

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2014



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

CCI Number 2007CB16IPO007



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for the
Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
AA	Audit Authority
AEUFEA	Executive Agency of Audit of European Union Funds
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross-border Cooperation
EU	European Union
FLC	First Level Control
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPA II	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2014-2020
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
JWG	Joint Working Group for preparation of the IPA II CBC Programme
MA	Managing Authority
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NA	National Authority
OI	Output Indicator
PA	Priority Axis
PPR	Project Progress Report
RI	Result Indicator
RfFLC	Requests for First Level Control
RfPs	Requests for Payments
RMG	Risk Management Group
TA	Technical Assistance





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 sixth AIR for the Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme, CCI Number 2007CB16IPO007 (hereinafter referred to as the Programme) and spans over the period of 1 January 2014 till 31 December 2014.

The Managing Authority (MA) for the Programme is the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) of Bulgaria having as counterpart the Ministry of Local Self-government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, acting as the programme's 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:	Bulgaria (NUTS III regions): Blagoevgrad District (14 municipalities) and Kyustendil District (9 municipalities)	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (NUTS III regions): Northeastern Statistical Region (6 municipalities), Eastern Statistical Region (11 municipalities) and Southeastern Statistical Region (10 municipalities)
Reporting year:	2014	

Date of approval of Head of MA:	22 May 2015
Date of approval of the annual report by the Joint Monitoring Committee:	11 June 2015





2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border 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 July 2012 and Decision C(2012) 8373 on 14 November 2012 and Decision C(2014) 1536 on 12 March 2014. The description of management and control systems was approved by the European Commission with letter ref. No DG REGIO E1 D (2010), Ares 978794 / 21 December 2010.

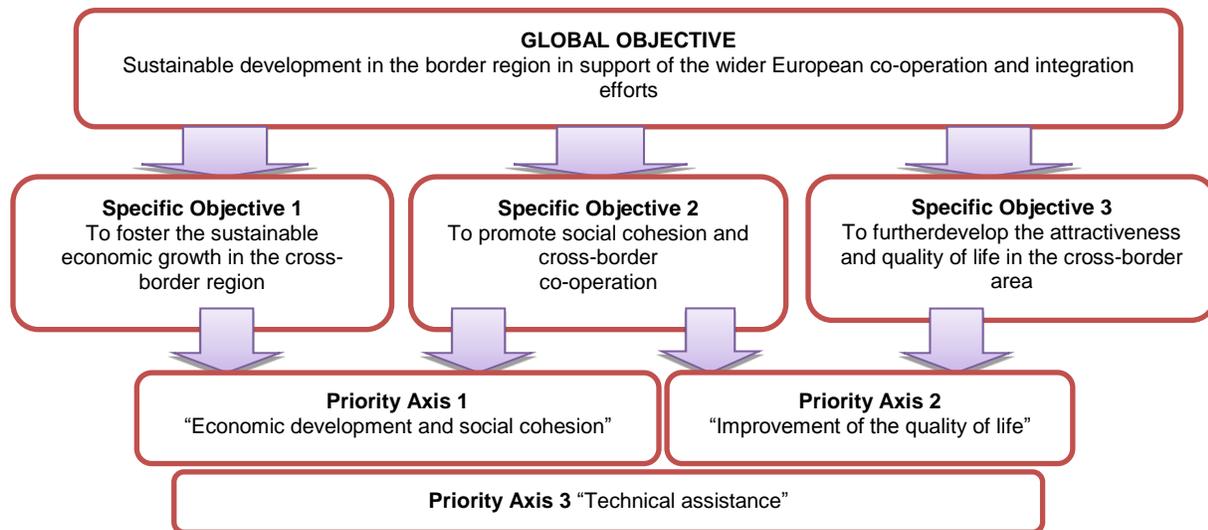
Within the period till 31 December 2014 three open Calls for Proposals were launched under the Programme which attracted a total number of 320 applications. These figures are positive sign for the dynamics of the bilateral co-operation between the two neighbouring countries and show intensity of cooperation at the stage of project preparation. At the same time, the big number of common project proposals shows good will and increased interest in implementing joint cross-border initiatives contributing to the sustainable development and the improvement of the quality of life in the region.

The number of joint projects supported under the Programme as of 31 December 2014 is 100 (32 projects under the first Call for Proposals, 32 ones under the second Call for Proposals and 36, under the third Call for Proposals), every one involving 2 or 3 project partners. The total number of legal entities involved in project implementation is 221 among which: municipalities, district administrations, non-for-profit organisations, cultural and education institutions, chambers of commerce, 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 usually 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 axes of the Programme are presented in the figure below:





2.1. ACHIEVEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRESS

Given that the programme is now at the final stage of its implementation with an important part of the IPA funding committed to projects, it is appropriate to continue the reflection process initiated through the programme mid-term evaluation by giving answer to the following questions:

What was the programme initially meant to achieve?

The overall objective of the Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme 2007 – 2013 aims to contribute for a sustainable development in the border region in support of the wider European co-operation and integration efforts thus providing a balanced and sustainable development throughout the entire cross-border region.

The specific objectives of the Programme strategy: 1) to foster the sustainable economic growth in the cross-border region; 2) to promote social cohesion and cross-border co-operation, and 3) to further develop the attractiveness and quality of life in the cross-border area through protection and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources as well as development of tourism, were jointly elaborated by the two partnering countries on the basis of territorial and SWOT analyses, regional consultations and lessons learned from the cross-border activities implemented until 2006.

The programme strategy and its objectives fit the relevant EU and national cohesion policy promoting good neighbourhood relations fostering stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of both countries.

Taking into consideration the limited budget (EUR 19 944 697) and nature of the Programme, it intended to complement the strategies and measures at national level. Mainly small-scale projects were foreseen to be financed for the benefit of a larger number of applicants in different spheres of intervention.





In addition, as an IPA CBC Programme, it initially intended to provide assistance to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in terms of building institutional capacity for management of Structural Instruments in view of forthcoming EU membership.

Is the programme still on track for the achievement of these objectives and where do efforts need to be refocused?

In September 2013, the Programme's mid-term evaluation came to the conclusion that the Programme had remained relevant to the needs of the target region and even at that particular moment most of the results had been achieved. The Programme was considered as being in line and consistent with the policy context of 2014 in terms of objectives and priorities and focusing on economic growth and labour market interventions which was assessed as fully relevant to the recessionary environment of the region.

Until 31 December 2014, the majority of Programme result indicators' targets set for 2016 have been overachieved which provides a reasonable assurance that the Programme is on a good track for achieving the objectives initially set and there is no need to refocus them. In addition, the foreseen values of the Programme result indicators for 2015 and 2016 show that after finalisation of the second- and third-call projects, all targets are going to be met.

What has changed in the programme area and for the people living there as a result of the Programme's interventions?

The main results of the Programme achieved so far are:

- *Increased cross-border interaction and mobility* through establishment of new partnerships and relations between neighbours across the border - through implementation of joint cooperation projects in different thematic fields, 29 training places created, 90 joint cultural events carried out, 96 awareness-raising campaigns organised and 1630 people participating in training events among which 406 are from vulnerable groups. Networking structures or permanent networks created by the Programme are 38 and the majority of partnerships created are further developed and maintained.
- *Better preserved natural resources and biodiversity* as well as decreased level of pollution in the region as a result of 12 permanent networks for environment protection and reasonable utilisation of resources set up, 8 joint environmental management plans developed, etc.
- *Enhanced sustainable economic development* of the border region and increased competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by establishing joint information services and encouraging contacts across the border - illustrated by 2309 business and educational linkages created, improved





access to and usage of new technology, 7033 SMEs involved/addressed in cross-border projects, 104 new jobs created, of which 35 are for young people, 43 management and job-related training courses carried out, etc.

- Strengthened potential for development of tourism through sustainable use of natural resources and cultural assets of the border region - 66 tourist destinations developed, 56 tourist services created, of which 12 joint tourist services, 48 surrounding areas of cultural spots improved, 19 joint eco-itineraries created, etc.
- Improved / developed early warning and risk management systems as a result of 14 partnerships for cases of natural disasters created.
- Increased governance capacity and improved policies through joint initiatives, development of joint strategic documents and exchange of best practices and know-how. The list of strategic documents and download links elaborated with the financial assistance of the Programme can be found at <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=1&d=661>.

More details on successful projects could be found in Annex C and at: <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=56>. In addition, in 2015 the Managing Authority is going to carry out a Programme's impact assessment.

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 subsidy contracts	Total amount € 6 367 922.62

35 projects were contracted under the first Call for Proposals in total amount of EUR 6,367,922.62, of which 3 subsidy contracts (with ref. numbers: 2007CB161PO007-2009-1-33, 2007CB161PO007-2009-1-34 and 2007CB161-PO007-2009-1-76) were terminated due to withdrawal of project partners. In 2014 all first call projects were successfully finalised. Information on the financial implementation of the first call projects is presented in the table below.





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Financial implementation of the first call projects as of 31 December 2014
(EUR)

Priority axis	Number of contracts	Total contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
Priority Axis 1	17	2 824 291	549 981	1 807 132	2 357 113
Priority Axis 2	15	3 432 132	684 580	2 221 893	2 906 473
TOTAL	32	6 256 423	1 234 561	4 029 025	5 263 586

Under the first Call for Proposals, the total amount of EUR 132 078 was paid as interim and final payments under Priority Axis 1. The amount of EUR 30 849 was verified to beneficiaries under Priority Axis 2. As a result, total interim and final payments under Priority Axes 1 and 2 amounted to EUR 162 927. No advance payments were made in 2014.

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 subsidy contracts	Total amount € 8 203 692.72

33 projects were contracted under the second Call for Proposals in the total amount of EUR 8 203 692.72 with financial allocation for 2010, 2011 and 2012. 1 subsidy contract with reference number 2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-62 was terminated for preventing the possibility of double financing occurrence.

14 investment projects in total amount of EUR 5 130 473 and 7 soft projects in total amount of EUR 663 536 successfully completed their implementation in 2014. The final monitoring visits have shown that all beneficiaries have fulfilled foreseen activities, planned targets and indicators in accordance with the subsidy contracts.

List of finalised projects under the second Call for Proposals during 2014 is presented in Annex B attached to the current report.





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In relation with the financial implementation of the projects under the second Call for Proposals, some general information as of 31 December 2014 is presented in the table below.

Financial implementation of the second call projects as of 31 December 2014 (EUR)

Priority axis	Number of contracts	Total contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
Priority Axis 1	14	3 524 075	703 060	1 988 061	2 691 121
Priority Axis 2	18	4 419 343	903 868	2 780 218	3 684 086
TOTAL	32	7 943 418	1 606 928	4 768 279	6 375 207

Under the second Call for Proposals, the total amount of EUR 1 346 344 was paid as interim and final payments under Priority Axis 1. The amount of EUR 1 887 016 was verified to beneficiaries under Priority Axis 2. As a result, total payments amounted to EUR 3 233 360. No advance payments were made in 2014.

3rd 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
	Second half of 2014
36 subsidy contracts	Total amount € 5 979 258.00

In December 2013 after assessment, pre-contracting site visits and negotiation procedures, **27 subsidy contracts were signed** under the third Call for Proposals.

Third call projects contracted in December 2013

Priority axis	Number of projects	Budget (EUR)
Priority Axis 1: Economic development and social cohesion	17	2 093 641.87
Priority Axis 2: Improvement of the quality of life	10	1 984 467.13
TOTAL	27	4 078 109.00





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As a result of analysis of the financial implementation on the programme on 3 June 2014 the JMC took a decision for overcontracting additional projects with generated savings from the completed projects under priority axes 1 and 2 and the expected savings based on the average absorption rate on Programme level.

Pursuant to the JMC decision, 9 additional subsidy contracts were concluded during the second half of 2014.

Additional third call projects contracted in 2014

Priority axis	Number of projects	Budget (EUR)
Priority Axis 1 "Economic development and social cohesion"	5	729 863.00
Priority Axis 2 "Improvement of the quality of life"	4	1 171 286.00
TOTAL	9	1 901 149.00

List of the additional projects contracted in 2014 under the third Call for Proposals is presented in Annex B attached to the current report.

10 soft projects in total amount of EUR 843 868 successfully completed their implementation in December 2014. The final monitoring visits showed that all beneficiaries had fulfilled the foreseen activities, planned targets and indicators in accordance with the subsidy contracts. Information on the financial implementation of the third call projects is presented in the table below.

Financial implementation of projects under the third Call for Proposals as of 31 December 2014 (EUR)

Priority axis	Contracts	Total contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
Priority Axis 1	22	2 866 875	480 312	524 109	1 004 421
Priority Axis 2	14	3 155 754	563 288	472 879	1 036 167
TOTAL	36	6 022 629	1 043 600	996 988	2 040 588

Under the third Call for proposals, 5 new subsidy contracts under Priority Axis 1 were signed at the total budget amount of EUR 729 683. Thus, a 29% increase of the number of contracts leads to 35% increase of their total value. Under Priority Axis 2, 4 new subsidy contracts were signed at the amount of EUR 1,171,286. The elasticity is even larger, as a 40% increase of number of contracts results in 59% of total budget value.



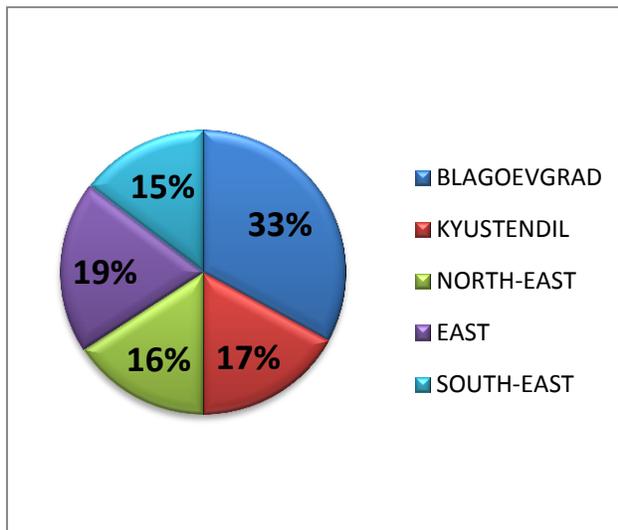


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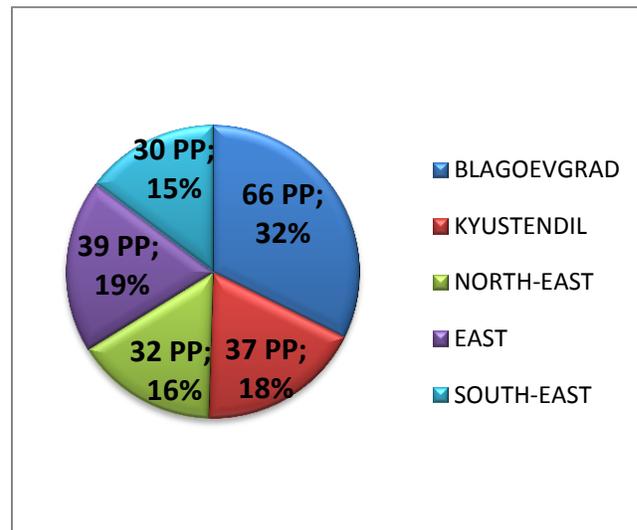
Aggregate data on cumulative financial implementation as of 31 December 2014 (EUR)

Call for Proposals	Priority axis	Contracts	Contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim & final payments	Total payments
First call	Priority Axis 1	17	2 824 291	549 981	1 807 132	2 357 113
	Priority Axis 2	15	3 432 132	684 580	2 221 893	2 906 473
TOTAL		32	6 256 423	1 234 561	4 029 025	5 263 586
Second call	Priority Axis 1	14	3 524 075	703 060	1 988 061	2 691 121
	Priority Axis 2	18	4 419 343	903 868	2 780 218	3 684 086
TOTAL		32	7 943 418	1 606 928	4 768 279	6 375 207
Third call	Priority Axis 1	22	2 866 875	480 312	524 109	1 004 421
	Priority Axis 2	14	3 155 754	563 288	472 879	1 036 167
TOTAL		36	6 022 629	1 043 600	996 988	2 040 588

Distribution of Funds under the Programme by Regions:



Distribution of Projects Partners by Regions:



As it can be seen, all regions have been active in the process of developing and implementation of projects, whereby a balanced coverage of financial resources is achieved in the whole eligible area. 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 organised.

- **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 JTS;
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 2014 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;
- Use of "Contingency" budget line are frequently requested for additional activities / quantities resulted by unfavourable or emergency situations which could not be foreseen at the stage of the investment planning;
- 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 2014 these were modifications concerning:

- Extension of the project implementation period, and
- Inclusion of applicant's own contribution.

Addenda for extension of implementation periods to 1 (one) project under the third Call for Proposals have been concluded with prior approval by JMC. The request for extension of implementation period is related to





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delay in projects implementation due slowdown in the reimbursement of expenditures caused by irregular transferring of the nation co-financing.

Addenda for inclusion of additional (applicant's) co-financing were signed with 1 (one) project from the second Call for Proposals and 2 (two) projects from the third Call for Proposals with prior approval by JMC. The requests for inclusion of additional co-financing are connected to the discrepancies between the amounts envisaged in budgets and the offers received in the works/supply tender procedures.

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 monitored and expected values of the Programme's result indicators (RI) are shown in the table below.

No	Programme Result Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1	<i>Joint information services established</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	7	2	1	
		Target 2016	2										
		Baseline*	8										
2	<i>Increased cross-border movement of people and exchange of goods and services in the region</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	8	1	1	
		Target 2016	1.5%										
		Baseline*	46										
3	<i>New Social Economic enterprises created</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	1	0	
		Target 2016	2										
		Baseline*	20										
4	<i>Improved environment for development of relationships across the border</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	8	5	1	
		Target 2016	3%										
		Baseline*	18										
5	<i>Projects actually applied</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	3	0	
		Target 2016	3										
		Baseline*	1										
6	<i>Decreased pollution in the region</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	1	1	
		Target 2016	2%										
		Baseline*	1										
7	<i>Awareness –raising on environmental protection</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	11	6	2	
		Target 2016	2.5%										
		Baseline*	32										
8	<i>Increased attractiveness of the region based on preservation of natural resources and cultural heritage</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	9	5	3	4	1	
		Target 2016	2%										
		Baseline*	8										
9	<i>Increased common cultural capital</i>	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	2	5	1	
		Target 2016	2%										
		Baseline*	37										





In compliance with the recommendations of DG REGIO, EC (Letter ARES (2015) 424874), the values of the result indicators for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are based on finalised projects. The values of Programme's result indicators for 2013 are calculated on the basis of finalised first and second call projects, while those for 2014, on the finalised second and third calls' projects. Data on the forecasted achievement in 2015 and 2016 are based on the implemented and not finalised contracts under the second and third Calls for Proposals.

