>	N/A	2,2	Investment	298 963,17	254 118,69
9	2007CB16IPO007- 2012-3-28	E-learning and ICT in Support of Human Resource Development in the Cross-border Region	<i>Business Information and Consulting Center - Sandanski</i>	Center for Development and Promotion Promo Idea (PI) - Strumica	N/A	1,2	Soft	97 242,64	82 656,24





10	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-29	Enabling Organic Production in the Cross Border Region	Assosiation „Savremie“ Sandanski	Macedonian Organic Producers Federation - Strumica	NA	2,1	Soft	98 468,32	83 698,07
11	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-30	Women entrepreneurship for sustainable economic development	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kyustendil	Foundation Euro Centre – FEC – Staro Nagoricane	NA	1,1	Soft	83 295,19	70 800,91
12	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-36	E – Region: Development Opportunity	Association Centre for Intercultural Dialogue	European Institute – branch Blagoevgrad	NA	1,2	Soft	94 620,13	80 427,11
13	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-39	Open Gate for Cultural Exchange – Building a Joint European Future	Municipality of Kyustendil	Municipality of Bogdanci	NA	2,2	Investment	295 597,14	251 257,57
14	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-40	Road to Herbs - Sustainable model for the efficient use of existing natural resources in the region (herbs, wild berries plants and mushrooms) and creating economic benefits for the population	NGO “EVRO” Kyustendil	Eko – Slavishki - Rankovce	N/A	2,1	Soft	82 862,64	70 433,24
15	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-42	Leadership and motivation - vocation or profession	Foundation for small and medium enterprises development - Kumanovo	Alliance for regional and civil initiatives-Blagoevgrad branch	N/A	1,2	Soft	67 128,43	57 059,17
16	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-44	Crossborder initiative for trainings in the area of health prophylaxis	Foundation “Health prophylaxis” - Blagoevgrad	Humanitarian Association for Help and Support of the People with Special Needs “ Bravura Cooperativa” - Delcevo	N/A	1,2	Soft	55 696,02	47 341,62
17	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-50	Clean and Green: Raising the Awareness of Young People on Pollution Prevention	Regional Chamber of skilled craft - Kyustendil	Norges Vel – Kriva Palanka	N/A	1,1	Soft	66 722,58	56 714,19
18	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-54	Promotion of rural and mountain tourism through the use of ICT and ISO consultation between Bulgaria and FYROM	Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Blagoevgrad	Woman’s Organization - Stip	N/A	1,1	Soft	95 762,12	81 397,80
19	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-59	Preparation of feasibility studies for development of ski tourism in mountain areas of Belitsa, Bulgaria and Makedonska Kamenica, FYROM	Community centre “Georgi Todorov - 1885”	PP2 Civic Association “Football club KAMENICA - SASA” - Makedonska Kamenica, MK	N/A	1,3	Soft	146 304,33	124 358,68





20	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-65	Rivers with no borders	<i>Municipality of Dupnica</i>	Municipality of Kriva Palanka	N/A	2,1	Investment	499 987,75	424 989,59
21	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-69	Team effectiveness as a factor for the development of local democracy and social cohesion between Republic of Bulgaria and FYROM	<i>Regional chamber of commerce and Industry - Blagoevgrad</i>	Regional advocacy center - Delchevo	N/A	1,2	Soft	68 258,41	58 019,65
22	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-74	Research your closest environment and discover its most dangerous and harmful effects	<i>NGO „ZUG“, Valandovo</i>	Professional agriculture gymnasium "Kliment Timiryazev" - Sandanski	High school Gotse Delcev - Valandovo	2,1	Soft	97 392,86	82 783,93
23	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-75	Innovation Centre for Young People	<i>Business Incubator - Gotse delchev, Enterpreneurs hip Promotion Centre</i>	Foundation for Local and IT Development - Gevgelija	N/A	1,1	Soft	97 744,15	83 082,53
24	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-78	Joint Implementation of Innovative Tools for New Generation Entrepreneurs and Professionalist Development	<i>Association Inventivnost</i>	Kauzi Foundation - branch Dupnitsa	Foundation for cultural and intellectual development "Optimist" - Gotse Delchev	1,1	Soft	97 296,71	82 702,20
25	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-79	Networking of multimedia centres in cross border region	<i>Centre for Development of East Planing Region</i>	Municipal cultural centre "Petko Rachev Slaveikov" - Breznitsa	N/A	1,1	Investment	448 840,29	252 909,25
26	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-86	"TOWARDS THE FUTURE" - Study on the potential and utilization of renewable energy sources in the cross border region	<i>Centre for Development of the South-East Planning Region</i>	Association of South Western municipalities - Blagoevgrad	N/A	1,3	Soft	147 403,43	125 292,92
27	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-91	Improvement of energy efficiency in the cross-border region	<i>Kinder Garden Snejanka - Gotse Delchev</i>	Public municipal institution kindergarten "Goce Delchev" - Probistip	N/A	2,1	Investment	333 563,44	283 528,92





ANNEX C Best practices from the First and Second Calls for Proposals

FIRST CALL

Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2009-1-01
Project title:	Contribution to the cross-border fire protection
Lead Partner:	Municipality of Rankovce Republic of Macedonia
Partners:	Organisation Evroslavyuanska obshnost Association
Duration:	18 months
Total budget (in €)	299 413,82

Project description: The project is the result of joint efforts of partners to develop joint activities in the field of fire protection and implement infrastructure project for the rehabilitation of existing small-scale infrastructure, which is used by municipal fire brigade in Rankovce. Bulgarian partner provide the necessary professional anti-fire equipment for municipal fire brigades from Kyustendil. Were organized 2-day conference for fire protection and fire safety in the border region of Kyustendil and increase the capacity of firefighters and fire departments in both municipalities.

