

**Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of  
Macedonia 2014-2020**

**IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme**

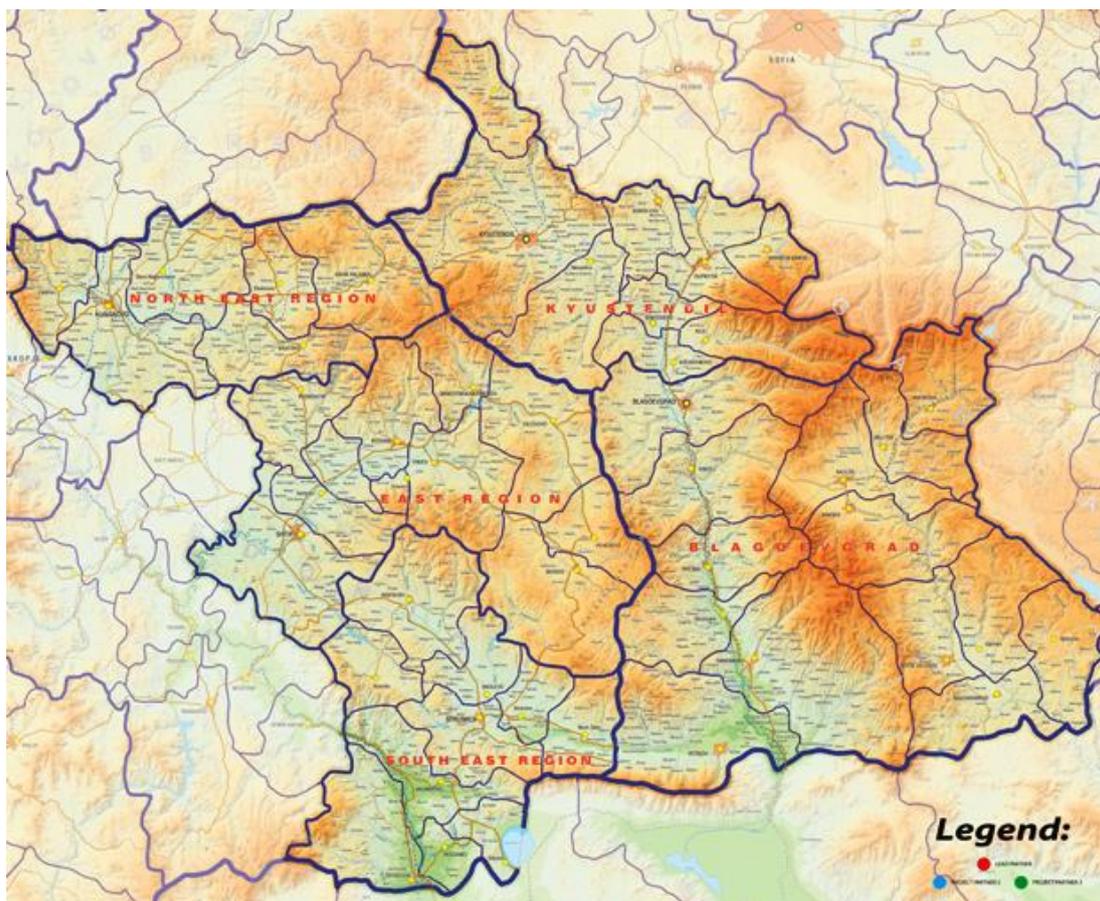
***Programme Summary***

## Geography

The IPA CBC Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014 – 2020 covers an area of 18 087 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 980 375 people:

The territory includes on **Bulgarian side** two districts Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil with a population of 452 973 people in 23 municipalities (municipalities on Bulgarian side are: District of Blagoevgrad: Bansko, Belica, Blagoevgrad, Gotce Delchev, Garmen, Kresna, Petrich, Razlog, Sandanski, Satovcha, Simitli, Strumiani, Hadjidimovo and Yakoruda; District of Kyustendil: Bobovdol, Boboshevo, Dupnitsa, Kocherinovo, Kyustendil, Nevestino, Rila, Sapareva Banya and Trekliano)

The territory on **side of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** comprises of the North-East, the East and the South-East planning regions with a population of 527 402 people in 27 municipalities (municipalities on side of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are: North-East region: Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Rankovce, Kumanovo, Lipkovo and Staro Nagorichane; South-East region: Valandovo, Gevgelija, Bogdanci, Dojran, Radovish, Konche, Strumica, Bosilovo, Vasilevo and Novo Selo; East region: Berovo, Pehchevo, Vinica, Kochani, Cheshinovo - Obleshevo, Zrnovci, Probishtip, Shtip, Karbinci, Delchevo and Makedonska Kamenica)



*Map of the eligible programme area*

The **overall objective** of the IPA CBC Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014 – 2020 is *“to intensify cross-border cooperation between the people and institutions of the region in order to jointly address common challenges and exploit untapped potentials”*

The three selected Thematic Priorities b, d and g (out of the list identified in the Annex III of the IPA II regulation) have been structured into three Priority Axes, which reflect the needs and challenges as identified in the situation analysis of the Programme area:

The Programme covers the following **three Priority Axes**:

*PA 1 Environment: Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management*

*PA 2 Tourism: Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage*

*PA 3 Competitiveness: Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment*

An additional Priority Axes 4-Technical Assistance will support the proper management and the communication of the Programme.

A **cross cutting issue** of the Programme is the support for youth, women and vulnerable groups.

These issues can be especially addressed under the PA 2 (tourism and cultural and natural heritage) and 3 (competitiveness), are reflected in the eligible activities and will also be reflected in the selection criteria when assessing project proposals under the Calls for Proposals.

This approach should help improving the framework and the labor and social conditions for young people, women and vulnerable / marginalized groups in the region.