To assess the real achievement of the expected results, the sum of indicators' values for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 was compared to 2016 target value.

From the data in the table it is apparent that most of the result indicators have reached their target values close to or considerably above 100% by the end of 2014. The expectations are that most of the Programme's result indicators will be reached after second and third calls' projects finalisation.

The values of majority of Programme's result indicators in 2014 show that the Programme is on track for the achievement of its objectives, especially of those related to sustainable economic development and improvement of the quality of life through utilisation of ecological and cultural resources of the region.

Until 31 December 2014 several result indicators' targets for 2016 were overachieved, which gives us a reasonable assurance to believe that:

- Joint information services were established (RI 1);
- Projects of good quality prepared under the Programme Sphere of Intervention 1.3 were actually applied (RI 5);
- Pollution in the region was decreased (RI 6);
- Attractiveness of the region was actually increased based on preservation of natural resources and cultural heritage (RI 8).

The accumulated values of some result indicators are below the targets set for 2016 but the Programme is still on track for their achievement. The results that need more efforts to be achieved (according to their targets for 2016) are: increased cross-border movement of people and exchange of goods and services in the region (RI 2), new social economic enterprises created (RI 3), and increased common cultural capital (RI 9), however, in the case of these three specific result indicators, not only the Programme's implementation is supposed to have an influence on their values. In conclusion, all Programme's result indicators that are assignable and realistic according to the SMART criteria have already achieved their targets.

2.1.3. Financial information





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The total value of the Programme budget is EUR 19 944 697 out of which EUR 16 952 994 are European funding and EUR 2 991 703 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:

Financial allocation to each priority axis by source of funding (EUR)

Priority axis	Union support	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 "Improvement of 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 programming 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 November 2012).

- **Achievement of Programme payment targets (n+3 rule)**

All the measures taken by the MA for speeding up the verification process such as possibility for additional verifications of expenditures, training for beneficiaries, individual consultations, etc. resulted in a higher level of absorption of the funds by the project partners during 2014 over the target. The spending targets of the Programme were met: while the amount that had to be certified during 2014 was EUR 2 799 216 (IPA financing), the total amount of the IPA funds certified to 31 December 2014 was EUR 4 083 360.

The accomplishment status of n+3 rule as of 31 December 2014 is shown in the table below:





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Programme payment targets*						EC advance payments 2007-2009	EC reimbursements 2007-2014**	Total advance payments + reimbursements	Amounts to be included in application for payment in order to avoid risk of de-commitment	
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014				2015	2016
0	0	605 798	2 690 518	2 744 330	2 799 216	3 296 316	9 675 665	12 971 981	2 855 200	2 912 304

** Accumulated amounts 2007-2014

The goal for 2014 is overachieved with EUR 1 284 144 (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.

Data from quality check performed by the Certifying Authority

During 2014 the "National Fund" Directorate at the Ministry of Finance of the 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 2014 amounting at EUR 4 083 360 (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 assessment of other available information by the Certifying Authority, the total amount of EUR 4 083 360 (IPA funding) is proposed for certification to EC by the CA.

2.1.4. Information about the breakdown of use of the funds

During 2014 the project beneficiaries submitted to the MA requests for interim and final payments amounting to EUR 3 421 555 for the implementation of projects under priority axes 1 and 2. Payment claims related to Technical Assistance Priority Axis amount to EUR 110 956.





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Financial flows during 2014 per Programme's priority axes (EUR)

	Amount of the payment claims to the MA / CA	Amount of Community and National contribution	Amount of own contribution from the beneficiaries	Amount of payments made by the MA	Total certified amount by CA
Priority Axis 1	1 474 403	1 464 408	9 995	2 482 845	1 960 456
Priority Axis 2	1 947 152	1 947 152	0	2 954 033	2 682 973
Priority Axis 3	110 956	110 956	0	173 303	170 632
TOTAL	3 532 511	3 522 516	9 995	5 610 181	4 814 061

The total number of contracted projects under the first, second and third Calls for Proposals is 100 at the amount of EUR 20 222 470, as shown in the table below.

Financial implementation of projects under priority axes 1 and 2 as of 31 December 2014

Calls for proposals	Contracts	Total contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments	Financial implementation
		EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	%
First call	32	6 256 423	1 234 561	4 029 025	5 263 586	84
Second call	32	7 943 418	1 606 928	4 768 279	6 375 207	80
Third call	36	6 022 629	1 043 600	996 988	2 040 588	34
TOTAL	100	20 222 470	3 885 089	9 794 292	13 679 381	68

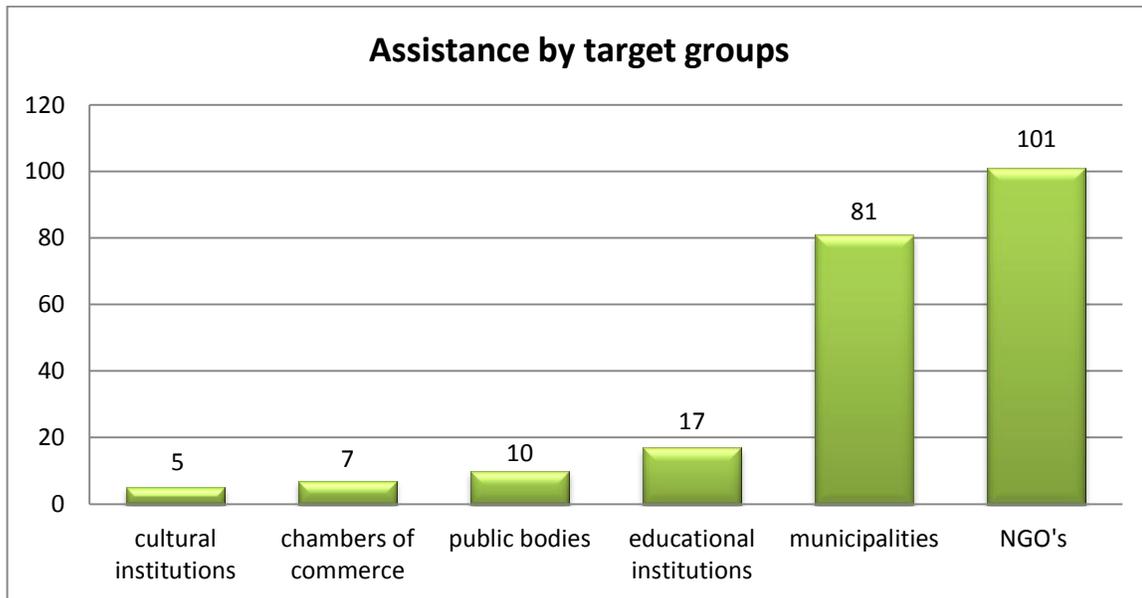
2.1.5. Assistance by target groups

The usual beneficiaries and target groups of the Programme are local and regional authorities and their associations, regional structures of central public authorities, regional and sectoral development agencies, non-government, non-profit organisations, research, cultural and education institutions, business support organisations, etc. Frequency of project partners among different target groups shows the following





distribution: 5 cultural institutions, 7 chambers of commerce, 10 public bodies, 17 educational institutions, 81 municipalities and 101 non-governmental organisations took part in cross-border cooperation projects.



Citizens and governments of the two countries benefitted from the implementation of the Programme. Indirectly, the Programme had an added value for the inhabitants of the cross-border region through the direct Programme investments in the region and the joint use of infrastructures, and enhanced cooperation activities in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education. The Programme contributed also to the assistance, which the IPA provided to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in their progressive alignment with the standards and policies of the European Union in view of forthcoming EU membership. Benefits for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were tangible in terms of building institutional capacity for the management of Structural Instruments and other forms of EU Assistance in the future. As regards the direct advantages for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (in light of EU accession), the Programme facilitated the transition to the EU practices on a multi-level basis (becoming more familiar with the use of the instruments in place for implementing mainstream EU interventions, the transfer of know-how between Programme implementing structures, etc.).

2.1.6. Assistance repaid or re-used

Not applicable





2.1.7. Qualitative analysis

Towards the end of 2014, 100 projects of a total amount of EUR 20 222 470 were contracted under the Programme. The projects under Priority Axes 1 and 2 were selected in three Calls for Proposals: two open Calls for Proposals (with 32 and 32 projects supported respectively) and one targeted Call for Proposals (with 36 projects supported). All first call projects, 21 second call projects and 10 third call projects have successfully completed their implementation by the end of 2014. 36 projects are still being under implementation.

Frequency of occurrence of project partners divided by target groups shows the following distribution: 5 cultural institutions, 7 chambers of commerce, 10 public bodies, 17 educational institutions, 81 municipalities and 101 non-government organisations.

During 2014 efforts were concentrated on ensuring a sufficient speed of Programme implementation and raising awareness about projects achievements and benefits. Considerable progress in the Programme financial implementation was observed in 2014. The Programme achieved and exceeded its financial goal, thus no funds were lost due to automatic decommitment rule (N+3). The Programme payment target for 2014 amounting to EUR 2 799 216 (IPA financing) was overachieved by EUR 1 284 144 and there was no loss of funds.

As of 31 December 2014, the total contracting amount for projects under Priority Axes 1 and 2 was EUR 20 222 470 or more than 113% of the available budget, and almost 68% of the total contracting amount were paid to beneficiaries. The total contracting amount for 53 projects under Priority Axis 1 was EUR 9 215 241 and the payments to beneficiaries amounted to EUR 6 052 655. The total contracting amount for 47 projects under Priority Axis 2 was EUR 11 007 229 and the payments to beneficiaries amounted to EUR 7 626 726. In addition, several projects supported by "Technical Assistance" Priority Axis were implemented.

The measures taken by the MA, NA and the JTS (both main and branch offices) such as organising training sessions for beneficiaries, providing a continuous support and advice during the project implementation, speeding up the verification process, etc. resulted in improved performance and in higher level of absorption of the Programme budget.

Similarly, the level of absorption of Programme funds was apparently increased in 2014 based on improvements in the FLC systems of the two partnering countries. Based on recommendations of audits and the mid-term evaluation performed, the MA established a pool of external independent controllers in Bulgaria, divided into groups specialised in verifications of projects under different financing Instruments (IPA or ERDF). The MA adopted a procedure for appointing controllers for the project's lifetime with regularly updated checks. As a result of the improvement of the first-level 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 could be assessed as effective considering the overall duration of the process.

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 at least 39. According to the mid-term evaluation, 90% of the target region population benefits from the Programme's implementation. 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 by the Programme. The MA procedures for ensuring compliance and integration of the horizontal themes are in line with the established best practices. In the selection process, priority was 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 the JTS.

During 2014, no significant problems were encountered for programme implementation and no risks to programme performance were identified.

The main activities for preparation of IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were implemented in 2014 with the “Technical Assistance” Priority Axis support, among which: territorial analyses, an on-line survey, two rounds of regional consultations with Programme stakeholders, draft Programme ex-ante and strategic environmental assessment, Joint Working Group meetings (in Skopje and Sofia), one technical meeting for discussing the Programme management and control systems and the draft Memorandum of Understanding for the period 2014-2020. The draft final IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was approved by the governments of the two countries and was sent to the European Commission on 19 September 2014 for further proceedings. After EC official comments had been received on 3 February 2015, the revised draft of the Programme (version 2.0 of March 2015) was re-submitted to the Commission on 6 March 2015. The Programme approval is expected in June 2015.

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 programme implementation were encountered during 2014.

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.

2.5 COMPLEMENTARITY WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS

A clear demarcation and complementarity of Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme 2007-2013 is ensured with: 1) other European territorial co-operation / IPA strands – in particular, the relevant cross-border and transnational co-operation programmes; 2) other EU co-financed programmes or funds implemented at national level such as Environment, Regional Development, Development of the Competitiveness of Bulgarian Economy, Human Resources Development operational programmes and Rural Development Programme for Bulgaria, as well as IPA component III, IV and V programmes in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; 3) other programmes / projects with national / regional and other funding of each of the partnering countries.





Complementarity and co-ordination with the other financial instruments is largely maintained during each stage of Programme Cycle Management through:

- Proper composition of the Programme Joint Monitoring Committee at the stage of Programme implementation and of the Joint Working Group at the stage of IPA II CBC Programme implementation;
- Existing national / regional co-ordination structures and mechanisms in both participating countries.

For example, MA representatives take part in the Regional Development Councils / Regional Co-ordination Councils that ensure co-ordination of all the EU co-financed programmes at regional (NUTS II) level in Bulgaria. In turn, representatives of such national and regional co-ordination structures participate in the Programme JMC sessions. Another tool used in the process of exchange of information for this purpose is the Programme Management Information System where one can obtain information related to different horizontal aspects as well as information on projects contributing to 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. For the first time during programme implementation, in 2013 the mid-term evaluation made review of the activities carried out on Bulgarian territory and of the joint projects that are considered coherent with three of the pillars and seven of the priority areas of the EUSDR. For more information, please refer to the Evaluation Report that is available at the Programme website.

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), Ares 978794/21 December 2010 with positive assessment on the Description of management and control systems of the Programme (in accordance with Article 115 and 116 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007).

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

IPA Programmes Manual

The legal basis for elaboration of the IPA Programmes 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.

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 2014, amendment to the IPA CBC Manual was approved in December 2014 related to optimisation of the checklist for monitoring site visit report.

Project Implementation Manual

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 2014, 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 version 5 as of June 2014. PIM for projects funded under the third Call for Proposals was also amended with version 2 as of June 2014. The amendments were caused by changes for public procurement procedures (PRAG 2014) as well as some minor changes with regard to project implementation.

The updated and improved Project implementation manuals are available at Programme's web-page: www.ipa-cbc-007.eu.

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 2014 the following changes were implemented:

Patch 1.4.05111014 – Additional functionality was added for financial report management in regards to the work of the first level controllers in partnering country. Additional groups were added and control mechanics were placed to ensure proper distribution of the information flows between the parties in FLC.

- **Monitoring measures and risk assessment procedure**

Project level

The overall monitoring at projects level is carried out by the JTS for Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 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 project progress reports (PPR), verifying the proper implementation of the projects in conformity with the provisions of the subsidy contract, the objectives of the approved application form and Programme rules.

During the reporting period, 34 initial monitoring meetings were held in the premises of the JTS offices. The main purpose of the initial monitoring visits is to be checked the available resources for the project implementation, to be discussed the preparedness for the tender procedures and the project implementation strategy; and to be performed the initial risk assessment, etc. During 2014, JTS managed to carry out all initial visits within the first three months of implementation, as required by the IPA Programmes Manual.

During the year 2014, on the basis of the Risk assessment analysis and Risk response plan one ad-hoc monitoring visit of the project under the second Call for Proposals has been performed by the 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 as well as the physical check of the investment activities and services delivered to be performed. During the year JTS has organised technical meetings with project beneficiaries from the second and third Calls facing delays in implementation. During these meetings it was discussed thoroughly the problematic issues as the appropriate resolving measures were formulated.

In accordance with the Annual Monitoring Working Plan, 27 final monitoring visits were performed throughout 2014.





Programme level

The Managing Authority and the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) are responsible for monitoring the Programme implementation in accordance with the principle of sound financial management. The Joint Monitoring Committee observes the monitoring of the Programme implementation and ensures the achievement of the Programme objectives through a rational use of the allocated resources.

During the reporting period, **one JMC meeting** was carried out on 3 June 2014 in Strumica (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Main decisions of the JMC meeting were the approval of the Annual Implementation Report of the IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007 for 2013 and of the MA proposal for contracting additional projects from the reserve list under the third Call for Proposals. Additionally, **several JMC written procedures** were organised on the following dates:

13 March 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of Negotiation Report from conducted pre-contract site visits and negotiations with projects from the reserve list under Third Call for project proposals under Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme.

18 July 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of budget revision of project “Social cohesion through establishment of activity centres of interests” (reference No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-012) approved for funding under Third Call for project proposals of IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme. CCI 2007CB16IPO007.

25 August 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of including own co-financing in the budget of project partner 2 – Municipality of Karbinci under project with ref. No. 2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-064 “Improvement of the quality and access to social services in the Municipality of Strumyani and Karbinci” approved for financing under the Second Call for project proposal of IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007

25 September 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of including own contribution in the budget of project partner 2 – “Goce Delchev” University in Stip under project with ref. No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-019 “Congressional Network and Center for Vocational and Technical Skills” approved for financing under the third Call for project proposal of IPA Cross-border Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007.

22 October 2014 – written procedure concerning of Negotiation Report from conducted budget negotiations with projects with ref. No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-083 and No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-026 under the IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007.

20 November 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of including own co-financing in the budget of lead partner 2 – Center for Development of the East Planning Region under project with ref. No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-079 “Networking of multimedia centres in cross-border region” approved for financing under the third Call for project proposal of IPA Cross-border Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007.





28 November 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of request for extension of the implementation period of project with ref. No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-059 “Preparation of feasibility studies for development of ski tourism in mountain area of Belitsa, Bulgaria and Makedonska Kamenica, Macedonia” financed under third Call for Proposals of IPA Cross-border Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007.

22 December 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of documents related to the Technical Assistance budget for 2015 of IPA Cross-border Programme CCI No 2007CB16IPO007.

23 December 2014 – written procedure concerning approval of request for extension of the implementation period of project with ref. No. 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-002 “Public Institutions – Energy Efficiency” financed under third Call for Proposals of IPA Cross-border Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007.

So that issues related to smooth programme implementation are discussed, during the period under review a number of **Joint technical meetings** between MA / NA / JTS were organised by the JTS. Issues related to the preparation of the next programming period 2014-2020 were discussed as well.

9 December 2014 – MA/NA technical meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, concerning: the first draft of the description of functions and procedures in place for the Managing Authority (Management and Control Systems of the Programme for the period 2014-2020) and first draft of the Memorandum of Understanding for the period 2014-2020. Other questions about the new programming period were also discussed and the status and the implementation of projects of the programming period 2007-2013 were presented.

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 at a 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 determining a baseline categorisation of potential risks events and subsequent analysis and assessment. The RMG prioritises the risks identified and provide a Risk response plan to reduce the likelihood or consequences of 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. overall project management and co-ordination by the lead partner, human resources, assignment of responsibilities, team changes, ability of the beneficiary to submit required documents, communications between the partners, partnership changes);





Operational Risks. Review and assessment of whether the performance characteristics (planning and organisation of project activities, implementation procedures in accordance with project timeschedule, project content changes and budget changes, extension or suspension of the project's implementation period, beneficiary's obligations related to the information and publicity activities under the project, achievement of the project output/result indicators, reporting of project implementation, beneficiary's response to instructions and recommendations of programme or other authorities) are in line with accepted project management practice;

Procurement Risks. Assessment of the risks related to subcontracting procedures, 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; risk of non-completion of tender procedures and cancellation of signed contracts;

Financial Risks. Assessment of the financial liabilities associated with the project, including operational and maintenance costs, PPs' own contribution, financial reporting (incl. unexpected / expected delays regarding the FLC and/or not properly prepared requests, slow rate of absorption of funds – total and by partners. Financial implementation depending on the type of the organisations – public authority or NGO).