- Achieved results:**
- ✓ Rehabilitated small-scale infrastructure for protection of environment and fire safety - reconstruction of a facility fire house, including the construction of a garage for two fire vehicles and derivative works for fencing and landscaping the yard around the building;
 - ✓ One partnership for cases of natural disaster was established;
 - ✓ Joint environmental management plan was elaborated; Permanent network for environmental protection was established;
 - ✓ Specialized equipment pack for fire-protection was supplied, including specialized equipment for anti-fire automobiles and equipment for personal protection (incl. helmets, belts, boots and protection suits);
 - ✓ Installation for creating an information portal, including specialized software for publications and experience exchange in the border area was delivered.
 - ✓ Two seminars on CBC fire-protection, exchanging of good practices and on the Concept for cross-border action in disasters, accidents and fires, were held in Kyustendil;
 - ✓ 2000 brochures in Bulgarian and Macedonian on transnational protection were developed, published and distributed;
 - ✓ Environmental friendly project was implemented;
 - ✓ Experience and best practices were shared. Knowledge and experience of firefighters from across the border was increased;

The project was successfully implemented in November, 2012.





Reconstruction of a facility fire house



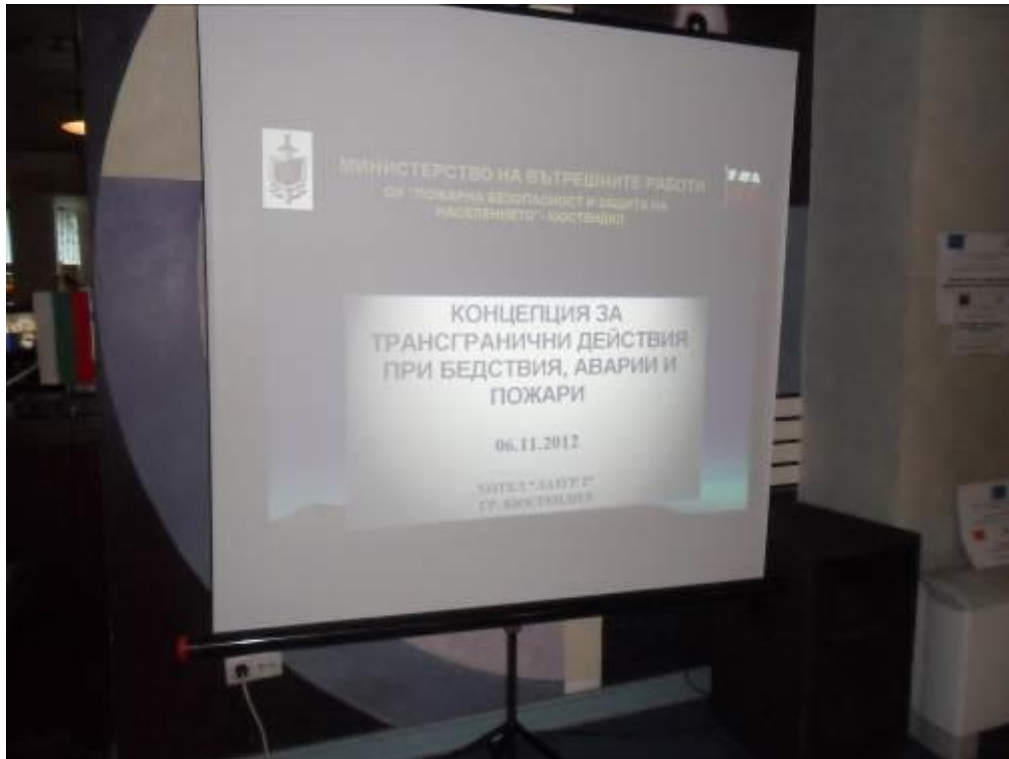


Construction of a garage for two fire vehicles



Fencing and landscaping the yard around the building





CBC fire-protection seminar: "Concept for cross-border action in disasters, accidents and fires".





Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2009-1-04
Project title:	Culture - bridge of cohesion
Lead Partner:	Municipality of Sandanski, Republic of Bulgaria
Partners:	Municipality of Novo Selo
Duration:	24 months
Total budget (in €)	276 922.59

Project description: The project defines the appropriate strategy for joint development in the field of alternative forms of tourism, the existence of a wide range of cultural heritage, sustainable economic development of cultural products. The project was implemented in two parts. The first part is an investment and included a partial repair and rehabilitation of the main halls in the houses of culture in Sandanski and Novo Selo. The second part consisted in cultural activities, divided into three areas: theater music, art gallery and ethno.

Achieved results: The main objective of the project was to reach sustainable development of the border region using the rich culture heritage and creation of innovative common cultural activities and services for encouraging the cross border cooperation between culture institutions in Municipality of Sandanski and Municipality of Novo Selo. The Project aimed to use the culture as an opportunity for tourist development and new profits of the local people through cultural traditions and activities promotion and reparation of existing House of culture.

- ✓ Partial repair and remediation of the Main hall in House of Culture in Sandanski
- ✓ Remediation and adaptation of Main hall in the House of Culture in Novo Selo
- ✓ Adaptation and repair of an Ethno nook and an Exhibition hall in House of Culture in Sandanski
- ✓ Adaptation of an Ethno nook and an Exhibition Hall in House of Culture in Novo Selo
- ✓ Culture activities in Sandanski – theatre-music and painting
- ✓ Culture activities organisation in Sandanski - ethnology
- ✓ Culture activities in Novo Selo - theatre-music and painting





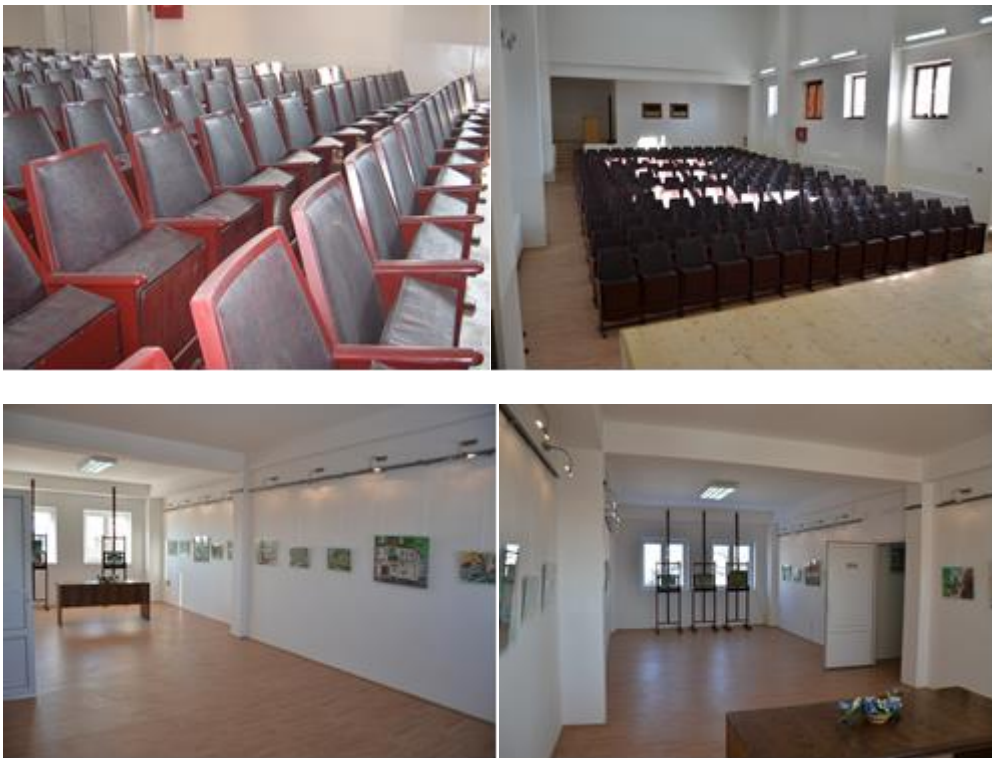
- ✓ Culture activities organisation in Novo Selo - ethnology
- ✓ Publicity and information provision
- ✓ Closing forum in Municipality of Sandanski
- ✓ Closing forum in Municipality of Novo Selo

The project has been successfully accomplished in May 2013.





House of culture in Sandanski after the partial repair at the end of the project;



House of culture in Novo Selo after the remediation and adaptation at the end of the project;





Ethno nook in Municipality of Sandanski;



Ethno nook in Municipality of Novo Selo;





Culture activities in Sandanski - theatre-music and painting;



Culture activities in Novo Selo - theatre-music and painting.





Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2009-1-40
Project title:	Cultural Exchange – Sharing Differences Towards United Cultural Development
Lead Partner:	Municipality of Nevestino
Partners:	Municipality of Dojran
Duration:	22 months
Total budget (in €)	299 920.47

Project description: The project focused on cultural exchange and preservation of cultural diversity, it provide support for appropriate and reasonable exploitation of existing cultural assets. This project fully utilized cultural resources through: Cross-border cultural cooperation through joint development of traditional festivals - "Struma pee" and "Dojranski rakuvanja", exhibitions and cultural events; Also perform the development and construction of small-scale infrastructure - Cultural Information Center in Nevestino and Small Summer stage in Doiran;

- Achieved results:**
1. Small-scale infrastructure was constructed - the new established Cultural-Informative centre in Nevestino was supplied of furniture and IT equipment and will be used for organization of different cultural performances (dances, theatres, music) to the wider auditoria. There are exhibition stages for cultural workers for presentations of cultures of both Bulgarian and Macedonian partner regions;
 2. Small-scale infrastructure was constructed - the new build Small Summer stage in Dojran will be used for organization of different cultural performances (dances, theaters, music) and exhibitions of cultural artistic works;
 3. Selected 40 young students trained in identification, analyzing and recording of cultural and folkloristic heritage: 20 young people from Nevestino and 20 young people from Dojran trained in different subject areas - folklore, local cultural tradition, artistic creation and photos;
 4. Organized and carried out 2 3-day workshops for cultural exchange





- in Dojran and Nevestino: 40 young students presented their local folklore each other and exchanged their cultural traditions;
5. Two-day joint presentations of the achieved results by the youths during the international folklore festivals "Struma Pee" in Nevestino and "Dojranski Rakuvanja" in Dojran;
 6. Identified, recorded, presented and demonstrated cultural folkloristic heritage of two regions through: implemented information and visibility activities under the project; created joint project website; printed information booklet and brochure concerning cultural heritage with collected data for folklore on both sides of the border, song lyrics, description of traditions, photos, paintings and drawings developed during project implementation.

The project has been successfully accomplished in 03.2013.

Cultural-Informative centre in Nevestino







Small summer stage in Dojran













Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2009-1-78
Lead Partner:	Municipality of Rila
Partners:	Municipality of Kochani
Duration:	18 months
Total budget (in €)	227 525.23

Project description:

The overall objective of the project was to promote a common cultural and historical heritage of Rila and Kocani by creating the conditions for the preservation and exhibition of folklore, traditions and rituals of the people in the border region. The main project activities were associated with the renovation and equipping of the House of common cultural and historical heritage and Ethno house, where you can see authentic arrangements of local house in order to boost interest in the cultural heritage and increase the attractiveness of border regions .