A Risk Management Group (RMG) has been established with order № RD-02-14-565 as of 18 June 2013 and consists of Chairperson /representative of CBC External Borders Department/, representatives of Financial Management and Control Department and JTS in Kyustendil.

After the first risk assessment session of the RMG in January 2014 (based on the quarterly Analysis of the project progress under the second Call for Proposals elaborated by JTS and the progress reports presented) risk categories / criteria were detected in the following levels: institutional, operational, procurement and financial risk. Annexes 11.9 "Risk assessment" at project level has been prepared for the 13 risky projects. Information has been summarised within the Annex 11.10 "Summary Project Risk Assessment Report". 2 projects have been assessed as risky in the institutional risk level in the risk category "Project management and project partnership". 7 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. 11 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 April 2014. Identified 13 risky projects under the second call have been assessed on the basis of elaborated by JTS quarterly Analysis of the project progress under the Second call and presented progress reports. Elaborated Annexes 11.9 "Risk assessment at project level". Information has been summarised within the Annex 11.10 "Summary Project Risk Assessment Report". 4 projects have been assessed as risky in the Institutional risk level in the risk category





Project management and project partnership. 10 projects have been assessed as risky in the Operational risk level in the following risk categories: Contract modifications; Project Implementation and reporting. 1 project has been assessed as risky in the Procurement risk level in the risk category Sub-tendering procedures. 12 projects have been assessed as risky in the Financial risk level in the risk category Financial implementation.

Third risk assessment session of the RMG was held in June 2014. Identified 9 risky projects under the Second call and 6 risky projects under the Third call have been assessed on the basis of elaborated by JTS quarterly Analysis of the project progress under the Second and Third calls and presented progress reports. Elaborated Annexes 11.9 Risk assessment at project level. Information has been summarized within the Annex 11.10 Summary Project Risk Assessment Report. 8 projects have been assessed as risky in the Institutional risk level in the risk category Project management and project partnership. 11 projects have been assessed as risky in the Operational risk level in the following risk categories: Contract modifications; Project Implementation and reporting. 2 projects have been assessed as risky in the Procurement risk level in the risk category Sub-tendering procedures. All 15 projects have been assessed as risky in the Financial risk level in the risk category Financial implementation.

Fourth risk assessment session of the RMG was held in September 2014. Identified 4 risky projects under the Second call and 11 risky projects under the Third call have been assessed on the basis of elaborated by JTS quarterly Analysis of the project progress under the second and third calls and presented progress reports. Elaborated Annexes 11.9 Risk assessment at project level. Information has been summarized within the Annex 11.10 Summary Project Risk Assessment Report. 8 projects have been assessed as risky in the Institutional risk level in the risk category Project management and project partnership. 10 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. All 15 projects have been assessed as risky in the Financial risk level in the risk category Financial implementation.

Fifth risk assessment session of the RMG was held in December 2014. Identified 3 risky projects under the Second call and 10 risky projects under the third call have been assessed on the basis of elaborated by JTS quarterly Analysis of the project progress under the second and third calls and presented progress reports. Elaborated Annexes 11.9 Risk assessment at project level. Information has been summarized within the Annex 11.10 Summary Project Risk Assessment Report. 2 projects have been assessed as risky in the Institutional risk level in the risk category Project management and project partnership. 7 projects have been assessed as risky in the Operational risk level in the following risk categories: Contract modifications; Project Implementation and reporting. 1 project has been assessed as risky in the Procurement risk level in the risk category Sub-tendering procedures. All 13 projects have been assessed as risky in the Financial risk level in the risk category Financial implementation.





Risk assessment phase / Month	Call for proposals	Total number of risky projects	Number of projects with Institutional risk	Number of projects with Operational risk	Number of projects with Procurement risk	Number of projects with Financial risk
First session / January 2014	Second call	13	2	7	3	11
Second session / April 2014	Second call	13	4	10	1	12
Third session / June 2014	Second and third calls	15	8	11	2	15
Fourth session / September 2014	Second and third calls	15	8	10	3	15
Fifth session / December 2014	Second and third calls	13	2	7	1	13

*The risky projects are different according to their implementation period.

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 and third calls. 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 and third Calls for Proposals:

- Informing the lead partners (LP) and project partners (PP) about their risk rating by letter, facsimile;
- Requiring clarification from the LP / PP about the detected risky event/-s;
- Requiring information from the LP / PP about the measures taken to overcome the problem/-s;
- Sending letters by facsimile to LP / PP 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 finalisation 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 – project progress reports (PPRs), requests for first level control (RfFLC), requests for payments (RfPs), changes in the project time schedule, extension of the project implementation period, etc.);
- Uploading questions and answers section and samples of the most frequently used documents (project progress reports; request for payments; timesheets; 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, RfFLC, RfPs, etc.);
- Participating as observers in the tender opening sessions on the spot to beneficiaries;
- Organising technical meetings for beneficiaries in MA / JTS premises to discuss and avoid potential risks/problems in project implementation;
- Conducting ad hoc monitoring visits on the spot to beneficiaries.

• **First Level Control system**

In accordance with 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.

First level control exercised in Bulgaria

Bulgaria set up a decentralized control system and the same approach was adopted by the partnering country. In Bulgaria the first level control is carried out by external independent controllers selected by the DG "Territorial Cooperation Management" within the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works 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:

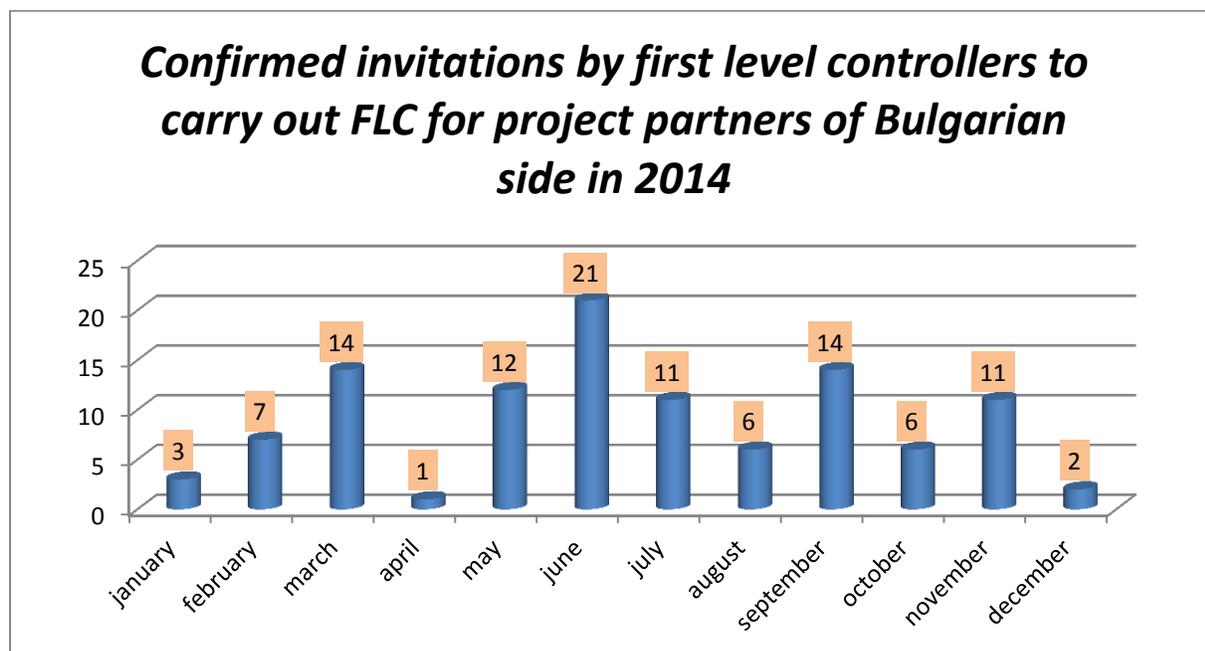
- 100% formal cross-check of the documents presented by first level controllers;
- Quality control on a "sample basis" in percentage of the number of the controllers who have executed FLC within quarterly period. The first level controllers covered by the sample are subject to documentary and/or on-the-spot 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 2014, 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 2014, 98 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.

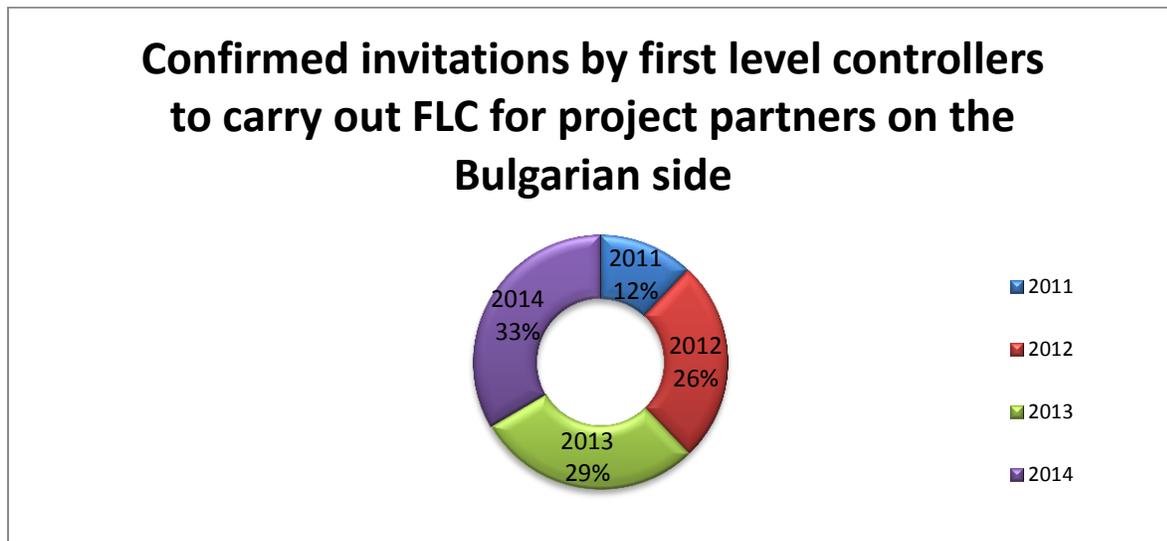




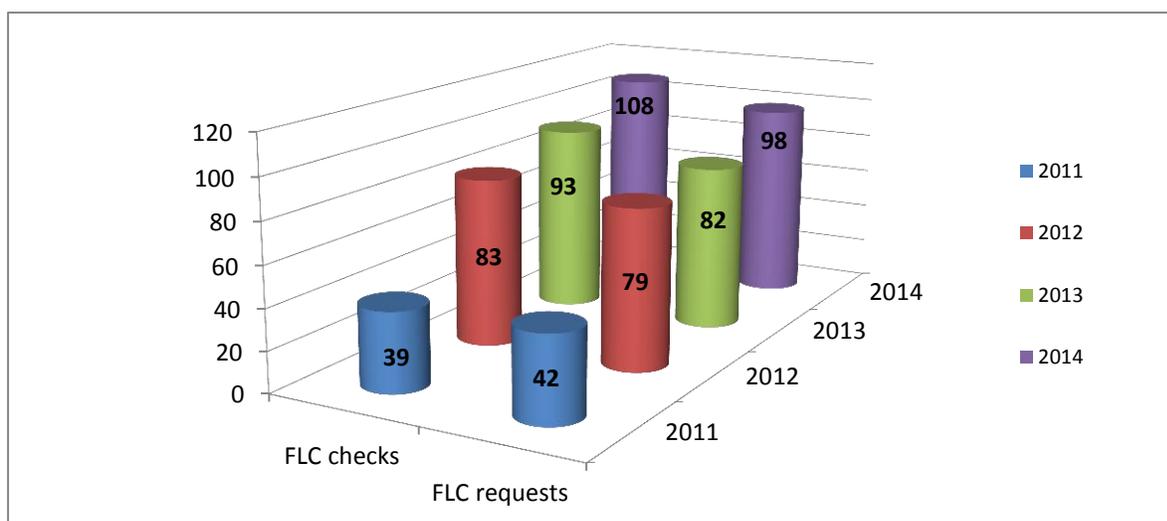
During 2014, the Bulgarian First Level Controllers encompassed 108 on-the-spot visits on the premises of respective project partners in Bulgaria which represented 55 projects.

Comparison related to intensity of the first level control workload

The confirmed invitations in 2014 for FLC for Bulgarian project partners within the programme are 98 which represents share of 33% of all controls performed under the Programme.



The summarised data related to confirmations by first level controllers for performing FLC on Bulgarian project partners under the programme show dominated share for year 2013 and 2014 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.

First level control exercised in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

For the purpose of verification of the expenditures made by the beneficiaries, National Authority have structured First level control system. The main responsibility of the controllers is to guarantee that the costs charged under the subsidy contracts are justified and that payments claimed by the partners are in accordance with the legal and financial clauses of the subsidy contract and within the rules of the Programme, the European Union regulations and the respective national legislation. Obligation of the controllers is to signalise NA in any case of fraud suspicion and to present evidences on which the suspicion is based.

The Macedonian FLC system is decentralised. The Controllers are employed as freelance contractors with a framework contract, selected through regular calls and included in a list of Controllers for this Programme (currently 7 Controllers). The experts are recruited through a procedure carried out in line with the national legislation. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia National Authority designate a controller from the pool of contracted experts for the functions of controllers.

The designation of Controllers is done in accordance with the Methodology for Selection and Designation of Controllers. Following the procedure for selection and designation of a Controller an Engagement contract is signed for performing FLC of the projects financed under respective Call for Proposal. After a Designation Certificate is issued by the NA in Ministry of Local Self-government (MoLSG) and when the verification is done and the needed correct reports and documents are issued by the Controller in NA and after the payment is done by the MA to the LP/PP and programme officer from NA is notified by receiving Table – Register for payment, MoLSG issues a Decision for payment of the Controllers for the respective FLC period as stated in the Request for FLC.

In relation with received Request for First Level Control by e-mail from MA, in NA were issued 59 Designation Certificates for 23 projects from the Second call and 58 Designation Certificates for 31 projects from the third Call for Proposals. During 2014, the Macedonian First Level Controllers encompassed 117 on the spot visits at the premises of the project partners in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia which represented 54 projects.

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia there is a possibility for rotation of first level controllers for verifications of expenditures on one single project. NA considers this as effective measure for not having to close relations between controller and project staff, in situation of late verification of expenditures of the





project and late submission of relevant documents by the controller to NA and of course, in situation of rejection by the controller to perform verification. 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.

During the year 2014, 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 Second and the Third call for proposals. Within the reporting period, the NA 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 Macedonian project partners.

- **Audits under the Programme**

- System audit*

In accordance with the Annual audit plan of AEUFEA, the AA performed the fourth system audit under the Programme in the period 2 December – 31 December 2014. 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 the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The audit activities were performed by joint audit team, including auditors from “Audit of European Union Funds” Executive Agency to the Minister of Finance (AEUFEA) and Audit Authority (AA) for the Instrument for Pre-accession assistance for the checks on the territory of the former Yugoslav 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“, as well as follow-up of the corrective measures undertaken on the recommendations given within the third system audit and the second audit of operations. The audit team examined the respective control activities undertaken by the MA and NA during the period from 1 January 2014 to 1 November 2014.

The preliminary results of the checks of the NA, FLC system and JTS Antenna on the territory of the former Republic of Macedonia were communicated with NA’s management and sent to the Audit Authority on 26 December 2014. According to the preliminary results of the checks of the AA, there are no open recommendations and the undertaken corrective measures by the NA are effectively implemented.

Based on the overall analyses carried out, the opinion of the AA states “The system works well, only minor improvements are needed”, corresponding to Grade 1.





Audit of operations

Within the 2014 the AEUFEA 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 of 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013 were checked. The AA has underlined five findings with financial impact, amounted to EUR 9 018.95, 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 co-ordination 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.

As result of the internal analyses of the output and result indicators in 2011, 2012 and 2013 performed by the MA, based on projects approved and the current progress in projects' implementation, several measures were implemented in view of improving Programme performance:

- Methodology for output and result indicators under the Programme was developed and uploaded to the Programme's 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 was 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 and second Calls for Proposals. The list of eligible activities was targeted according to indicators that were identified as underachieved, for example: eligible projects under the third Call for Proposals should have a focus on ICT and knowledge economy under Priority Axis 1 and a focus on protection and management of environment – under Priority Axis 2.
- An exhaustive analysis of the achievement and relevance of the Programme's output and result indicators, based on the implementation of the first and second call projects, was prepared by the on-going evaluation of the Programme in 2013. The Programme Annual Implementation Report for 2013 included both the main conclusions and recommendations of the Programme's mid-term evaluation and the values of the output and result indicators based on the finalised first and second





call projects. The final Programme's evaluation report as well as all the annual implementation reports are available at the Programme's website.

2.7 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE RESERVE (WHERE APPLICABLE AND ONLY FOR THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT SUBMITTED FOR 2010)

Not applicable.

3. IMPLEMENTATION BY PRIORITY AXIS

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 Axis 1**

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

The total number of projects contracted under Priority Axis 1 is 53, of which 17 are under the first call, 14 – under the second call and 22 – under the third call for proposals. All first and second call projects, and 8 third call projects have successfully finalised their activities by the end of 2014.

The financial implementation of the Priority Axis 1 projects until 31 December 2014 is 66% of the total contracting amounts or 87% of the Programme budget available for Priority Axis 1.

Number of subsidy contracts under Priority Axis 1 as of 31 December 2014





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Sphere of intervention	First call	Second call	Third call	Total
1.1 „Economic development“	9	5	8	22
1.2 „Social cohesion“	7	9	10	26
1.3 „Project preparation“	1	0	4	5
TOTAL	17	14	22	53

*Financial implementation of projects under Priority Axis 1 as of 31 December 2014
(EUR)*

Call for Proposals	Number of contracts	Total contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
First call	17	2 824 291	549 981	1 807 132	2 357 113
Second call	14	3 524 075	703 060	1 988 061	2 691 121
Third call	22	2 866 875	480 312	524 109	1 004 421
TOTAL	53	9 215 241	1 183 372	4 319 302	6 052 655

➤ 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.

The output indicators which are used to measure the progress under this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. The information in the table is provided on the ground of successfully finalised projects. For 2013, the data are based on finalised first and second call projects. Likewise, for 2014, the indicators' values are presented based on the implementation of the second and the third call projects. The expected indicators' values for 2015 are provided based on projects contracted but not finalised yet.





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The number of SMEs involved/addressed marked with “*” for 2011 is based on information provided by beneficiaries in the project progress reports. The number of SMEs for 2012 involves 4900 SMEs included in a business catalog under the first call project with reference number 2007CB16IPO007-2009-32.