Achieved results:

1. Created House of the cultural and historical heritage of Rila and Kocani as a place for exhibition and presentation of the common history in Municipality of Rila;
2. Created Ethno house in Municipality of Kocani as a place, where can be presented authentic crafts, character for the region, among which: embroidery, knitting, weaving, production of souvenirs. The Ethno house functions as a museum of ethnographic collections, a school for authentic crafts and halls for workshops and it is the best way for preservation and presentation of the culture in the region;
3. Organized and carried out joint forums and exhibition, connected with the presentation of the cultural and historical heritage in the cross-border region Rila-Kocani. One-day forum "Identical in cultural differences" was organized in the town of Kochani on 12.11.2012. A joint exhibition on the topic "The ethnography in the cross-border region" was organized in the town of Rila on 14.11.2012;





4. Increased awareness of the people through realization of the following activities and measures: Organization of an initial pres-conference in Rila; 1 forum in the town of Kochani organized; 1 exhibition and 1 final pres-conference in the town of Rila organized; filming the cultural heritage of the CB region; trilingual catalogue elaborated; informational boards installed.

The project has been successfully accomplished in 11.2012.

House of cultural heritage of Municipalities of Rila and Kochani in Rila





Ethno House in Kochani







A joint exhibition on the topic "The ethnography in the cross-border region" in Rila on 14.11.2012



DVD film





SECOND CALL

Project number: 2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-04
Lead Partner: Organisation Association Business Information and Consulting Centre-Sandanski
Partners: Organisation Centre for Development of the East Planning region-Shtip
Duration: 18 months
Total budget (in €) 99 953.79

Project description: The project was carried out to develop mechanisms that will provide more information and increase awareness of natural resources and the Malesh mountain region in order to promote and provide adequate funds for its preservation. At this point in Bulgaria and Macedonia was formed and published a common web-based platform that contains detailed information on the biodiversity of the region and promotion, as well as a comprehensive guide info for various plant and animal species Malesh mountain.

- Achieved results:**
- ✓ Implemented Contact Meeting in Bulgaria for the establishment of a Partnership Network of existing environmental stakeholders of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
 - ✓ Implemented Discussion forum “Maleshevska mountain – past, present and future”
 - ✓ Carried out series of school meetings in the target cross-border regions of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
 - ✓ Developed Interactive Map of Species to promote Biodiversity of the Maleshevska Mountain
 - ✓ Prepared and distributed promotional stickers to promote the preservation of rare and typical Maleshevia Species

The project was successfully implemented in February, 2014.





Activity 1. Management and coordination of the project



1st Work meeting of the project team, Sandanski, Bulgaria, November 29, 2012





4th Work meeting of the project team, Shtip, June 18, 2013



6th work meeting of the project team, Sandanski, November 29, 2013





7th work meeting of the project team, December 13, 2013





Activity 2. Information, visibility and publicity campaign of project "MALESH"



Promotional materials of the project





Press conference Berovo, April 2013





Press-conference for presentation of project results, Sandanski, Bulgaria, January 20, 2014





Activity 3. Carrying out a detailed analysis and data collection of the biodiversity (flora and fauna) in the cross-border mountain of Malesh in the Bulgarian part of the mountain.



ПРОГРАМА ЗА ТРАНСГРАНИЧНО СЪПЪРДИЧЕСТВО МЕЖДУ БУЛГАРИЯ И СЪСЪДНАТА РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА
ИНСТРУМЕНТ ЗА РЕГИОНАЛНО СЪДЪРЖАНИЕ (ИПМ)

2.3 ТЪРНАЧНИ ЖИВОТИ
При обработката на резултатите от теренните изследвания с това от най-големите литературни списъци била избрана 296 вида горнопланински животни (вж. Приложение 2.3.1. Горнопланински животни), от които 47 процента вида с ясно природоопазвателен статус (табл. 7).

Табл. 7 Установен брой видове горнопланински животни в Малешевска планина

Таксон	Установен брой видове в българския участък на Малешевска планина	Брой видове с природоопазвателен статут за цялостта (включително за цялостта)
Рибни (class Pisces)	11	4
Земноводни (class Amphibia)	12	2
Члустети (class Insecta)	25	9
Птици (class Aves)	148	31
Млечнокопчи (class Mammalia)	97	24

ЧАСТ II. АНАЛИЗ НА МЕСТООБИТАНИЯ (ХАБИТАТИ) НА ТЕРИТОРИЯТА НА БЪЛГАРСКАТА ЧАСТ ОТ МАЛШЕВСКАТА ПЛАНИНА.

Местообитание (хабитат), представлява място, както даден организъм или група от организми обитават и едно с всички важни и важни фактори и условия на околната среда.

Описание на биологичното разнообразие е в тясна връзка с околната на природните местообитания. Тези две съществено параметри в големия степен бъдещето и на съхраняване с тези видове живи организми.

Разнообразието класифициран и поведени условия, спецификата на водни реки и долините на човешка обриват и разнообразието на местообитанията представени на територията на Малешевска планина.

Хабитатното разнообразие е установено чрез литературен преглед на научни и популярни





Activity 4. Carrying out a detailed analysis and data collection of the biodiversity (flora and fauna) in the cross-border mountain of Malesh in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia part of the mountain.



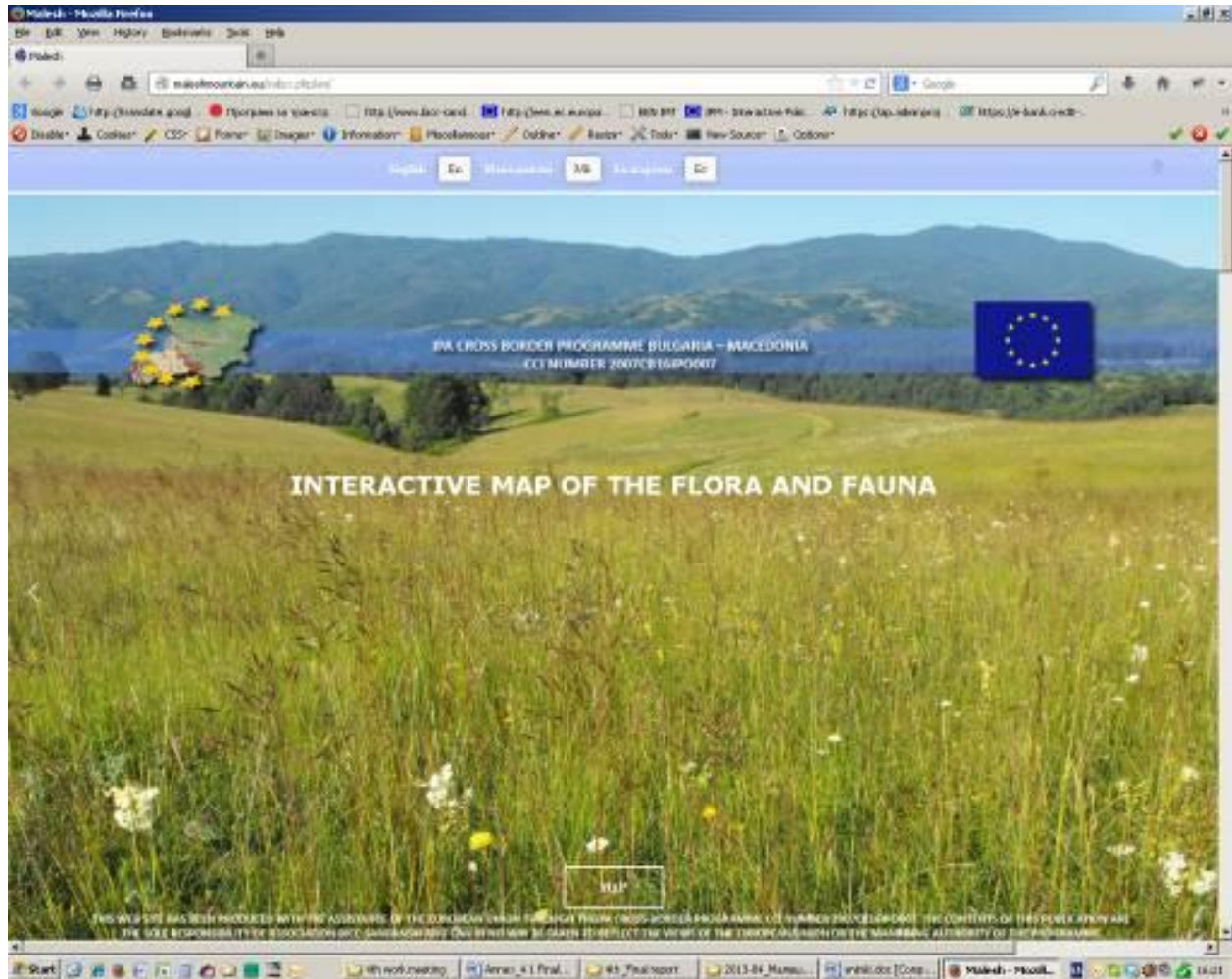


Activity 5. Design, pre-press and printing of a trilingual (BG, MK, EN) Info-guide " The Biodiversity of Maleshevska mountain"





Activity 6. Design, development, maintenance and update of interactive biodiversity portal "MALESHEVIA" and interactive online map of species.





Activity 7. Carrying out a Contact meeting in BG for the establishment of Partnership Network of existing environmental stakeholders of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia





Activity 9. Carrying out a series of school meetings in the target cross-border region of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



**Project number:**

2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-12

Lead Partner:

Alliance for regional and civil initiatives (ARCI) – Blagoevgrad Branch

Partners:

Foundation for small and medium enterprises development - Kumanovo

Duration:

12 months

Total budget (in €)

77 433,68

Project description:

The aim of the project is the development of human resources through training and cooperation among institutions and organizations. Acquiring knowledge will increase mobility and employability in the region including vulnerable groups. These groups are difficult to realize in the labor market due to lack of experience, skills and work habits. The project will encourage the search for work and to get new qualifications. Realizing active policy in the labor force will reduce unemployment, to ensure business needs with flexible and productive workforce for flexible response to changes in market conditions.

Achieved results:

- **Improved Environment for development of relationships across border** - Created opportunity for exchange of information and contacts between representatives of the Manufacturing sector from Blagoevgrad and Kumanovo during the three - day FORUM and JOB fair.

The following project Specific result indicator was achieved:

- **Fostered cross-border cooperation between labour market, educational institutions and SMEs in Manufacturing sector** - created opportunity for exchange of information and contacts between representatives of the Manufacturing sector from Blagoevgrad and Kumanovo during the three - day FORUM and JOB fair

The project has been successfully accomplished in July 2013.





Motivational training in Blagoevgrad, Republic of Bulgaria – January 9th – 18th, 2013





Seminar in Blagoevgrad, Republic of Bulgaria – April 5th, 2013



Vocational trainings in Kumanovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – April – June, 2013





Vocational trainings in Blagoevgrad, Republic of Bulgaria – May – July, 2013

BREAD AND BREAD PRODUCTS



TAILORING





Cross – border FORUM for establishment of cooperation network – July 4th – 6th, 2013





Project number: 2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-21

Lead Partner: Bulgarian Management Association - Blagoevgrad

Partners:

1. Association Regional Center of Cooperation- SPECTAR – Kriva Palanka
2. Stratos Foundation - Simitly

Duration: 12 months

Total budget (in €) 94 273,49

Project description: The project was realized with integrated research, analysis and preparation of a strategy for integrated cross-border economic development. Also the participation of entrepreneurs in the two study visits in Bulgaria and Macedonia and conference for entrepreneurship and business opportunities, activities that helped to establish the number of cross-border partnerships, exchange information on business opportunities, best practices and know-how among entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises and farmers on both sides of the border.