No	Programme Output Indicator		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1	Business and educational linkages created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	50	136	11	2112	2	6	
		Target 2016	15										
		Baseline	9										
2	Communities & institutions participating in knowledge economy	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	35	10	2	
		Target 2016	7										
		Baseline	0										
3	Awareness campaigns of the benefits of ICT and new media	Achievement	0	0	0	0	2	12	1	9	5	1	
		Target 2016	20										
		Baseline	9										
4	ICT training	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	10	2	7	6	0	
		Target 2016	10										
		Baseline	9										
5	Access to and usage of new technology	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	32	4	189	1	1	
		Target 2016	10										
		Baseline	0										
6	SMEs involved/ addressed in CBC projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	130*	6138*	404	361	85	140	
		Target 2016	7										
		Baseline	50										
7	Institutions/ bodies benefiting of programme activities	Achievement	0	0	0	0	11	136	66	60	0	38	
		Target 2016	50										
		Baseline	194										
8	New jobs created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	52	4	48	4	0	
		Target 2016	50										
		Baseline	30										

In compliance with the recommendations of DG REGIO, EC (Letter ARES (2015) 424874), the values of output indicators for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are based on finalised projects. The values of output indicators for 2013 are calculated on the basis of finalised first and second calls' projects, while those for 2014, on the basis of finalised second and third calls' projects. Data on the forecasted achievement in 2015 and 2016 are based on the implemented and not finalised contracts under the second and third Calls for Proposals.





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To assess the achievement, the sum of indicator's values for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 was compared to 2016 target value. From the data in the table it is apparent that almost all targets for 2016 have been already considerably overachieved. Only one output indicator's value is little below its target for 2016, namely "Awareness campaigns of the benefits of ICT and new media" which is achieved at 83% and it is expected to be fully achieved after the second and third calls' projects are finalised.

➤ 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 correlation between the two sides. The activities in this sphere are aiming to contribute to the increase of social co-operation growth through strengthening connections and co-operation between different actors serving as a backbone to various cross-border initiatives.

The output indicators (OI) which are used to measure the progress under this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. The information in the table is provided on the ground of successfully finalised projects. For 2013, the data are based on finalised first and second call projects and the indicators' values are presented as total number for 2013. Likewise, for 2014, the indicators' values are presented as a total number, but this time on the basis of the implementation of the second and the third calls' projects. The expected indicators' values for 2015 and 2016 are provided based on projects contracted but not finalised yet.

No	Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1	Joint cooperation projects on development of skills and knowledge	Achievement	0	0	0	0	7	6	2	6	14	0	
		Target 2016	10										
		Baseline	15										
2	Training places created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	2	5	6	16	4	10	
		Target 2016	3										
		Baseline	7										
3	Management and job-related training courses	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	19	9	14	19	0	
		Target 2016	5										
		Baseline	51										
4	People participating in training	Achievement	0	0	0	0	26	679	268	657	57	200	
		Target 2016	350										
		Baseline	1460										
5	People with enhanced skills	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	326	139	648	284	200	
		Target 2016	200										
		Baseline	1460										
6	Business to education linkages	Achievement	0	0	0	0	2	13	1	3	13	0	
		Target 2016	10										





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		Baseline	3										
7	People from vulnerable groups trained	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	105	43	258	80	0	
		Target 2016	20										
		Baseline	26										
8	Scientific exchange and transfer of know-how	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	8	16	0	
		Target 2016	10										
		Baseline	4										
9	Networking structures created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	8	16	2	12	4	1	
		Target 2016	3										
		Baseline	11										
10	Joint plans for cooperation in sphere of human management	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	5	1	0	
		Target 2016	3										
		Baseline	13										

In compliance with the recommendations of DG REGIO, EC (Letter ARES (2015) 424874), the values of the output indicators for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are based on finalised projects. The values of the output indicators for 2013 are calculated on the basis of finalised first and second calls' projects, while those for 2014, on the basis of finalised second and third calls projects. Data on the forecasted achievement in 2015 and 2016 are based on the concluded and not finalised contracts under the second and third Calls for Proposals. To assess the achievement, the sum of indicators' values for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 was compared to 2016 target value.

From the data in the table it is apparent that the majority of the targets for 2016 have been already overachieved, especially the indicators "People from vulnerable groups trained" (OI 7), "Training places created" (OI 2) and "Networking structures created / developed" (OI 9).

Some output indicators' values are expected to be achieved by the end of 2016, for example of the indicator "People participating in training" (OI 4). The expectations are that most of Programme's output indicators will be reached after the second and third calls' projects are finalised.

More efforts are needed for the targets of the following output indicators to be fully achieved, although they are reached between 64% and 77% (depicted ascending):

- Joint plans for co-operation in the sphere of human management (OI 10), achieved at 64%;
- People with enhanced skills (OI 5), achieved at 67%;
- Management and job-related training courses (OI 3), achieved at 77%;

Apparently the Programme is on good track for the achievement of its objectives. However, further efforts are needed for enhancing the co-operation for human resources development and management.





➤ Sphere of intervention 1.3 “Project preparation”

The objective of this sphere of intervention is to prepare mature projects to apply under other EU and national financial sources.

The output indicators which are used to measure the progress under this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. The information in the table is provided on the ground of successfully finalised projects. For 2013, the data are based on first and second calls' projects, while for 2014, the indicators' values are based on the second and the third calls' projects. The expected indicators' values for 2015 and 2016 are provided based on projects contracted but not finalised yet.

No	Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1	Feasibility studies	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	1	0+0	2	1	0	
		Target 2016	5										
		Baseline	0										
2	Preliminary and detailed design works	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	0+0	1	16	0	
		Target 2016	7										
		Baseline	1										
3	Project environmental assessments	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0+0	2	16	0	
		Target 2016	2										
		Baseline	0										

The values of the result indicators for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are based on finalised projects. From the data in the table it is apparent that the beneficiaries have found more suitable to use the Programme support under this sphere of intervention for project environmental assessment, rather than for preparation of feasibility studies or preliminary and detailed works designs.

• Qualitative analysis

All first and second call projects, and 8 third call projects finalised their activities and the planned outputs were delivered. Envisaged activities were realised with the involvement of the target groups. Majority of the projects were based on balanced and adequate partnerships and demonstrated clear correlation between activities and results. There was a variety of activities financed under Priority Axis 1 which resulted in broad range of outputs.

Programme targets of outputs related to the objective for the development of business co-operation, clustering and networking were overachieved already by the first call's projects and delivered economic surveys, joint strategies and technical and business infrastructure rehabilitated.





Few projects under the first and second calls targeted the objective for boosting innovation and knowledge economy in the border region, and Programme's 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 calls' projects created joint information services and business and educational linkages, having some contribution to innovation and knowledge economy.

From the data relating to output indicators of Sphere of Intervention 1.1 it is apparent that all targets for 2016 have been already considerably overachieved with exception of the indicator "Awareness campaigns of the benefits of ICT and new media" which is expected to be fully achieved after the second and third calls' projects are finalised.

The Programme's targets on indicators related to human resources development are overachieved by the first call's projects only, though indicators are numerous. The majority of targets for 2016 output indicators of Sphere of Intervention 1.2 have been already overachieved, especially the indicators "People from vulnerable groups trained", "Training places created" and "Networking structures created / developed". The objectives for integration of vulnerable groups were considerably overachieved.

The beneficiaries under Sphere of Intervention 1.3 have found more suitable to use the Programme support for project environmental assessment, rather than for preparation of feasibility studies or preliminary and detailed works designs. Apparently the Programme is on good track for the achievement of its objectives for Priority Axis 1.

3.1.2. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems were encountered in 2014.

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 Axis 2**

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

The total number of projects contracted under Priority Axis 2 is 47, of which 18 are under the first call, 18 – under the second call and 14 – under the third call for proposals. All first and 15 second call projects, and 2 third call projects have successfully finalised their activities by the end of 2014.

The financial implementation of the Priority Axis 2 projects until 31 December 2014 is 69% of the total contracting amounts or 76% of the Programme budget available for Priority Axis 2.

Number of subsidy contracts under Priority Axis 2 as of 31 December 2014

Sphere of intervention	First call	Second call	Third call	Total
2.1 „Utilisation of eco resources“	3	13	9	25
2.2 „Utilisation of cultural resources“	12	5	5	22
TOTAL	15	18	14	47

Financial implementation of projects under Priority Axis 2 as of 31 December 2014 (EUR)

Call for Proposals	Number of contracts	Total contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
First call	15	3 432 132	684 580	2 221 893	2 906 473
Second call	18	4 419 343	903 868	2 780 218	3 684 086
Third call	14	3 155 754	563 288	472 897	1 036 167
TOTAL	47	11 007 229	2 151 736	5 474 990	7 626 726





➤ 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 output indicators which are used to measure the progress under this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. The values of the output indicators for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are based on finalised projects. The values of the output indicators for 2013 are calculated on the basis of finalised first and second calls' projects, while those for 2014, on the basis of finalised second and third calls' projects. Data for the expected achievement in 2015 and 2016 is based on the implemented and not finalised contracts under the second and third Calls for Proposals. To assess the achievement, the sum of indicator's values for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 was compared to 2016 target value.

No	Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1	Number of joint environmental friendly projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	3	10	14	11	6	1	
		Target 2016	20										
		Baseline	6										
2	Joint Eco-itineraries created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	3	12	3	2	2	
		Target 2016	10										
		Baseline	8										
3	Joint tourist services created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	3	1	0	
		Target 2016	10										
		Baseline	7										
4	Partnerships for cases of natural disasters established	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	1	3	1	
		Target 2016	2										
		Baseline	1										
5	Joint environmental management plans	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	2	0	
		Target 2016	2										
		Baseline	15										
6	Permanent networks for environmental protection and reasonable utilization of resources	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	6	6	0	
		Target 2016	5										
		Baseline	1										
7	Environmental awareness campaigns	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	7	16	23	9	1	
		Target 2016	15										
		Baseline	18										





From the data in the table it is apparent that the majority of the targets for 2016 have been already overachieved, especially the indicators “Partnerships for cases of natural disasters established” (OI 4) and “Permanent networks for environmental protection and reasonable utilisation of resources” (OI 6).

The expectations are that most of Programme’s output indicators will be reached after second and third calls’ projects are finalised, although some more efforts are needed for the targets of the following output indicators to be fully achieved:

- Joint environmental management plans (OI 5), achieved at 47%;
- Joint tourist services created / developed (OI 3), achieved at 71%;

As a whole, the Programme is on good track for the achievement of its objectives. Obviously, indicators targets set have been very ambitious in spheres like joint nature / environment management plans development and joint tourism products.

➤ Sphere of Intervention 2.2 “Utilisation of cultural resources”

The objective of this sphere of intervention is to foster the cross-border co-operation 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 output indicators which are used to measure the progress under this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. The information in the table is provided on the ground of successfully finalised projects. The values of the output indicators for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are based on finalised projects. The values of the output indicators for 2013 are calculated on the basis of finalised first and second calls’ projects, while those for 2014, on the basis of finalised second and third call projects. Data on the forecasted achievement in 2015 and 2016 is based on the contracted and not finalised contracts under the second and third Calls for Proposals.

No	Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1	Number of projects concerning common cultural heritage	Achievement	0	0	0	0	12	16	6	2	16	1	
		Target 2016	20										
		Baseline	37										
2	Tourist destinations created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	43	21	2	3	5	
		Target 2016	10										





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		Baseline	33										
3	Tourist services created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	24	18	2	7	10	
		Target 2016	10										
		Baseline	37										
4	Surrounding area of cultural spots improved	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	41	7	0	7	7	
		Target 2016	7										
		Baseline	26										
5	Joint cultural events carried out	Achievement	0	0	0	0	6	48	28	8	19	5	
		Target 2016	15										
		Baseline	20										
6	Events popularizing intangible cultural heritage and traditions	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	38	27	3	13	5	
		Target 2016	15										
		Baseline	21										
7	Awareness campaigns	Achievement	0	0	0	0	5	38	22	7	6	5	
		Target 2016	15										
		Baseline	55										

To assess the achievement, the sum of indicator's values for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 was compared to 2016 target value.

From the data in the table it is apparent that the majority of the targets for 2016 have been already overachieved, especially the indicators "Joint cultural events carried out" (OI 5) and "Events popularising intangible cultural heritage and traditions" (OI 6).

The expectations are that most of the Programme output indicators will be reached after second and third calls' projects are finalised, for example the indicator "Tourist services created / developed" (OI 3). Even the indicator "Number of projects concerning common cultural heritage" (OI 1) is achieved at 63% of its target value for 2016, which is a good sign that the Programme gives opportunity to the region to implement projects that would have never be implemented without its financial support.

- **Qualitative analysis**

All projects under Priority Axis 2 have a clear correlation between activities and results. They address mainly the investment needs of the Programme area. The projects have not had serious implementation problems threatening the achievement of project results.





The objective for eco, rural and cultural tourism development was addressed by several projects (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 2014, all programme output indicators related to tourism development were achieved by the implementation of the projects under the three Calls for Proposals.

The objective for cultural co-operation strengthening was targeted by several projects, both investment referring to cultural infrastructure improvements and soft ones. Apart from the investment components, under the supported projects a number of joint cultural events were conducted (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.

From the data relating to output indicators of Spere of Intervention 2.1 it is apparent that the majority of the targets for 2016 have been already overachieved, especially those relating with the response to natural disasters, environmental protection and reasonable utilisation of resources. As a whole, the Programme is on good track for the achievement of its objectives, despite some targets have been too ambitious in spheres like joint nature / environment management and joint tourism products development.

The target for implementing projects concerning common cultural heritage was achieved at 63%, which is a good sign that the Programme gives opportunity to the region to implement projects that would have never be implemented without its financial support and promotes the cross-border cooperation in a proper way.

3.2.2. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems were encountered in 2014.

4. MAJOR PROJECTS (IF APPLICABLE)

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

5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The purpose of „Technical Assistance“ (TA) Priority Axis is to ensure an effective and efficient programme management and information flow, thus improving the quality of cross-border co-operation and management





tools. The TA Priority Axis 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).

A significant problem was detected during 2014 concerning considerable delays in the payments of the remuneration costs of the staff of the JTS branch office in Strumica. This situation has led to serious difficulties in the daily work of the experts and in particular in the process of monitoring of the projects. The problem has been taken into consideration by the responsible authorities.

- **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, training 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 EUR 1 695 299 Community funding is available for the “Technical assistance” Priority Axis.

In order to implement the activities under „Technical assistance“ Priority Axis, 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 „Technical assistance“ Priority Axis and is subject of approval by the JMC.

Total budget forecast for 2014 was amounted to EUR 537 255, of which EUR 324 855 allocated for MA and EUR 212 400 for NA. The detailed indicative breakdown of budget for 2014 was approved by JMC on 15 January 2014.

The 2014 TA budget encompasses administrative expenditures, travel and accommodation expenditures, meetings, training sessions, promotional events, information and publicity, external expertise, supply, maintenance of equipment and other expenditures.

The main activities carried out under “Technical Assistance” Priority Axis within 2014 are as follows:

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

Information days / Regional consultative fora

Two rounds of regional consultative fora were organised in the border region in the framework of the service contract for Preparation of the IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme. The first round of consultations was held in February – March 2014 in the towns of Strumica, Stip, Kumanovo, Kyustendil and Blagoevgrad with 182 participants. Findings of the SWOT analysis and the territorial analysis were presented and discussed, and the expectations related to the future co-operation programme were explored. During the second round a joint regional consultative forum on the draft Programme strategy with 52 participants was held In June 2014 in Strumica. The draft investment strategy of the programme within the selected by the Programme joint working group thematic priorities was presented. The stakeholders gave their input in terms of specific objectives, results, examples of activities as well as the prospective types of beneficiaries. Reports from the on-line survey conducted in February 2014 with 142 respondents as a first step in the programming consultative process, and from the two rounds of regional consultative fora were published on the Programme website and also communicated to the joint working group members.





European Co-operation Day

For celebration of the European Co-operation Day Joint Technical Secretariat organised two events under the motto "Sharing borders, growing closer!" which were held on 17 September 2014 in Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria) and on 18 September 2014 in Stip (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The celebration of European Co-operation Day consisted of exhibition of photographs entitled "The beauty of the cross-border region" in the hall of the municipality of Blagoevgrad and Art Gallery "Bezisten" in Stip and pop-rock concerts "Sharing borders, growing closer!" in "Makedonia" square in Blagoevgrad and the small square in Stip, which was held on 17 and 18 September in Blagoevgrad and Stip.

Project implemetation training

Three training sessions for Bulgarian and Macedonian beneficiaries on the implementation of additionally funded projects under the third Call were held during 2014 (two at the premises of JTS Kyustendil and one in Strumica).

Four training sessions for project teams of the financed under third Call for proposals have been organized during 2014.

Programme staff training

During 2014, MA, NA and JTS staff attended training events organised by INTERACT Programme 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.

- **Expenditures for external expertise**

Througout 2014 the technical assistance budget was used for remuneration of external independent controllers, for maintenance and upgrade of the Programme website and maintenance of MIS.

The main activities for preparation of Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme 2014 – 2020 were implemented in 2014. The Programme preparation was supported by the planning team of the Project Planning and Management Consortium under a service contract financed by the Technical Assistance Priority Axis with duration of seven months. The contract was concluded between the Managing authority and PPM Consortium on 28 November 2013 and extended by two months with an addendum signed on 31 May 2014. The total contract's amount remained unchanged – EUR 68 500, and the final payment of EUR 27 400 was made in 2014 after the successful project's accomplishment.

In May 2014 a service contract for Ex-ante evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the IPA





CBC Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme was concluded between the Managing authority and Lattanzio e Associati S.p.A., Italy. The project's duration was four months and its main objectives were: to improve the quality of programme design and to ensure that the draft IPA II CBC Programme clearly articulates the intervention logic and that it contributes to the Europe 2020 strategy and the relevant macro-regional strategies; to perform Strategic Environmental Assessment of the draft Programme and to ensure that the environmental considerations have been taken into account in the final draft of the Programme before its submission to the EC for approval. As per the service contract, the contract's amount of EUR 42 980 was transferred to the Contractor in two instalments – an advance payment of 40% and a final payment of 60% of the contract's budget.

Another service contract with subject "Development of methodological guidelines for baseline and indicative target values establishment of qualitative result indicators under IPA II CBC Programmes 2014-2020 between Republic of Bulgaria and EU External Borders' Partnering Countries" was concluded between the Managing Authority and Sigma Hat Ltd., Bulgaria, on 12 September 2014. Initially, the contract's duration was four months but after the draft IPA II CBC Programme's submission (in September 2014) it was extended to twelve months. The reason of this extension was that the negotiations with the EC were likely to lead to certain changes in the Programme intervention logic, hence – they would influence the Programme result indicators as well. The project purpose is to elaborate methodological guidelines for baseline and target values establishment concerning qualitative result indicators under IPA II CBC Programmes 2014-2020 between Republic of Bulgaria and EU External Borders' Partnering Countries – Turkey, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Methodological guidelines on how to use the tools to measure result indicator's baselines and values will be provided by the Contractor and training sessions for the Managing authority and the three Joint secretariats will be organised after the Programme approval.