Achieved results:

- Prepared analyses of the current economic situation in the District of Kyustendil and the Macedonian North-East Region.
- Prepared strategies for integrated cross-border economic development for the District of Kyustendil and the North-East Region.
- 20 entrepreneurs, representatives of SMEs and farmers exchanged experience in Bulgaria and Macedonia.
- 40 persons participated at the conference on entrepreneurship and business opportunities in Kyustendil.
- Web portal and database developed to assist entrepreneurs, SMEs and potential investors in both regions.
- A set of consulting materials was prepared and the most important information was translated into Macedonian and English.
- Project promotion and publicity – 2 000 brochures, four plates, two boards, 4 newspaper releases and 4 regional radio announcements.
- As a result of project activities four new jobs due to the increased cross-border cooperation were created: two unemployed persons were hired by Mitovski Holding because of the increased customers coming from Bulgaria; one unemployed person was hired by TP Oblache Komerz because of the increased customer volume due to the contacts with Bulgarian businesses provided by the project. One Macedonian person made a cooperation contract with a Bulgarian representative of LR Health and Beauty Ltd. And started distribution of the respective products;
- On the site were registered over 400 visits and over 120 downloads of loaded documents.





The project has been successfully accomplished in July 2013.





















Project number: 2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-39
Lead Partner: Regional History Museum "Academician Yordan Ivanov" – Kyustendil
Partners: Municipality of Kriva Palanka
Duration: 15 months
Total budget (in €): 97 156, 38

Project description: The purpose of this project is to establish sustainable cooperation within the border between Kyustendil and Southeast region by developing sustainable programs for cultural and economic change. The project encouraged cross-border cooperation in cultural affairs, improve the capacity of local authorities and institutions and promote the exchange of cultural values that build cross-border cultural cooperation. A mutual inquiry card model elaborated.

Achieved results:

- Data base on the tangible and intangible cross-border cultural heritage developed.
- 2 two-day Festivals of traditional culture in Kyustendil and Kriva Palanka with review-spectacles of traditional garment from the region, children's holidays "The Games of Our Grandpas and Grandmas" and cross-border traditional cuisine exhibitions organized, held and visited.
- Advertising information materials (cultural products) elaborated and promoted:
- 6 types of brochures (3 Bulgarian/English and 3 Macedonian/English);
- 2 guidebooks "On the Road of Legends" (1 Bulgarian English and 1 Macedonian/English);
- 2 photo exhibitions elaborated and promoted in Kyustendil and Kriva Palanka (1 Bulgarian/English and 1 Macedonian/English);
- Borderless Cultural Heritage Two-Day Seminar organized in Kriva Palanka and 1 book of collected articles printed;
- 1 common cross-border project visible promoted by 4 press conferences in Kyustendil and Kriva Palanka organized,
- 1 Project promotion English/Bulgarian/Macedonia leaflet printed,
- 2 banners and 2 visibility boards elaborated and fixed.
- 80 Project advertising t-shirts elaborated and distributed.





The project has been successfully accomplished in October 2013.

First Project Press Conference in Kyustendil, 22.10.2013



Project advertising materials – information board and banner.





Project partners work meetings on 17.12.2012 in Kyustendil and on 22.01.2013 in Kriva Palanka



Field work in the region of Kriva Palanka by the Project experts from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia





Field work in the region of Kriva Palanka by the Project experts from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Festivals of Traditional Folk Culture:

Publicity materials produced for the Festivals in Kriva Palanka and in Kyustendil





Project partners work meeting held on 05.06.2013 in Kriva Palanka



Organizing review-spectacles of traditional cloths:

The traditional costumes show in Kyustendil, 18.05.2013





The traditional costumes show in Kriva Palanka, 18.05.2013





Organizing children's holiday "The Games of Our Grandpas and Grandmas"

Children's holiday in Kyustendil, 18.05.2013





Children's holiday in Kriva Palanka, 08.06.2013





Organizing of cross-border traditional cuisine exhibition

Cross-border traditional cuisine exhibition in Kyustendil, 19.05.2013





Cross-border traditional cuisine exhibition in Kriva Palanka
(St. Yoakim Monastery), 9.06.2013





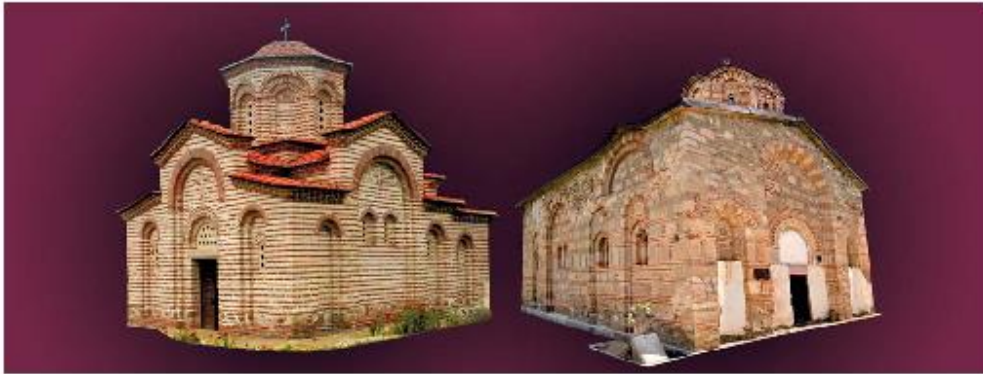
Preparation, printing and promoting of photo exhibition “Borderless Cultural Heritage”:

The first Bulgarian/English exhibition poster





Project: Cultural Heritage of Our Ancestors – Spiritual Mainstay of Our Common European Future
The project is co-funded by EU through the IPA Cross-Border Programme,
CCI number 2007CB16IPO007



КУЛТУРНО НАСЛЕДСТВО БЕЗ ГРАНИЦИ

CULTURAL HERITAGE WITHOUT BORDERS

Територијата на трансграничниот регион Кјустендил – Крива паланка е извонредно богата на цениви споменици на културата од всички историски епохи. Првите заселници на тои земји прео неолитот и енеолитот са оставили трајни отишци и в рајоните на обштините Кјустендила, Невестино и Бобов дол – оспло осплота Невестино, Ваксво, Шипковци, Долна Козница, Мала Фуча, Четрци, Илја, Пиперков Чифлик и др. Веројатно тои период водат началото си и т. нар. „сплани обекти“ – сплани ниши, кругови, дискови, вдлбнатини. Особено интересни са тои тип обекти в осплота Бабинска река, Долна Козница, Мала Фуча, Голем Варбовник, Црварина и др. В изолитот и железитот регион на Македонија също са регистрирани големо количество мегалитни споменици – обект на култ на праисториски човек.