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

The drafting of the IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was organised in compliance with the partnership approach as referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. "Territorial cooperation management" Directorate General at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of the Republic of Bulgaria, designated as Programme's managing Authority, co-ordinated the process together with Joint Secretariat support.

Maintaining a broad partnership was a guiding principle during the entire programming process. The Joint Working Group (JWG), established in November 2013 continued working in partnership and kept on preserving the balanced representation of the public authorities (national, regional and local), economic and social partners, relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-





discrimination as rules of conduct guiding the Programme development process and was approving the main stages of Programme elaboration. A Task Force (TF) for discussing particular topics and draft proposals, also established in November 2013, stayed operational.

The OP was developed in an iterative, consultative process and the involvement of stakeholders was organised in several stages:

- An on-line survey among national and regional stakeholders was conducted in February 2014 with 142 respondents as a first step in the programming consultative process. The survey aimed also at gathering the respondents' expectations related to the scope, the content and other important aspects of the programme, as well as their preferences for thematic priorities for co-operation for the 2014-2020 period. It helped to identify specific demands and expectations towards the new programme among potential target groups.
- Two rounds of regional consultative forums were organised. The first round was held in February – March 2014 in the towns of Strumica, Stip, Kumanovo, Kyustendil and Blagoevgrad with 182 participants. Findings of the SWOT and the territorial analysis were presented and discussed, and the expectations related to the Programme under elaboration were explored. During the second round a joint regional consultative forum on the draft Programme strategy with 52 participants was held in June 2014 in Strumica. The draft investment strategy of the programme within the selected by the JWG thematic priorities was presented. The stakeholders gave their input in terms of specific objectives, results, examples of activities as well as the prospective types of beneficiaries. Reports from the on-line survey and the two rounds of regional consultative forums were published on the Programme website and also communicated to the JWG members.
- Reports from the on-line survey and the two rounds of regional consultations were published on the Programme website and also communicated to the JWG members.
- Relevant draft programme documents and publications as well as information on the programming process have been published regularly on the Programme's website.
- The draft Programme and the Strategic Environmental Assessment report were made available for public consultations on the Programme website, the websites of the Managing and National Authorities, the environmental authorities in Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and considerable feedback was received and integrated into the draft Programme where appropriate.

The final draft Programme was elaborated according to inputs from the Joint Working Group and from regional and local stakeholders, including environmental authorities, thus ensuring the ownership of planned interventions by stakeholders and building on the experience and know-how of relevant actors.

Two JWG meetings (in Skopje and in Sofia) were held in 2014 with the financial support from the TA budget.





The draft final IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was approved by the governments of the two partnering countries and the JWG, and was sent to the European Commission on 19 September 2014 for approval.

A technical meeting with the participation of the Managing Authority, National Authority and Joint Secretariat was held on 9 December 2014 in Sofia, where the management and control system and the first draft of the Memorandum of Understanding for the period 2014-2020 were presented. Issues related to the new programming period were discussed, as well as the status of projects' implementation under the programming period 2007-2013 was presented.

After EC official comments were received on 3 February 2015, the revised draft (version 2.0 of March 2015) of the Programme was re-submitted for approval to the Commission on 6 March 2015.

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 2014 variety of activities included in the Communication plan have been organised and performed in order to reach out to a wide audience, e.g. media events, regional consultations, training for beneficiaries have been successfully organised; various types of promotional materials have been produced and disseminated to the target audience, the Programme Web site has been redesigned and maintained, etc. For further evidence on this topic, please refer to Annex A.

During 2014 various tools for information and publicity were used to reach the wide audience:

- Programme website;
- Facebook page;
- Promotional materials;
- European Co-operation Day 2014;
- Project implementation training;
- Regional Consultative Forum In the framework on preparation of the new IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020;





- Joint Working Group;
- Mass media campaign;

• Programme Website

During 2014 the official website of the Programme 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 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.

With the establishment of the Facebook page of the Programme continuously published any new information from the website of the social network Facebook, which is accomplished faster and wider awareness.

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, training sessions, 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:

mrrb.government.bg – Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria (Managing Authority).

eufunds.bg – EU Structural Funds website,

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

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

• Programme Facebook page

In order to better and faster information to participants in social networks was based page of program at social network Facebook on 31 March 2014. The address is [facebook.com/ipacbcbgmk](https://www.facebook.com/ipacbcbgmk)





By the end of 2014 Facebook page of the Programme had more than 500 members. The Facebook page is post links to information from the official website, links from websites of the beneficiaries, from projects website, links from information published by the media about the program or projects, and photos of events, projects and cross-border region.

- **Promotional materials**

In 2014 tender procedure for elaboration and preparation of a great variety of promotional materials was conducted. Supply of promotional materials had been extended with new items as high number of brochures in three languages “Compendium under the second call”, rain jackets, T-shirts, cardboard folders, conference bags, binders, agenda organisers, key rings, pens, umbrellas, USB drives, wall and table calendars for 2015 and 2016, map of our cross-border region and many others.

The materials have been used for promotion the Programme on various occasions (training sessions for beneficiaries, the JMC meetings, European Co-operation Day 2014 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 2014 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.

- **European Co-operation Day**

For celebration of the European Cooperation Day, the Joint Technical Secretariat organised events in Kyustendil on 17 September 2014 and in Stip on 18 September 2014. Both events included:

Photography exhibition entitled "The beauty of the cross-border region" in the hall of the municipality of Blagoevgrad and Art Gallery Bezisten in Stip and

Pop-rock concerts “Sharing borders, growing closer!” in “Makedonia” square in Blagoevgrad and the Small Square in Stip, with participation of the youth groups from Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – winners of contest for best song of the cross-border region.

Photos for the competition were accepted from from 28 July 2014 to 5 September 2014 and 400 photographs of over 40 participants from all over Europe were obtained. The jury selected 45 photographs that were part of the exhibition "The beauty of the cross-border region" and determined the first three places. The audience had the opportunity through Facebook page and Programme website to choose one photo.





The pop-rock concerts "Sharing borders, growing closer!" took place in square "Makedonia" in Blagoevgrad from 20:00 h. and in the Small Square in Stip where the winners of a contest for the best song of the cross-border region - youth groups from Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, took part.

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 training**

Four training sessions for the project teams of the third Call for Proposals projects were organised by the JTS and they took place, as follow:

23 January 2014 in Kyustendil – for the projects contracted in 2013;

21 May 2014 in Kyustendil – for the beneficiaries whose projects were additionally contracted under the third Call for Proposals;

11 September 2014 in Kyustendil – for Bulgarian beneficiaries whose projects were additionally funded;

11 September 2014 in Strumica (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) – for Macedonian beneficiaries whose projects were additionally funded.

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, including project's progress and financial reporting;
- Contract modifications;
- Sub-contracting procedures;
- Financial implementation and irregularities;
- Visualisation and other relevant issues.

During 2014 variety of activities included in the Communication plan have been organised 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 training sessions 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's visual identity and graphics standards have been maintained and widely disseminated to all the Programme's stakeholders.





- **Regional Consultative Fora for the preparation of the IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme**

Five Regional Consultative Fora took place between 26 February and 7 March 2014 in the district centers of the cross-border area in the framework of preparation of the IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme. The meetings were held as plenary discussions with the aim to:

- Inform regional stakeholders about the ongoing programming process for the IPA II cross-border programme and the external experts' findings on regional analysis and identified needs;
- Present and discuss a possible prioritisation of thematic priorities for the future cross-border programme;
- Discuss potential actions that may be relevant for addressing the identified needs and challenges in the respective thematic priority areas.

The regional consultations started in Strumica on 26 February 2014 at the Sirius Hotel with 30 participants from the Southeastern Statistical Region, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The second Regional Consultative Forum was held on 27 February 2014 in Stip in hotel Oaza. This forum was attended by over 50 representatives of stakeholders from the Eastern Statistical Region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Third Regional Consultative Forum was held in Kumanovo on 28 February 2014 in NAMA Restaurant. This forum was attended by over 40 representatives of local governments, schools, non-governmental sector from the Northeastern Statistical Region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

On 6 March 2014 the Joint Technical Secretariat in Kyustendil hosted the first Regional Consultative Forum in Bulgaria. 30 representatives of stakeholders from Kyustendil District were acquainted with the results of the analysis and IPA II thematic priorities for cooperation.

The first round of regional consultations ended in Blagoevgrad, where on 7 March 2014 at Ezerets Hotel the last meeting was held, attended by over 30 representatives of public / local governments, NGOs and media from Blagoevgrad District as well as representatives from several municipalities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The second round of regional consultations took place on 4 June 2014 at the Sirius Hotel, Strumica, with over 60 representatives of the two countries.

- **Joint Working Group for preparation of the IPA II CBC Programme**

On 23 April 2014 in Skopje the Joint Working Group (JWG) for preparation of IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014 – 2020 held its second meeting.





The main topic on the agenda was the presentation of the programme strategy and review and approval of the thematic priorities.

The final meeting of the Joint Working Group for preparation of IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 took place on 21 August 2014 at “Best Western City Hotel”, Sofia, Bulgaria. The JWG session was aimed at the finalisation and approval of the Programme document.

The meeting was attended by the majority of members of the Joint Task Force. After detailed presentation and a discussion the final draft of IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 document was approved unanimously.

- **Media campaign**

Media campaigns and the participation in different events greatly contributed to the successful promotion of the Programme and the Call for Proposals. The Programme’s visual identity and graphics standards have been maintained and widely disseminated to all the Programme’s stakeholders. More details can be found in Annex A attached to this report.



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	20489				
		Target 2016	2000 per year											
		Baseline	0											
	Partners' search facility	Number of web-site visits	0	0	8190	8731	29 009	29350	24367	20489				
		Target 2016	2000 per year											
		Baseline	0											
		Number of new potential PPs in the database	0	0	0	0	20	111	114	114				
		Target 2016	20 per call											
	Contact details	Number of web-site visits	0	0	8190	8731	29 009	29350	24367	20489				
		Target 2016	2000 per year											
		Baseline	0											
	Information for mass media	Number of press releases	0	0	0	0	6	6	4	5				
		Target 2016	2 per year											
		Baseline	0											
	Promotional materials	Leaflets	Number of leaflets produced	0	0	0	0	0	1000	0	0			
Target 2016			500 per call											
Baseline			0											
Number of leaflets disseminated			0	0	0	0	0	90%	10%	0				
Target 2016			80% of leaflets produced											
Brochures		Number of brochures produced	0	1000	0	0	0	500	0	600				
		Target 2016	500 per year											
		Baseline	0											
		Number of brochures distributed	0	25%	55%	20%	0%	89%	10%	50%				
		Target 2016	80% of brochures produced											
Posters & Banners		Number of official events	0	2	0	0	2	3	3	12				
		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	6063				
		Target 2016	200 per call											
	Baseline	0												
	Number of materials distributed	0	60%	0	0	33%	95%	100%	50%					
	Target 2016	80% of the materials produced												
Information seminars	Information days	Number of organizations/bodies represented	0	0	227	0	110	0	117	120				
		Target 2016	40 per call											
		Baseline	0											
		Number of persons attended	0	0	76	80	199	0	270	300				
Target 2016	Min.60 per call													



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		Baseline	0											
		Increase in the number of proposals submitted	0	0	0	0	29.7%	0	-	29.8%*	11%			
		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	70				
		Target 2016	20 per event											
		Baseline	0											
	Print media campaign	Number of newspapers publishing issue(s) concerning the programme	0	1	2	2	2	2	4	4				
		Target 2016	4 per year											
		Baseline	0											
	Press conferences	Number of press conferences held	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	8				
		Target 2016	2 for the duration of the Programme											
		Baseline	0											
	Press releases	Number of press releases	0	1	5	4	6	6	4	5				
		Target 2016	1 per call											
		Baseline	0											
	Press Advertisements	Number of press advertisements published	0	0	16	0	2	2	2	2				
		Target 2016	2 per call											
		Baseline	0											
	Internet media advertisement	Number of advertisements/eBanners	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	8				
		Target 2016	2											
		Baseline	0											
	eNewsletter	Number of eNewsletters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
		Target 2016	2											
		Baseline	0											
	Publication in regional initiatives and media	Number of events	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1				
		Target 2016	1											
		Baseline	0											
	TV campaigns	Number of TV advertisements aired	0	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	2				
		Target 2016	1 per country for each Call											
		Baseline	0											
	Training for beneficiaries	Number of participants	0	0	0	0	105	52	110	70				
		Target 2016	20											
		Baseline	0											
	Number of training sessions	Number of training sessions	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	4				
		Target 2016	Min 1											





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	Training of the MA/NA/JTS	Baseline											
		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	40% of the MA/NA/JTS			
		Target 2016	min 50% of the total staff										
		Baseline	0										
	Controllers performing FLC training sessions	Number of participants	0	0	0	0	55	94	27				
		Target 2016	min 30										
		Baseline	0										
		Number of training sessions	0	0	0	0	3	3	1				
		Target 2016	min 1										
	External assessors training sessions	Baseline	0										
1) Number of participants		0	0	0	0	0	10	0					
Target 2016		min 10											
Baseline		0											
Number of training sessions		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 / organisation may submit only 1 (one) project proposal either as Lead Partner or Project Partner.





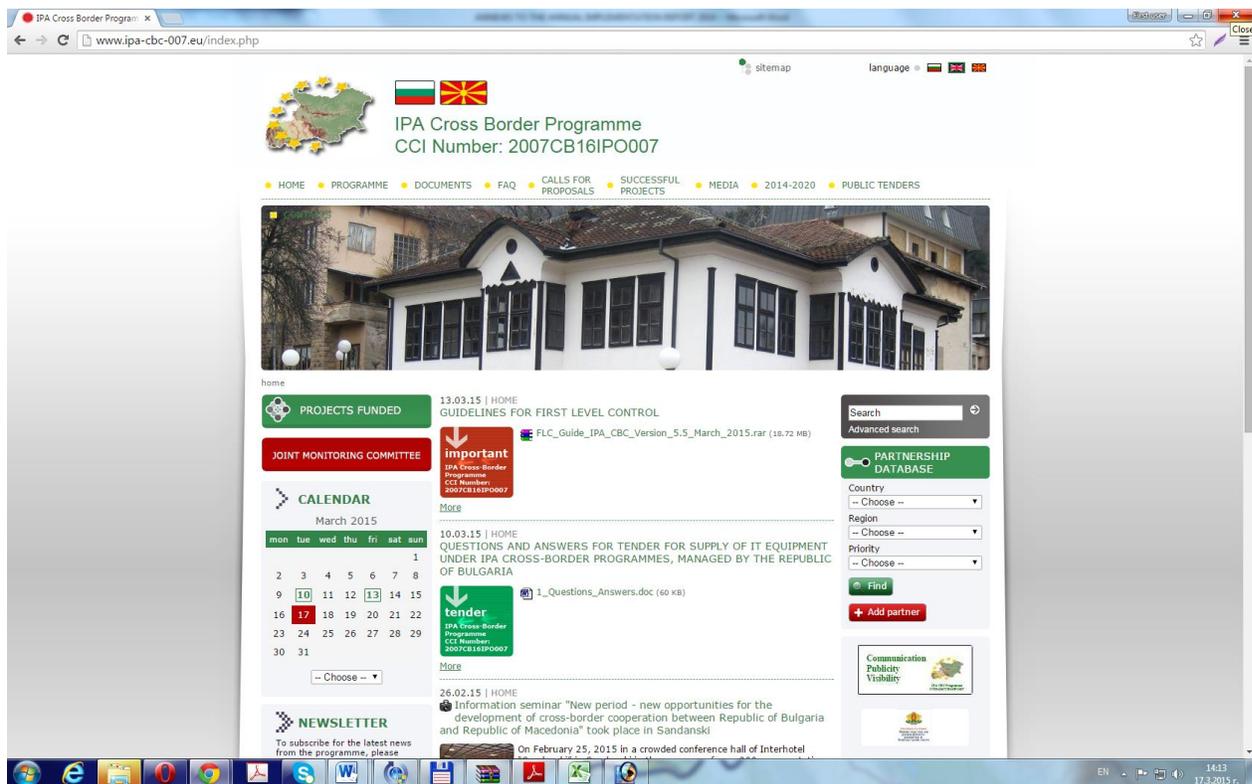
ANNEXES TO THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2014

ANNEX A

**Programme web site, Programme Facebook page, Promotional materials
Training sessions in 2014, Publicity / Media campaigns**

Programme web site

The official Programme web site was effectively launched 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 contents of the applications, evaluation and selection criteria, procedures to follow, etc., useful contacts, partner search facility; it has provided a 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 the general public.





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The web site also includes information for mass media – press releases, announcements, news, events, awareness campaigns, photo-gallery, and a 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 2014 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 the general public and the beneficiaries since it is continuously updated with information on all the relevant events, training sessions, information days, and news in general.

With the establishment of the Facebook page of the Programme continuously published any new information from the website of the social network Facebook, which is accomplished faster and wider awareness.

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 (Managing Authority).

www.eufunds.bg – EU Structural Funds website

www.mls.gov.mk – Ministry of Local Self-government, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (National Authority).

Number of updated post in the Programme website by months:

2014

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	5	8	4	4	5	6	2	12	3	1	4

Total: 59

Number of visits to the Programme website in 2014 by months:

2014

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1 816	1 727	1 792	1 535	1 510	1 693

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1 925	1 611	2 158	1 791	1 487	1 444

Total 20.489





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Number of visits to the Programme website for the period of 2009 to 2014:

Year 2009	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
8 190	8 731	21 006	29 350	24 367	20 489

Programme Facebook site

In order to better and faster information to participants in social networks was based page of programme at social network Facebook on 31 March 2014. The address is www.facebook.com/ipacbcbgmk

The screenshot displays the Facebook page for the IPA Cross Border Programme BG-MK. The page header includes the name 'IPA Cross Border Programme BG-MK' and the CCI number '2007CB16IPO007'. The cover photo features a map of the cross-border region and the flags of Bulgaria and Macedonia. The page shows 566 likes and 777 posts. A post from April 1, 2014, is visible, along with a 'Promote Your Page' section and a list of friends.

By the end of 2014 the Programme Facebook page's group had more than 500 members. The Facebook page posts links to information from the official website, ones of the beneficiaries, projects' website, information published by the media on the Programme or projects, and photos of events, projects and the cross-border region itself.



Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme
CCI No. 2007CB16IPO007

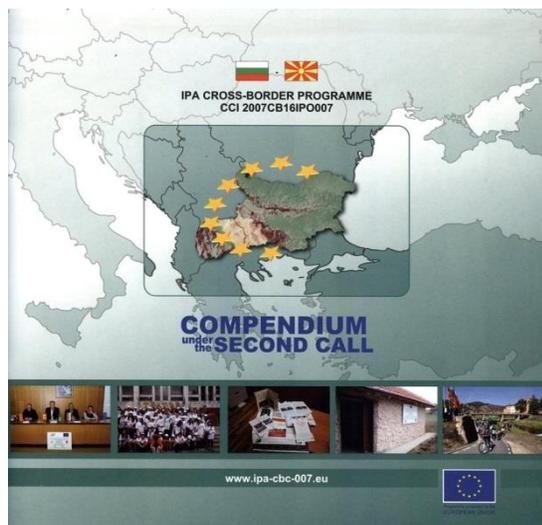
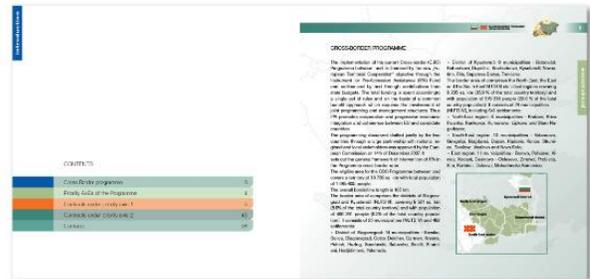


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Promotional materials

Tender procedure for elaboration and preparation of a great variety of promotional materials was conducted and a service contract was signed with “Mouse Printing” advertising agency. The JTS Communication officer has actively participated in the process of preparation and design of all the Programme promotional materials. All the promotional materials are properly branded with some or all the Programme visibility elements, depending on their type and the available branding space. Based on the contract the following materials were produced and delivered:

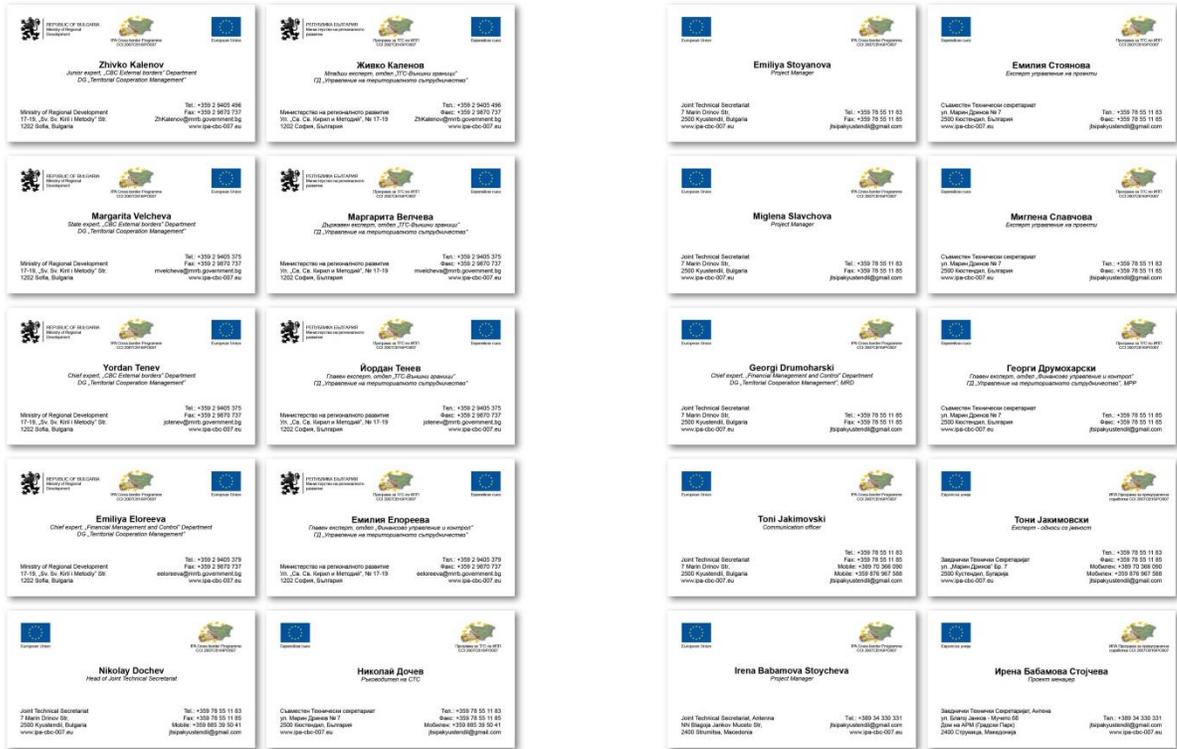
- 01. One brochure “Compendium under the Second Call” (1 version in English, 1 version in Bulgarian and 1 version in Macedonian x 200 pcs.) containing information about the programme implementation in compliance with description of all projects from Second Call for project proposal;





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02. A business card containing information for MA, JTS and NA programme staff was printed. The total number of printed business cards was 1500.



03. A metal business card folder for standard business card was printed in 100 pcs..with engraved Programme and EU logo on it.

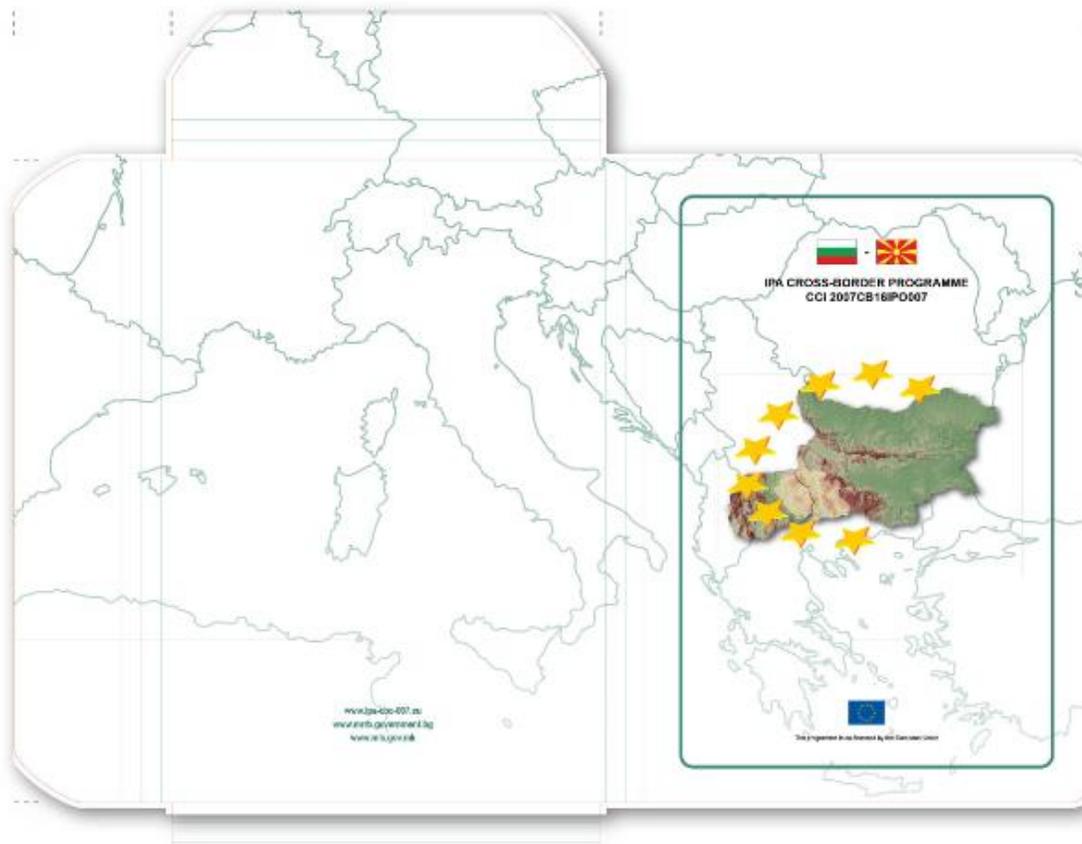


Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Programme CCI No. 2007CB16IPO007



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04 Laminated cardboard folders with folded pockets for A4 documents in white colour were printed in 400 copies visualized with programme and EU logo.



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05 Transparent plastic plates (two sided) for conferences with dimensions 24x21 cm was purchased in 60 pieces.



06. One-sided "Quick" banners in vinyl banner and metal frame, in full colour and dimension 200x90cm was printed in 3 copies and visualized with programme and EU logo.



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07 Wall Calendar for 2015 and 2016 with photos from our projects (250 pieces)




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CCI 2007CB16IPO007


2015 / 2016



www.ipa-cbc-007.eu




IPA CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMME
CCI 2007CB16IPO007




Kriva Palanka Museum. Restored and adapted premises of the Old Army House in Kriva Palanka as a completed Centre for Cultural and Historical Heritage (CCHE) under project 2007CB16IPO007-2009-01-02

JANUARY 2015

mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

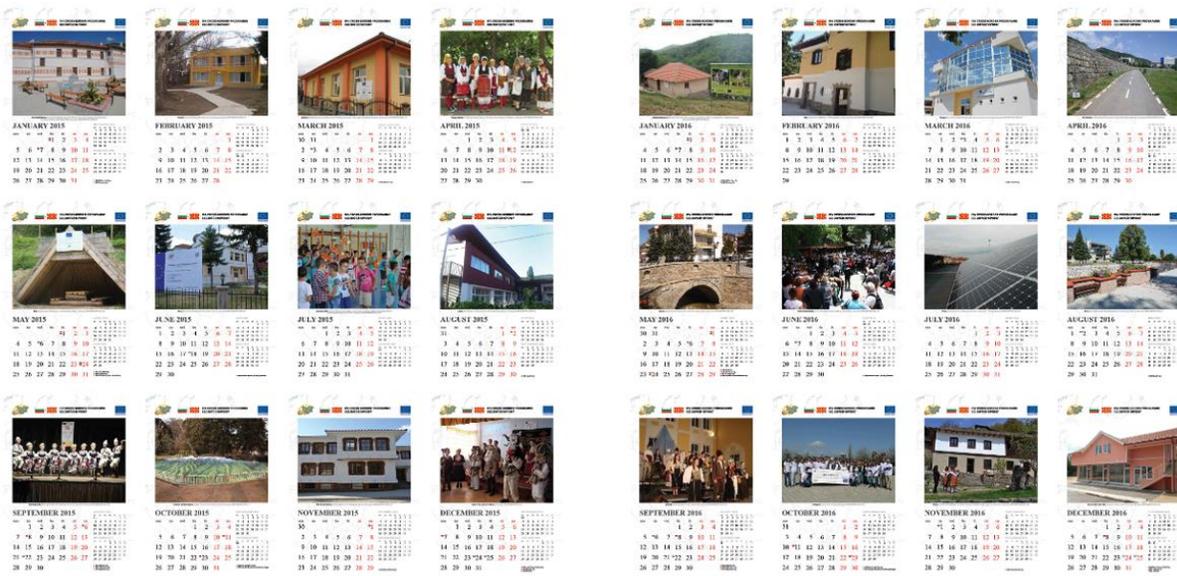
(1) (MAG, BIC) New Year's Day
(7) (MAG) Christmas Day

DECEMBER 2014

mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2015

mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	



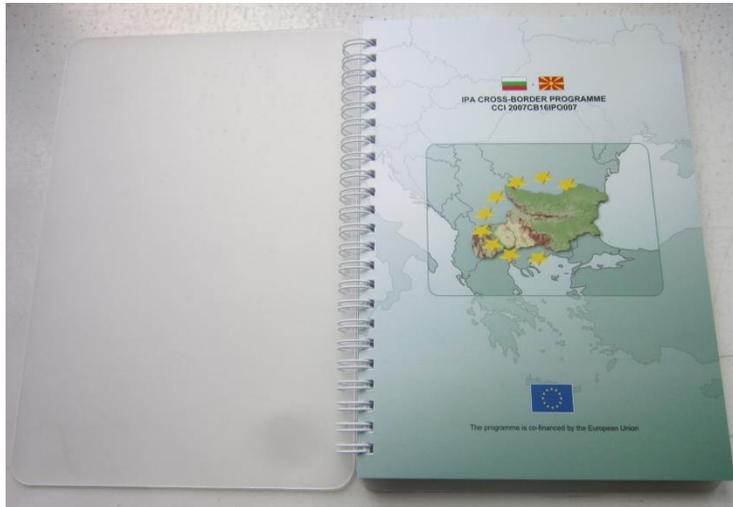

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08 Notebooks (400 pieces)

A5 Notebooks in white colour, spiral binding and 100 pages were printed in 200 copies, visualized with programme logo, EU logo.



09. A5 Agenda organiser in white colour, leather binding and 192 non-dated pages was printed visualized with programme and EU logo (300 pieces)



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10 Table Calendar for 2015 and 2016 with photos from our projects (400 pieces)



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11 Map of Cross-border Region (300 pieces)



12 Rain Jacket (250 pieces)



13. Metal pens with programme name imprinted were supplied (300 pieces).



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14. USB drivers (8GB) with programme logo imprinted were produced in 300 pieces



15. Bag with handle with programme name and logo imprinted on the front and EU Logo on back (300 pieces)



16. Conference Laptop Bag were purchased with programme name and logo imprinted on the front. (100 pieces)



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17 Coffee Mugs (100 pieces)



18 Umbrellas with imprinted programme name and logo (100 pieces)





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19 T-Shirts (300 pieces)



20 Metal Keyring (300 pieces)



The materials have been used for promotion the Programme on various occasions (training sessions for beneficiaries, European Co-operation Day 2014, 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. http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm Programme promotional materials





Project implementation training sessions in 2014

- Training session "Project implementation" for Bulgarian beneficiaries under the Third Call for project proposals carried out on 23 January 2014 in the town of Kyustendil



- Training for beneficiary whose projects are additionally funded under the Third Call for project proposals – Kyustendil, 21 May 2014 Venue: JTS - Kyustendil



- Training for Bulgarian beneficiary whose projects are additionally funded under the Third Call for project proposals – Kyustendil, 11 September, 2014 Venue: JTS - Kyustendil



- Training for Macedonian beneficiary whose projects are additionally funded under the Third Call – Strumica, 11 September 2014, Venue: JTS antenna – Strumica



Regional Consultative Forum In the framework on preparation of the new IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020

Regional Consultative Forum In the framework on preparation of the new IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 – Strumica, 26 February 2014, Venue Hotel Sirius



Regional Consultative Forum In the framework on preparation of the new IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 – Shtip 27 February 2014, Venue Hotel Oaza



Regional Consultative Forum In the framework on preparation of the new IPA II Cross-border Programme Co-operation 2014-2020 – Kumanovo, 28 February 2014 Venue NAMA Kumanovo



Regional Consultative Forum In the framework on preparation of the new IPA II Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 – Kyustendil, 6 March 2014, Venue JTS – Kyustendil



Regional Consultative Forum In the framework on preparation of the new IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 – Blagoevgrad, 07 March 2014 Venue Hotel Ezerets



Second round of the Regional Consultative Forum for preparation of the IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014 – 2020 – Strumica, 04 June 2014 Venue Hotel Sirius Strumica



Joint Working Group

Second meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) for preparation of IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014 – 2020 - Skopje, 23 April 2014 Venue: Hotel TCC Grand Plaza Skopje

On April 23, 2014 in Skopje held its second meeting of the **Joint Working Group (JWG)** for preparation of IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014 – 2020.

The main topic on the agenda was the presentation of the program strategy and review and approval of the thematic priorities.



Final meeting of the Joint Working Group for preparation of IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 took place on the 21th of August 2014 at “Best Western City Hotel”, Sofia, Bulgaria.

The final meeting of the Joint Working Group for preparation of IPA Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 took place on the 21th of August 2014 at “Best Western City Hotel”, Sofia, Bulgaria. The JWG session was aimed at finalization and approving of the Programme document.

The meeting was attended by the majority of members of the Joint Task Force, which initially welcomed Deputy Minister of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria, Yordanka Chobanova, representative of the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy at the European Commission, Ann-Jasmin Krabatsch, representative of the Ministry for Local Self-government Brankica Ristovska and Minister Counsellor in Embassy of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Sofia Goce Georgievski



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After detailed presentation and a discussion the final draft of IPA Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 document was approved unanimously. The Programme will be submitted for final approval by the European Commission before the deadline set for the 22nd of September 2014



European Cooperation Day 2014

European Cooperation Day 2014 – 17 – 18 September 2014 in Blagoevgrad and Shtip

21 September 2014

17 September 2014

18:00 h.
Exhibition of photographs
"The beauty of the cross-border region"
Venue: Municipality of Blagoevgrad

20:00 h.
Pop rock concert
"Sharing borders, growing closer!"
Venue: square "Makedonia" - Blagoevgrad

18 September 2014

18:00 h.
Exhibition of photographs
"The beauty of the cross-border region"
Venue: Art gallery "BEZISTEN" - Shtip

20:00 h.
Pop rock concert
"Sharing borders, growing closer!"
Venue: little square - Shtip

EUROPEAN COOPERATION DAY
You're invited!
when: 17 and 18 September 2014
where: Blagoevgrad - Bulgaria and Shtip - Macedonia
why: To celebrate the achievements of EU funded territorial cooperation projects and increase cultural understanding among people throughout Europe and beyond!

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On 21 September each year under the patronage of the European Commission and the European Parliament celebrated the European Cooperation Day that marked the achievements more of 20 years of territorial cooperation in Europe. In the past three editions in hundreds of local events organized by territorial cooperation programs in more than 30 countries under the motto "Sharing borders, growing closer!" citizens of the cross-border regions shared positive benefits of territorial cooperation.

In 2014 on 17 and 18 September the Joint Technical Secretariat of the IPA Cross-border Programme organized a celebration of the European Cooperation Day in Blagoevgrad and Stip.

The festivities realized under the patronage of the Ministry of Regional Development (Managing Authority) and the Ministry of Local Self Government (National Authority) on 17 September in Blagoevgrad and 18 September in Stip.

Preparations for the celebration of the European Cooperation Day started with organizing the photo contest "The beauty of the cross-border region". Photos for competition were accepted from from 28 July 2014 to 5 September 2014 were obtained through 400 photographs of over 40 participants from all over Europe. The jury selected 45 photos that were part of the exhibition "The beauty of the cross-border region" and determine the first three places. The audience had the opportunity through Facebook page and Programme website to choose a one photo.