Най-многобројни и извонредно цениви са спомениците од античната епоха. При провжидането на комплексните терени облождени по проектот била посетени десетки обекти: руини од осплота, крепости, градница, светишница и некропол. Част од тои, како римските терени и ксантениците и средновековна крепост на осплота „Хисарска“ од античната град Паузалка (Кјустендила), ксантениците крепости и укреплене в земланицата на Горна Козница, Мала Фуча, Црварено и др., са представени в изложбата.

Посланиците на средновековната епоха и последвалото в българско влжрдане на територијата на трите обштини, са осплотирувани в десетни средновековни осплота и крепости – Писка Славаница и Ражданица, множество средновековни и ксантениковни цркви и паравани, част од които като средновековната црква „Св. Петар“ над мачола „Хановите“ в с. Блато и црквата „Св.св. Константин и Елена“ в с. „Манастир“, с. Голема Фуча, обштина Бобов дол се представат и презентираат туи за гледиште пак. Отличителност на времето в осплота на-триотн осплота едну оставилост од средновековна Вељбжа (Кјустендила), в униклалност на десетките средновековни цркви и манастири, ссредоточени по поречието на р. Струма, в градска и извонградската на глорждискиот христииски храмове, в колорита на традиционната българска осплота. За територијата на обштините Кјустендила, Невестино, Бобов дол, както и за обштина Крива Паланка в Р Македонија, на-вблвематично са средновековната црква „Св. Георги“ в Кјустендила и манастирот „Св. Йованв Ослопски“ над Крива Паланка.

Самослободискиот период, освен със заслвжнотото строителство на христииски храмове и солидни обштински сплоти, се характеризира и сплота на нова формира политичност – приложение предпаметта на заштителста Ослободеното и ека војовитост за обединение на Българии. Злвочват да се строят мемориални споменици, сплоти на осплотири дати се организират осплотири тържества. На-инишк в тоа отишение в храм-споменикот „Св. Троица“ в граничното осплота Гешнево, по-познат како „Костеницата“.

В изложбата представени и традиционни детски игри и традиционни гозби, како и част од злвжните информатори, на които дължим огромна благодарност, че са сплотирили за нас и бидејќите поколение една извонредно важно част од наследството на регионот – т. нар. живо наследство.

Изложбата е резултат од излвжнението на проектот „Културното наследство на предците ни – духовни усти за обшото ни европелско бидење“, сплотириран од Европелскиот сплоти по Програмата за трансгранично сгтрудинчество 2007-2013 Българии – Р Македонија, ССЛ № 2007CB16IPO007. Партнери по проектот са Регионални историски музеи „Акад. Йордан Иванов“, Кјустендила и обштина Крива Паланка, Р. Македонија. Автори и сгставители са исплотириите по проектот од Регионални историски музеи „Акад. Йордан Иванов“ и обштина Крива паланка.

The territory of the cross-border region Kyustendil-Kriva Palanka is exceptionally rich in valuable cultural monuments from all historical epochs. The first settlers of these lands in the Neolithic and Eneolithic Ages have left their lasting imprints where today's municipalities of Kyustendil, Nevestino and Bobov Dol are situated – around the villages of Nevestino, Vaksvo, Shihkovci, Dolna Koznitsa, Mala Fucha, Chetrtci, Ilija, Piperov Chiflik, etc. The so called “rock sites” – rock niches, circles, discs, covers – probably started to be made during this period. The sites of this type in the villages of Babinska Reka, Dolna Koznitsa, Mala Fucha, Golem Varbovnik, Tsarvartsa, etc. are particularly interesting. Numerous megalithic monuments – cultic sites of the prehistoric man – were also registered in the eastern and southeastern parts of Macedonia.

Antique monuments are the most numerous and extremely valuable. Dozens of sites were reached during the complex field research under the project: ruins of villages and towns, fortresses, strongholds, sanctuaries and necropolis. Part of them, such as the Roman thermas and the late antique and medieval fortress on the Hisarlik hill surviving from the ancient town of Pautalia (Kyustendil), the late antique fortresses and strongholds near the villages of Gorna Koznitsa, Mala Fucha, Tsarvartsa, etc. are featured in the exhibition.

The medieval epoch and the subsequent Bulgarian National Revival (Vazrazhdane) also left their mark on the territory of the those municipalities where dozens of medieval villages and fortresses are found: Piska Slavantsa, Razhdantsa, and numerous medieval and late medieval churches and chapels. Some of the latter, such as the medieval church St. Peter above the Hanovite hamlet in the village of Blato and Sts. Konstantin and Elena Church in the Manastira area, village of Golema Fucha, Bobov Dol municipality are here first presented to the public. Best preserved and most eloquent of their time are the remains of the medieval town of Veluzhd (Kyustendil), as well as the dozens of unique medieval churches and monasteries mainly built along the Struma river, the Christian temples from the National Revival with their specific structure and murals, and the quite traditional Bulgarian houses. The most emblematic of them for the municipalities of Kyustendil, Nevestino and Bobov Dol and Kriva Palanka, FYROM, are the medieval church St. George in Kyustendil and St. Yovank of Osovo Monastery in the mountain above Kriva Palanka.

The post-liberation period was characterized not only with the large-scale construction of churches and solid public buildings, but also with the appearance of a new form of worship relating to the men who sacrificed their lives in the Liberation struggle and the wars for the unification of Bulgaria. To pay them homage, war memorials began to be erected and village celebrations to be held at them on certain dates. The most significant of these memorials is the Holy Trinity Church in the border village of Gusherevo, better known as the Ossuary.