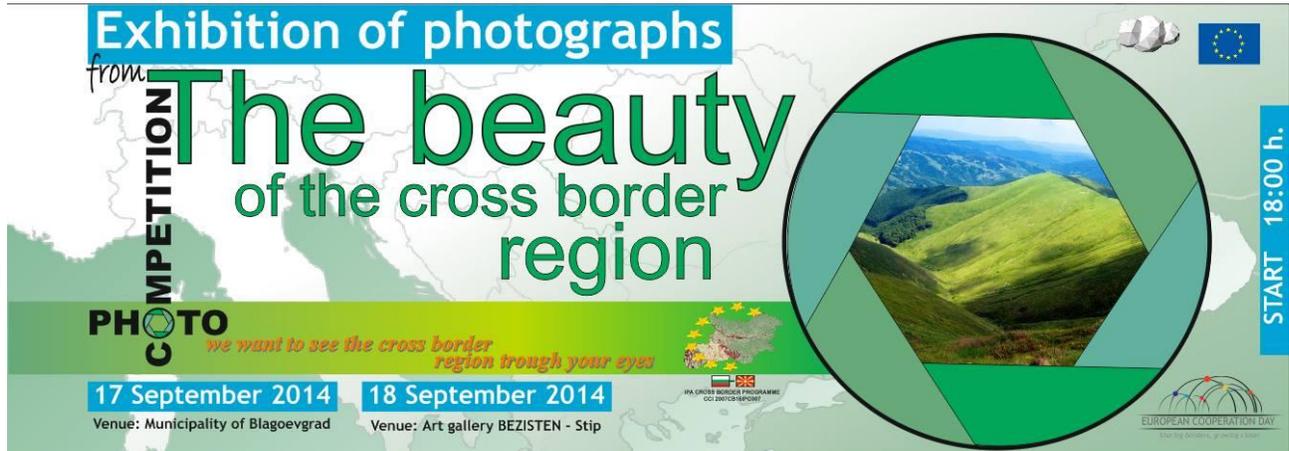
The celebration of European Cooperation Day consisted of exhibition of photographs entitled "The beauty of the cross-border region" of 18:00 h. in the hall of the municipality of Blagoevgrad and Art Gallery "Bezisten" in Stip and pop-rock concerts "Sharing borders, growing closer!" from 20:00 h. in square "Makedonia" in Blagoevgrad and the small square in Stip where participate youth groups from Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - winners of contest for best song of the cross-border region.



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Exhibition of photographs "The beauty of the cross-border region"



Exhibition of photographs "The beauty of the cross-border region" in Blagoevgrad – 17.09.2014
Venue: Municipality of Blagoevgrad



Exhibition of photographs "The beauty of the cross-border region" in Stip - 18.09.2014 Venue: Art Gallery "Bezisten"



Concerts "Sharing border, growing closer!"

**pop
ROCK
Concerts**

EUROPEAN COOPERATION DAY
Sharing borders, growing closer

17 September 2014
square "Makedonia"- Blagoevgrad

18 September 2014
little square - Stip

START 20:00 h.

PARANORMAL Plovdiv, Bulgaria TV Rage Kumanovo, Macedonia After Midnight Plovdiv, Bulgaria
 VIZIJA Skopje, Macedonia Chainsaw Babies Velingrad, Bulgaria
 + guests

IPA CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMME
CCI 2007CB16P007



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Concert "Sharing border, growing closer!" in Blagoevgrad - 17.09.2014 City Square "Makedonia"



Concert "Sharing border, growing closer!" in Stip - 18.09.2014 City Square Shtip



JMC and technical meetings during 2014

JMC meeting in Strumica – 03 June 2014 Venue: Sirius Hotel – Strumica

The Joint Monitoring Committee of the Programme held session on 03.06.2014 in the town of Strumica.

Main topics of the Joint Monitoring Committee were approved 2013 Annual Implementation Report of the IPA Cross-border Programme CCI 2007CB16IPO007 and Proposal for contracting additional projects from reserve list under the third Call for project proposals.

The Bulgarian co-chairman of the Joint Monitoring Committee was Mrs. Klimentina Deneva – Secretary General of the Ministry of Regional Development and from Macedonian side Mrs. Mjellma Mehmeti - Petersen – State Councillors for European Integration at the Ministry of Local Self-Government and IPA CBC Coordinator. Mrs. Ann - Jasmin Krabatsch – Programme Manager in Competence centre macro-regions and European territorial co-operation in Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy attended as a representative of the European Commission.





Technical meeting in Sofia - 09 December, 2014 Venue: "Best Western City Hotel", Sofia

On **9 December, 2014** r in Sofia held a **technical meeting under our IPA Cross-border Programme**. The meeting was attended by representatives of Managing Authority, National Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat.

During the meeting was conducted presentations and discussions of first draft of the description of the functions and procedures in place for the Managing Authority (Management and control system of the Programme for the period 2014-2020) and first draft of the Memorandum of Understanding for the period 2014-2020. Also were discussed other questions about the new programming period and was presented the status and implementation of projects of the programming period 2007-2013.





ANNEX B List of projects

List of completed projects under the second Call for Proposals (within 2014)

	Project №	Project name	Lead Partner	Partner 2	Partner 3 / 4	Area of intervention	Type of project (investment/ IB)	Total value of the project In EUR
1	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-02	"Sharing of experience and information in wine production industry – a way for cross-border economic development"	Association Regional Centre of Cooperation SPECTAR – Kriva Palanka (MK)	Eurointegra Association / (Eurointegra Association – Kresna - Sandanski branch) (BG)	Union of enologists in Bulgaria / (Union of enologists in Bulgaria – Blagoevgrad branch)	1.1	Soft	99 945.73
2	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-03	"Nature for people and people for nature"	Directorate of Rila Monastery Nature Park (BG)	Environmental Association Planetum, Strumica (MK)	NA	2.1	Soft	77 159.84
3	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-04	"Promoting and preserving the biodiversity of Maleshevska mountain"	Association Business Information and Consulting Center - Sandanski (BG)	Centre for Development of the East Planning Region (MK)	NA	2.1	Soft	94 953.79
4	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 utilisation"	No Frontiers 21 Century Association - Kyustendil (BG)	Assembly of Associations for Technical Culture - National Technique of Strumica (MK)	NA	2.2	Soft	99 533.83
5	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-08	Agro business without borders	Municipality of Sandanski (BG)	Municipality of Novo Selo (MK)	NA	1.1	Investment	497 378.00
6	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-29	"NET working for Efficient and Sustainable Civil Society across the Border"	European Institute - Blagoevgrad (BG)	Center for Intercultural Dialogue – Kumanovo (MK)	NA	1.2	Soft	94 420.00





7	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-34	Restoration of Nature for Good Quality of Life	Municipality of Berovo (MK)	Municipality of Sandanski (BG)	NA	2.1	Investment	494 199.96
8	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"- Strumyani (BG)	Municipality of Karbinci (MK)	NA	2.2	Soft	99 995.53
9	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-46	Bike Lanes for Citizens and Visitors to Kjustendil and Kriva Palanka	Municipality of Kjustendil (BG)	Municipality of Kriva Palanka (MK)	NA	2.1	Investment	495 357.68
10	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-61	Improvement quality and accessibility to natural attraction in the Municipality of Belitsa and Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica	Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica (MK)	Municipality of Belitsa (BG)	NA	2.1	Investment	497 984.32
11	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-63	To keep the youth in the cross border region - new-Y4Y	Municipality of Staro Nagoricane (MK)	Rila Municipality (BG)	NA	1.2	Investment	466 350.51
12	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-64	"Improvement of the quality and access to social services in the municipalities of Strumyani and Karbinci"	Municipality of Strumyani (BG)	Municipality of Karbinci (MK)	NA	1.2	Investment	499 452.37
13	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-94	Efficient usage of solar energy for better future	Centre for development of the South-East planning region - Strumica (MK)	Municipality of Strumica (MK)	PP3 Association of South Western municipalities (BG) PP4 Municipality of Petrich (BG)	2.1	Investment	432 392.40
14	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-98	A cross-border approach to tourism development based on water resources	Municipality of Lipkovo (MK)	Municipality of Satovcha (BG)	NA	2.1	Investment	491 875.16





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15	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-104	Hand in Hand: Little Bulgarians and Macedonians	Municipality of Vasilevo (MK)	Municipality of Strumyani (BG)	NA	1.2	Investment	492 565.26
16	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, FCaCSME-JPCEE"	Foundation for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises - Strumica (MK)	Regional Chamber of Skilled Crafts - Kyustendil (BG)	Agency for Regional Development, Kriva Palanka (MK)	1.1	Soft	97 528.08
17	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-109	Sustainable economic development through improvement of the social infrastructure in cross-border region Garmen - Bosilovo	Municipality of Bosilovo (MK)	Municipality of Garmen (BG)	NA	1.2	Investment	304 410.25
18	2007CB16IPO007-2011-2-112	Better life for children in cross border region	Kinder Garden "Detelinka" - Gotse Delchev (BG)	PMS "Vanco Prke" - Delchevo (MK)	Municipality of Gotse Delchev (BG)	2.1	Investment	458 507.84

Soft – 663 536.80
Investment – 5 130 473.75

Priority axes: 1 – 2 552 050.20
2 – 3 241 960.35





- List of completed projects under the third Call for Proposals (within 2014)

	Project №	Project name	Lead Partner	Partner 2	Partner 3 / 4	Area of intervention	Type of project (investment/I B)	Total value of the project in EUR
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
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
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
4	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
5	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
6	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-29	Enabling Organic Production in the Cross Border Region	<i>Assosiation „Savremie“ Sandanski</i>	Macedonian Organic Producers Federation - Strumica	NA	2,1	Soft	98 468.32
7	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-30	Women entrepreneurship for sustainable economic development	<i>Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kyustendil</i>	Foundation Euro Centre – FEC – Staro Nagoricane	NA	1,1	Soft	83 295.19
8	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-42	Leadership and motivation - vocation or profession	<i>Foundation for small and medium enterprises development - Kumanovo</i>	Alliance for regional and civil initiatives-Blagoevgrad branch	N/A	1,2	Soft	67 128.43
9	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-50	Clean and Green: Raising the Awareness of Young People on Pollution Prevention	<i>Regional Chamber of skilled craft - Kyustendil</i>	Norges Vel – Kriva Palanka	N/A	1,1	Soft	66 722.58





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10	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-54	Promotion of rural and mountain tourism through the use of ICT and ISO consultation between Bulgaria and FYROM	<i>Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Blagoevgrad</i>	Woman's Organization - Stip	N/A	1,1	Soft	95 762.12
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Soft – 843 867.60

**Priority axes: 1 – 663 279.79
2 – 180 587.81**





List of additional third call projects contracted in 2014 (as of 31 December 2014)

	Project №	Project name	Lead Partner	Partner 2	Partner 3 / 4	Area of intervention	Type of project (investment/I B)	Total value of the project In EUR
1	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 02	Public Institutions - Energy Efficiency	Municipal Primary School "Ilinden" Kriva Palanka	Public Support Centre	N/A	1.3	soft	142 324.63
2	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 08	Strengthening textile industry capacities in the cross border region through learning best practices and implementation of promotional activities	Textile Trade Association - Textile Cluster	Textile and Clothes Branch Organization	N/A	1.1	soft	87 119.49
3	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 12	SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF ACTIVITY CENTRES OF INTERESTS	7 SECONDARY SCHOOL "KUZMAN SHAPKAREV"	Municipal Secondary School Metodi Mitevski - Brico	N/A	1.2	investment	267 584.74
4	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 22	Measures for flood prevention of Rivers Bregalnica and Bistrica	Municipality of Delcevo	Municipality of Blagoevgrad	N/A	2.1	investment	498 125.49
5	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 26	Promotion of waste management and energy efficiency practices in the cross-border region	Alliance of the Producers of Ecological Energy - BG	Center for Climate Change - Skopje, Branch Office Center for Climate Change - Gevgelija	N/A	2.1	soft	86 410.54
6	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 47	Feasibility Study for Trans-border Biosphere Reserve Osogovo	Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation - Belasitsa Branch	Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius - Skopje	N/A	1.3	soft	145 003.77
7	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 49	E-service knowledge for social cohesion	Vocational School of Economics and Management "Yordan Zahariev", Kyustendil	Gorce Petrov Secondary School	Association "Farmers and Entrepreneurs for Europe" (AFEE)	1.2	soft	87 830.75
8	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 52	GREEN FUTURE FOR OUR KIDS	Municipality of Berovo	Kindergarten №2 „Gianni Rodari"	N/A	2.1	investment	496 500.35
9	2007CB16IPO007 – 2012 - 3 - 83	Improvement of the Quality of Life in the Cross-border Region trough Promotion and Revitalization of the Common Cultural Heritage	KUD "Goce Delchev"	Association "People and traditions"	N/A	2.2	soft	90 250.46

Soft – 638 939.64
Investment – 1 262 210.58

Priority axes: 1 – 729 863.38
2 – 1 171 286.84





ANNEX C Best practices from the second and third Calls for Proposals

SECOND CALL

Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-04
Project title:	Promoting and preserving the biodiversity of Maleshevska Mountain
Partners:	Organisation Centre for Development of the East Planning Region – Shtip
Duration:	18 months
Total budget (EUR)	99 953.79
Project description:	<p>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 the former Yugoslav Republic of 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.</p>
Achieved results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 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”<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 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



First work meeting of the project team, Sandanski, Bulgaria, 29 November 2012



Fourth work meeting of the project team, Shtip, 18 June 2013





Sixst work meeting of the project team, Sandanski, 29 November 2013



Seventh work meeting of the project team, 13 December 2013





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



Promotional materials of the project



Press conference Berovo, April 2013



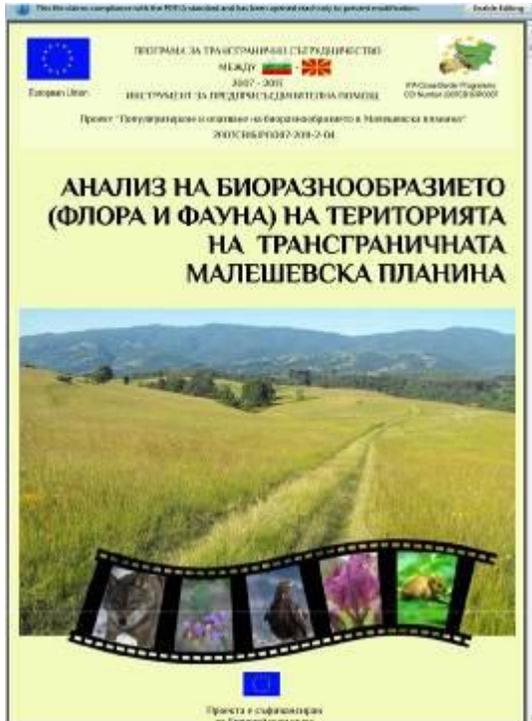


Press-conference for presentation of project results, Sandanski, Bulgaria, 20 January 2014





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 СЪУЧАСТИЕ МЕЖДУ БЪЛГАРИЯ И СЪСЪДНАТА СЪЮЗНА РЕПУБЛИКА СЪРБИЯ

ИНСТРУМЕНТ ЗА РЕГИОНАЛНО СЪУЧАСТИЕ

ПРОЕКТ "Консервация и развитие на биоразнообразието в Малешевска планина"

ЖНПС/ИП/С/ОП/07-2013-0-01

АНАЛИЗ НА БИОРАЗНООБРАЗИЕТО (ФЛОРА И ФАУНА) НА ТЕРИТОРИЯТА НА ТРАНСГРАНИЧНАТА МАЛЕШЕВСКА ПЛАНИНА

2.3 ТРЪБНАЦИТЕ ЖИВОТНИ

При обединяване на резултатите от теренните изследвания с тези от наличните литературни източници общо отбелязани 206 вида тръбначни животни (всички Пролетни и Зимни видове), от които 67 процента вида с високо природоопазвателно статут (табл.7).

Табл. 7 Установени тръбначни видове животни в Малешевска планина.

Таксон	Установени тръбначни видове в българския участък на Малешевска планина	Видове с приоритетно значение за природата (алчливо значение)
Райба (sub Genus)	11	4
Земноводни (sub Amphibia)	12	2
Влечуги (sub Reptilia)	25	0
Птици (sub Aves)	168	51
Млечопиши (sub Mammalia)	97	24

ЧАСТ II: АНАЛИЗ НА МЕСТООБИТАНИИ (ХАБИТАТИ) НА ТЕРИТОРИЯТА НА БЪЛГАРСКАТА ЧАСТ ОТ МАЛЕШЕВСКАТА ПЛАНИНА.

Местообитание (хабитат), представяща място, което даден организъм или група от организми обитават и едно съвкупно живи и мъртви фактори и условия на околната среда.

Основа на биологичното разнообразие е в тясна връзка с околната на природните местообитания. Текстът съдържа описание на характеристиките и главни стъпки бъдещето и на свързаните с тях видове местообитания.

Разнообразието на местообитанията и почвени условия, спецификата на водния режим и алпийската на човешка обуславят и разнообразието на местообитанията представени на територията на Малешевска планина.

Хабитатното разнообразие е установено чрез литературни 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.

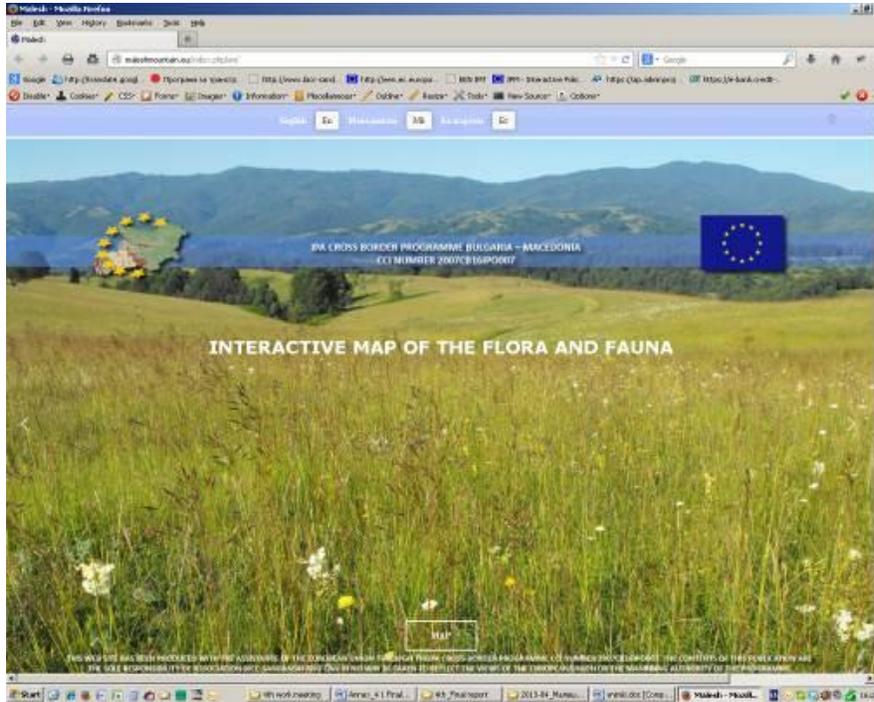


Activity 5. Design, pre-press and printing of a trilingual (BG, MK, EN) Info-guide " The Biodiversity of Maleshevska mountain"





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 8. Carrying out a Discussion forum "Malesh Mountain - past, present, future"





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: 2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-46
Project title: Bike Lanes for Citizens and Visitors to Kyustendil and Kriva Palanka
Lead Partner: Municipality of Kyustendil
Partners: Municipality of Kriva Palanka
Duration: 18 months
Total budget (EUR): 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









Project number: 2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-61
Project title: Improvement quality and accessibility to natural attractions in the Municipality of Belitsa and Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica
Lead Partner: Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica
Partners: Municipality of Belitsa
Duration: 22 months
Total budget (EUR): 497 984.32

Project description: The project promotes touristic values of the Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica and Municipality Belitsa like regions with similar geographical characteristics. Investment activities are related to improvement of road infrastructure to a natural tourist sites in Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica and reconstruction of the museum and construction of small tourist infrastructure in the surrounding mountains in Belitsa Municipality. Project envisages exchange of experience, know-how and best practices in local tourism development, promotion of the tourist opportunities and facilitating cross border utilization of natural tourist locations in both municipalities.

Achieved results:

- Increased awareness of the region based on preservation of natural resources; Infrastructure works to provide acces to tourist location; Infrastructure works to provide the necessary facilities for tourist purposes
- Construction of 1,3km access local road to tourist location "Elenec" in settlement Cera;
- Construction of walking trails 100m x 1,5m;
- Installation of urban equipment at tourist location;
- Refurbishment of accommodation capacity;
- Power installation and water supply;
- Site rehabilitation after infrastructure works;
- Initial meeting in Municipality Belitsa;
- Construction of tourist infrastructure in the Municipality of Belitsa with two sites - rehabilitation of a museum building in Belitsa and tourist infrastructure with five sub-sites;
- Visit of Municipality Belitsa representatives to Makedonska Kamenica;
- Informational and tourist promotional activities;
- Visit of Municipality Makedonska Kamenica representatives to Belitsa for promotion of the project results;
- Project management;
- Audit and project evaluation

The project has been successfully accomplished in May 2014.





Tourist location "Elenec" in settlement Cera







Small tourist infrastructure in the surrounding mountains in Belitsa Municipality









Project number: 2007CB16IPO007-2009-2-94
Project title: Efficient usage of solar energy for better future - SP - FUTURE
Lead Partner: Centre for development of the South-East planning region-Strumica
Partners: Municipality of Strumica,
Association of South Western municipalities Bulgaria,
Municipality of Petrich
Duration: 24 months
Total budget (EUR) 432 392.40

Project description: Project focused on identified target groups motivated to contribute to protecting the environment, but they need a positive example and a role-model project. Thus, two schools in both municipalities were equipped with photovoltaic panels to harness and use sunlight as energy - Elementary school "Sando Masev" Strumica and primary school "Anton Popov" Petrich. Investments being made in the project is expected to save 40% of the used electricity. Using the technology teachers who participated in the project through joint training of students, field visits, workshops, games and other tools encouraged friendly attitude towards nature and economic savings in formal education.

Achieved results:

- Two primary schools are vitalized according EU environmental standards for the energy efficiency- usage of Solar power plant;
- Promotion of regional Community renewable projects;
- Prepared draft Carbon cutter programme for Municipality of Strumica and Municipality of Petrich;
- Annual cost for electricity (used) in the primary schools are reduced up to 50%;
- Ten teachers are trained peer-educators in the regions (South-east in MK and South-west in BG);
- Network of teachers working on environmental topics is introduced;
- One guide for preparation of the lessons plan is developed (for the primary school);
- One study visit for the teachers is organized;
- Regional Energy Education programme is established;
- 200 students from primary and intermediary schools in two border regions has been coached on Renewable energy sources including biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind and solar.

The project has been successfully accomplished in July 2014.





Petrich





Strumica







SUN POWER Festival







THIRD CALL

Project number: 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-05
Project title: Rock'n Pop the Borders
Lead Partner: Partners Dupnitsa Association
Partners: Regional Center for sustainable development, Kratovo
Duration: 12 months
Total budget (EUR): 82 119, 49

Project description: Setting and promoting an accessible web platform/stage for young rock and pop music makers joining existing web partners' tools; involving wide crossborder audience into appraisal of music works uploaded/published; joint contest under clear rules and on a web stage between young rock/pop music makers with the crossborder audience active assessment role; participation and uploading procedures reflecting the copyrights in programme countries; joint professional estimation about the best music works - selected by the audience; a common promotional tools kit, focussed on different types of audiences and supporters, for young rock/pop music makers working up - live concerts on both border sides, documentary films about them on the web platform, uploading young participants' music works on the web platform, the contest winners' professional video and sound records uploading on the web platform; involving producers, professionals, festival selectors, business concerned from CBC area and the programme countries into audiences and into working out and implementation of the common Framework for established format management and sustain after the project end.

Web site of the project: <http://www.rocknpoptheborders.com/>

Achieved results: Increased common cultural capital through 1 new common culture product of contemporary, not traditional, CBC area culture.; Adequate appearance stage for young rock and pop music authors – set; Support of new audiences, professionals, festival selectors, business concerned and local communities to establishment and sustain of new cultural events, products and formats – gained; Common framework for managing and maintaining the format by involved NGOs, young authors participated, the professionals, producers, festival selectors, business concerned and local communities - settled.

The project has been successfully accomplished in December 2014.





Rock'n Pop the Borders Music Award Gig on 9 August 2014







Rock'n Pop the Borders Joint concert on 10 August 2014





Rock'n Pop the Borders technical conference and workshop





Rock'n Pop the Borders Concert in Kumanovo 7 September 2014







Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-28
Project title:	E-learning and ICT in Support of Human Resource Development in the Cross-border Region
Lead Partner:	Business Information and Consulting Center - Sandanski
Partners:	Center for development and promotion "Promo Idea" - Strumica
Duration:	12 months
Total budget (EUR)	97 242, 64
Project description:	<p>By following the project's concept for developing a strategic plan for human resources development the much needed enhancement of cross-border cooperation and mutual trust will be promoted and developed. The common plan will take into account the present condition of the human resources in the common cross-border region and it will provide tangible measures and mechanisms for their further development. Specific actions such as the creation of online training modules and a common web-portal in support of tourism and e-learning will contribute for improving capacity and increasing knowledge of human resources working in the tourism sector. All of the above mentioned improvements will be achieved without interrupting the labor process in the field tourism. The catalogue of traditional cuisine of the border region and the relevant web based e-library and mobile application represent an innovative toolkit which will improve knowledge and increase awareness of regional tourist products. The various promotion and networking events will foster experience exchange and cooperation between employers, business support organizations and educational institutions working in the field of tourism.</p>

Web site of the project: <http://www.e-tourism-bg-mk.eu/>

Achieved results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed Human Resources Development Strategy in Tourist Sector at the Target Cross-Border Region as a result of Activity 3• "Developed and delivered personalized "E-tourism Training Programme" including e-learning <i>training</i> modules and content for enhancing knowledge and practical skills of human resources in the field of tourism"• Trained and enhanced skills of management and administrative staff of tourism businesses working in the target CB region of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (hotels and restaurant owners, private accommodations, fast-food providers, pastries, bakeries, food producers, etc)• Trained and enhanced skills of general and specialized personell of tourism businesses working in the target CB <i>region</i> of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; representatives and experts, students at business Support organizations, NGOs, branch associations; universities, technical high schools (with tourism profile), training and vocational training organizations; etc.• Developed, applied and promoted innovative tools in support of human <i>resource</i> development, training and adaptation; (E-learning programme; Web-portal; E-library; Application for mobile devices; Catalogue of local and traditional cuisine).
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The project has been successfully accomplished in December 2014.





Seminar "Traditional meals and cuisine from Southwestern Bulgaria and Eastern Macedonia."



Strategy for development of Human Resources in tourism and catering sector in the cross-border region Strumica – Sandanski 2015-2020





Catalogue of local and traditional cuisine



ИЗДАТЕЛИ:
СДРУЖЕНИЕ БИКЦ - САНДАНСКИ ЦЕНТЪР „ПРОМО ИДЕЈ“ - СТРУМИЦА

ЕКИП:
ЖИВКО ИВАНОВ - РЪКОВОДИТЕЛ ПРОЕКТ
ПЛАМЕН ТЕДОРОВ - КООРДИНАТОР ПРОЕКТ
ДАЖКО РИСТОВСКИ - ТЕХНИЧЕСКИ КООРДИНАТОР
ХАРИ ШУТОСКИ - АСИСТЕНТ

ТЕКСТ:
АТАНАС АТАНАСОВ - ЈУЗИА ЕООД, ТЕКСТ БЪЛГАРСКА ЧАСТ
КАТЕРИНА ВАСИЛЕВА - ТЕКСТ МАКЕДОНСКА ЧАСТ

ФОТОГРАФИИ:
АТАНАС АТАНАСОВ, ВЕСНА РОД, ЖАН ЈОВАНОВ

ДИЗАЙН И ПЕЧАТ
СМИЛКОВ ЕООД
БЛАГОВЕРГЛАД, БЪЛГАРИЈА
ТИРАЖ: 1000 БР.
СЕПТЕМВРИ 2014

Culinary traditions:
The number of painted eggs on Easter depends on the number of family members, while in some villages, it depends on the number of the hens. Tradition says that painting should be made on Thursday morning before Easter and it is priority of the oldest woman in the family, while young girls and brides make the eggs decoration. In the past, the first red egg was carried in the church (to protect from hail).
The main dye was red, symbolizing the Resurrection, but other colors and combinations were also used. In oldest times, eggs were painted with the help of boiled herbs, with natural bright and pure colors: red (with oregano), orange-red (with sticks of sumac), green (nettles), yellow (with nuts and apple peels). People used for dyes also Polish elderberry, red onion, geranium, etc. Besides for family members, eggs are painted also for sponsors, for children and guests. For them, the eggs are decorated with drawings, geometric shapes, with petals, decals, wax, etc. Such eggs are called "parashki" (painted eggs). With the first painted red egg, women used to rub the faces of children for health.
On Thursday before Easter, the sourdough should be renewed and with it are prepared ritual loaves of breads, which could be round, prolonged or braided. In the past, 3 loaves were compulsorily prepared: for the godparents, for the parents of the young bride and for breaking over the festive table. Before baking the braided ritual loaves of bread, 5 eggs were placed on them - one white and 4 red. The newlyweds carried painted eggs and ritual bread to the godparents and parents of the bride in Sunday morning, i.e. on the first day of Easter.
On Easter, people knead sweet bread, called in Bulgaria "kozunak". The story of "kozunak" begins from more than 3 centuries. In the beginning of XVII century, a French baker kneaded the original of today's Easter "kozunak". Since then, there is a tradition to be made "kozunak" on this holiday. In Bulgaria, "kozunak" is prepared since 1920, firstly in cities. Along with it, city housewives prepared cake with 14 eggs. In the past, when the "kozunak" was not widespread, women made butter sweets. On the Easter table are served mainly foods of animal origin, because the holiday puts an end of the Lent.
The menu compounds compulsorily of lamb meat with green spices, oddments, lamb trifles soup, eggs, cheese, milk, kozunak, butter sweets, red wine. In the past, people roasted lamb for Easter with "bumba" (the lamb's belly, filled with rice and vegetables), in a clay oven, while front intestines they made "kukun" (the lamb intestines are being braided and roasted on embers).

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САЛАТИ SALADS САЛАТИ

Шопска салата
Традиционната, вкусна и лесна комбинација от неколку вида зеленчуци, поръсени с настргано сирене придава уникатен вкус на шопската салата, която често присъства на македонската трапеза като ординар, придружена с чаша домашна ракия.

Необходими продукти
1 зелена чушка; 1 глава кромид; 2 домати; 2 краставици; 200 г бело овче сирене; олио; сол

Начин на приготвяне
Обелете краставиците и заедно с домати ги нарежете на малки парчета. Нарезете на дребни кръгове кромид и чушката. Сложете всички зеленчуци в дълбок сад и добавете на око олиото и солта. Разбъртайте добре и накрая добавете настрганото сирене отгоре.

Shopska Salad
Traditional, delicious and easy combination of several types of vegetables sprinkled with grated white cheese gives the irreplaceable taste of the Shopska salad, which is often present on every Macedonian table, as appetizers and accompanied by a glass of homemade brandy.

Necessary products
1 green pepper; 1 onion bulb; 2 tomatoes; 2 cucumbers; 200 g white sheep cheese; edible oil; salt

Cooking directions
Peel the cucumbers and together with the tomatoes cut them into cubes. Finely dice the onion and the pepper in circles. All the vegetables are placed in a deeper pot and add cooking oil and salt to taste. Once the ingredients are mixed, add grated white cheese on top.

Шопска салата
Традиционалната вкусна и лесна комбинација на неколку вида зеленчуци поръсени со ренданото сирене го дава неизменливиот вкус на шопската салата, често присутна на секоја македонска трапеза како мезе во придружба на чаша домашна ракия.

Потребни продукти
1 зелена пиперка; 1 главина кромид; 2 домати; 2 краставици; 200 гр. овчо сирене; масло за јадење; сол

Начин на приготвување
Крставиците се прупат и со домати се сечат на коцки. Кромидот се сече на ситно, а пиперката на крутин. Ситот зеленчук се става во подлабок сад и му се додава масло за јадење и сол по вкус. Откако сировината ќе се промеша одозгора се ренда сиренето.

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Interactive CD-ROM Traditional Meals and Cuisine



Android application

e-tourism
Utils - December 10, 2014
Education

Install Add to Wishlist

This app is compatible with some of your devices.

★★★★★ (2)

8+1 Recommend this on Google

Description

The Project "E-learning and ICT in Support of Human Resource Development in the Cross-border Region (e-Support)" is conducted by the Association Business Information and Consulting Center – Sandanski, Bulgaria and Centre for Development and Promotion PROMO IDEA – Strumica, and is funded by IPA Cross-border Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Macedonia.

This project includes mutual effect, fostering favorable conditions for social inclusion, economic development and human resources development in the tourist sector and benefit on the CB region. Regional approach of the actions predicted with the Project will contribute on large scale improvement of the existing socio-economic potentials and will create conditions for sustainable development of the tourist sector in the CB region and wider. The CBC impact includes joint initiatives for social inclusion, economic development, utilization of new tools appropriate for acceleration of joint co-operation in future with specific focus of human resources development and capacity building in tourist sector. This will promote new products as benefit for the local/regional SME related to tourism, local communities and



Project number:	2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-29
Project title:	Enabling Organic Production in the Cross Border Region
Lead Partner:	Association "Savremie" Sandanski
Partners:	Macedonian Organic Producers Federation - Strumica
Duration:	12 months
Total budget (EUR)	98 468, 32
Project description:	<p>In order to tackle the afford mentioned issues the project aims to introduce organic agriculture as a sector of special interest and an alternative which can add values to the agricultural products, support exports, incomes and new jobs in rural areas. The project also presents organic agriculture as a method which contributes towards sustainability in terms of water management, soil management, waste reduction and the protection of biodiversity. It proposes raising awareness and development of capacity building measures for self- improvement of the organic producers' knowledge and skills in a form of Organic Production Know – How Packages for beginners and advanced organic producers and Organic production manuals for improvement of knowledge of advisory, training and educational service providers. It also proposes establishment of relations for joint cooperation, exchange of ideas, experiences and good practices among organic production stakeholders of both sides of the border, thus utilization of the given information in regards to bringing the organic agriculture as sustainable and effective agriculture model in favor of both local communities and environment.</p>

Web site of the project: <http://www.eop-cbr.eu/>

Achieved results:

- Implemented vast promotional campaign on the project objectives, advantages and benefits of organic production among target groups in the border regions;
- Identified, approached and selected interested agricultural producers to be included in the project activities as capacity building recipients;
- Developed, printed, disseminated and promoted *Organic* Production Know - How Extension Packages for Self-Guided Improvement 1 and 2. Basics in Organic Production and Advanced Organic Production;
- Developed, printed, disseminated and promoted Organic Production Manual for for Advisors / Teachers / Trainers;
- Carried out a total of 4 (four) Joint information and *raising* awareness workshops organized in Bulgaria and FYROM;
- Carried out a total of 2 (two) Cross-border Forums and Exhibition of local organic products in Bulgaria and FYROM;
- Developed and fostered joint cross border cooperation, networking, exchange of experience, good practices and joint promotion of local organic products of the cross-border region among the organic production stakeholders.

The project has been successfully accomplished in December 2014.





Cross-border forum for promotion and encouraging of organic production and exhibition of local organic products 22 - 23 November 2014





atanasov / sandanski1.com



atanasov / sandanski1.com





Cross-border forum for promotion and encouraging of organic production and exhibition of local organic products in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia







Materials





ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2014



Macedonian Organic Producers Federation
www.fpopm.com



Macedonian Organic Producers Federation
www.fpopm.com



Macedonian Organic Producers Federation
www.fpopm.com

Очекувани резултати:

- Имплементација на широка промотивна кампања за проектните цели, предностите и придобивките од органското производство наменета за целните групи во прекуграничната област;
- Идентификувани и избрани земјоделски производители кои ќе бидат вклучени во проектните активности за јакнење на нивните капацитети;
- Развиени, отпечатени и дисеминирани пакети со материјали за подигнување на нивото на знаење за органското производство и самопомош 1- пакет со основни знаења и 2 - пакет со напредни знаења за органското производство;
- Развиени, отпечатени и дисеминирани прирачници органско производство за советодавци / обучувачи / тренери;
- Оддржани вкупно 4 заеднички информативни работилници за подигнување на свеста во Бугарија и Македонија;
- Оддржани вкупно 2 форуми со манифестации / изложби на органските производители во Бугарија и Македонија;
- Директна информираност на претставниците на целните групи.

Expected results and outputs:

- Implemented vast promotional campaign on the project objectives, advantages and benefits of organic production among target groups in the border regions;
- Identified, approached and selected interested agricultural producers to be included in the project activities as capacity building recipients;
- Developed, printed, disseminated and promoted Organic Production Know - How Extension Packages for Self-Guided Improvement 1 and 2: Basics in Organic Production and Advanced Organic Production;
- Developed, printed, disseminated and promoted Organic Production Manual for Advisors and Trainers;
- Carried out four Joint information and raising awareness workshops organized in Bulgaria and FYROM;
- Carried out two Cross-border Forums with Exhibitions of local organic products in Bulgaria and FYROM;

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**НАСЛОВ НА ПРОЕКТОТ:
ОВОЗМОЖУВАЊЕ
НА ОРГАНСКОТО ПРОИЗВОДСТВО ВО
ПРЕКУГРАНИЧНИОТ РЕГИОН
Ref. Nr: 2007CB16IPO007-2012-3-029**

www.eop-cbr.eu

**PROJECT TITLE:
ENABLING ORGANIC PRODUCTION
IN THE CROSS BORDER REGION**





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