The exhibition also features traditional children's games and traditional dishes, as well as some of our informers, to whom we are deeply grateful for preserving, for us and for the generations to come, this incredibly important part of our region's heritage – the living heritage.

This exhibition is organized under the project Cultural Heritage of Our Ancestors – Spiritual Mainstay of Our Common European Future, co-funded by the European Union under the 2007-2013 CCI № 2007CB16IPO007 Cross Border Programme for Bulgaria and FYROM. The two project partners are the Academician Jordan Ivanov Regional Historical Museum, Kyustendil and the municipality of Kriva Palanka, FYROM. Its authors and compilers are the projects experts from Kyustendil's Regional Historical Museum and the municipality of Kriva Palanka.



Проект: „Културното наследство на предците ни – духовни усти за обшото ни европелско бидење“
Проектот е сплотириран од ЕС чрез Програмата за трансгранично сгтрудинчество Българии – Р Македонија, ССЛ № 2007CB16IPO007

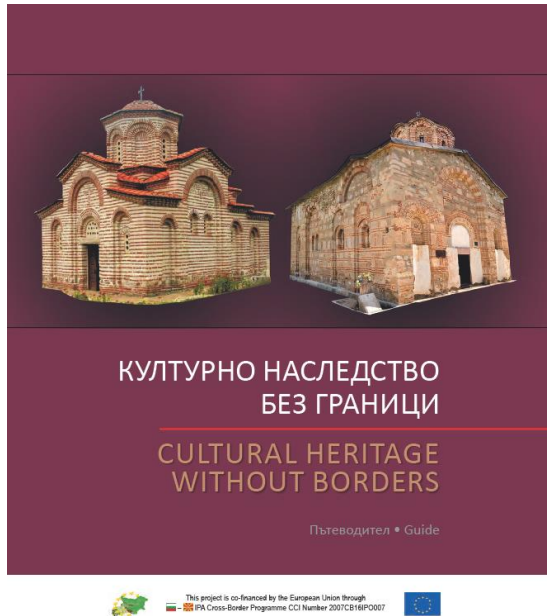




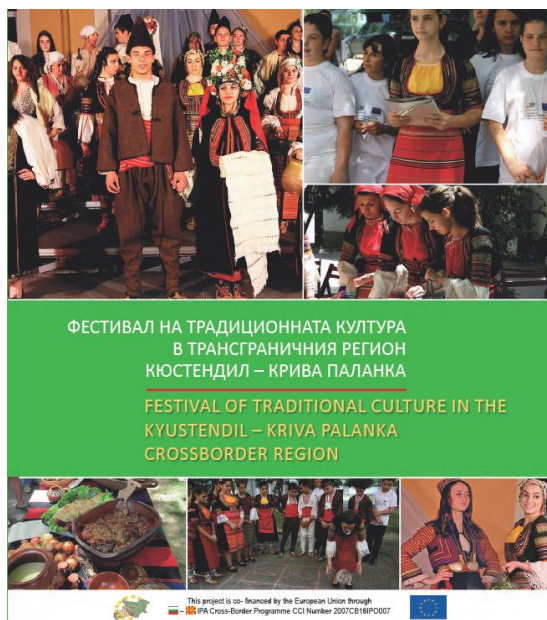
Preparation, designing and printing of 3 types of advertising information brochures

Bulgarian/English brochure promoting the photo exhibition

Bulgarian/English brochure promoting the cultural heritage



Bulgarian/English brochure and Macedonian/English brochure promoting the Festivals





Preparation, designing and printing of guidebook “On the Road of Legends”:

Project partners' work meeting in Kyustendil on 24th of September and in Kriva Palanka on the 2nd of October 2013



Seminar “Borderless Cultural Heritage”:

Presentation of scientific reports at the Borderless Cultural Heritage Seminar





Project closure:

Final Project Press Conference in Kyustendil, 15.10.2013





Final Project Press Conference in Kriva Palanka, 01.10.2013





Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-46
Project title:	Bike Lanes for Citizens and Visitors to Kyustendil and Kriva Palanka
Lead Partner:	Municipality of Kyustendil
Partners:	Municipality of Kriva Palanka
Duration:	15 months + 3 months
Total budget (in €)	495 357.68

Project description: In this project, the implementation of the planned activities are built bicycle lanes in both cities. It was the second step in the process of city cycle network building after the first bike lane constructed in Kyustendil back in 2007. The other project issues are joint research study conducted for the special protection of natural resources and conduct a joint workshop on the challenges and potential for protection and improvement of environmental conditions in the region and creating a network of working relationships.

- Achieved results:**
- Constructed bicycle lanes in Kyustendil and Kriva Palanka with installation traffic signs in favour of citizens and visitors to the two cities;
 - Easy access and created conditions for active involvement of citizens (including those with disabilities) and visitors to the two municipalities for protection and joint sustainable use of the natural resources;
 - Created conditions for active involvement of the economic agents from the cross-border region Kyustendil - Kriva Palanka in the processes of integration and economic development of the two municipalities;
 - Public transparency provided, public awareness raised for project implementation and increased confidence among the citizens, NGOs and the business sector;
 - Two press conferences conducted;
 - 4 publications in local/ national mass media;
 - 10 press releases for the project progress published on the web-sites of the two municipalities;
 - 1000 project promotional brochures designed, printed and widely disseminated;
 - Elaborated Assessment Report on the prospective impact of the bike lanes construction and use on the environment in the two cities;
 - Elaborated Report with proposals for policy changes and measures related to the environment preservation;
 - 6 informational boards installed.

The project has been successfully accomplished in January 2014.





Bicycle lanes in Kyustendil







Bicycle lanes in Kyustendil and Kriva Palanka