Figure 1: Priority Axes, Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives of the IPA II CBC Programme Bulgaria-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020

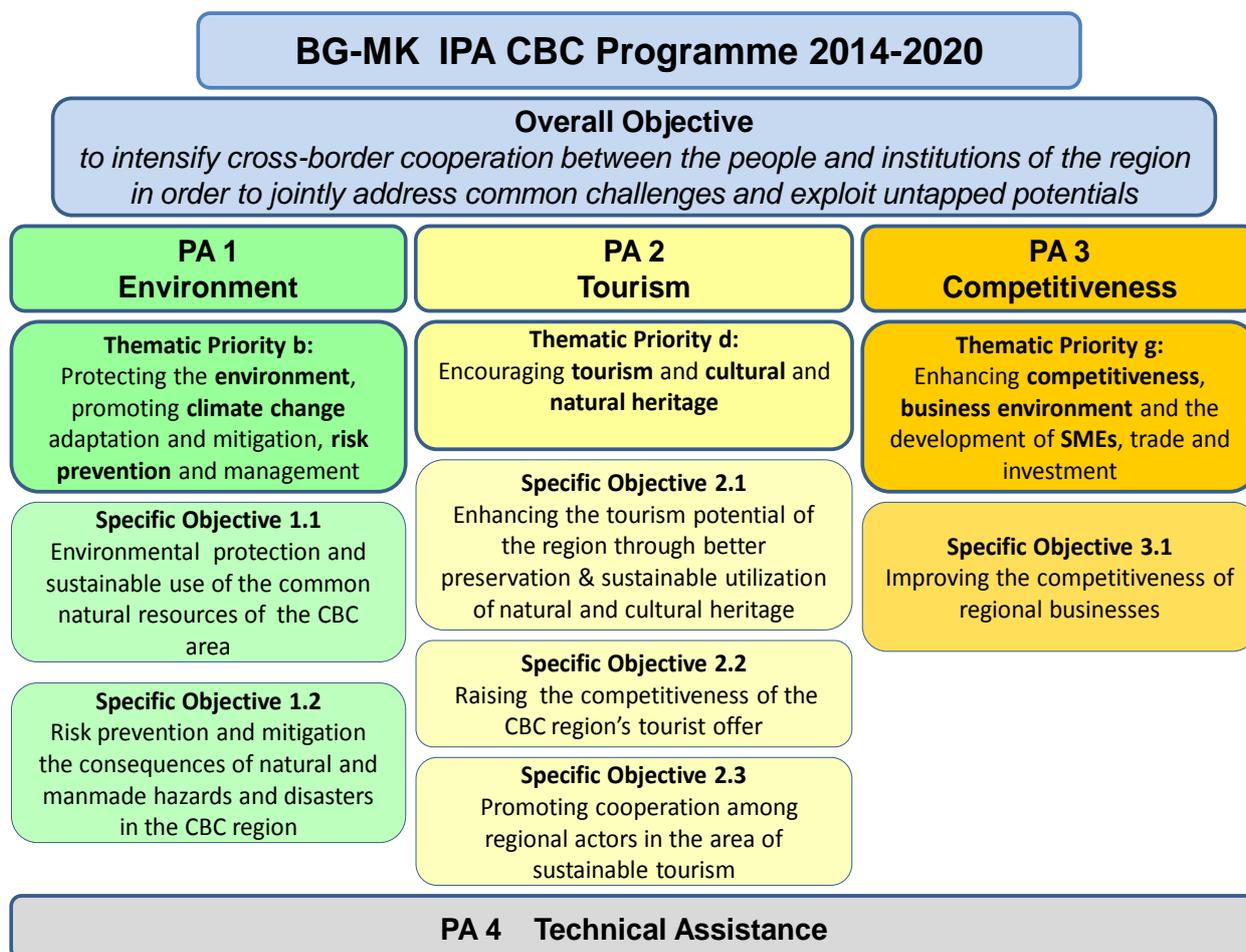


Table: Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme

| Priority axis         | Thematic priority  | Specific Objectives  | Result indicators   |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| PA<br>Environment     | 1<br>Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management                  | SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of the common natural resources of the CBC area  | RI 1.1.1: Increased supported nature protected sites<br>RI 1.1.2: Increased level of capacity in using common natural resources   |
|                       |  | SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region                          | RI 1.2.1: Increased joint interventions in the field of risk prevention and management<br>RI 1.2.2: Increased joint initiatives related to risk prevention and management |
| PA<br>Tourism         | Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage  | SO 2.1: Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage | RI 2.1.1: Increase of nights spent by tourists in the cross-border region   |
|                       |  | SO 2.2: Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer  | RI 2.2.1: Increased created/supported joint tourism products and services   |
|                       |  | SO 2.3: Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism   | RI 2.3.1: Increased public awareness regarding sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources   |
| PA<br>Competitiveness | 3<br>Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment | SO 3.1: Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses   | RI 3.1.1: Increased cross-border business networks created or extended<br><br>RI 3.1.2: Increased level of awareness on the business opportunities offered by the region  |
| PA<br>TA              | 4<br>Technical Assistance  | SO 4.1: assuring effective Programme management  | N/A   |
|                       |  |  |   |

## **Programme budget:**

A total of **19.461.687 EUR** (EU co-funding and national contribution) will be available under this Programme. The EU co-financing rate is up to 85% of the total eligible costs of interventions. The allocation of these funds to the various Priority Axes is as follows:

*Table: Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme (in EUR)*

| <b>Priority axis</b>    | <b>Thematic priority</b>  | <b>Union support</b> | <b>National counterpart</b> | <b>Total funding</b> |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| PA 1<br>Environment     | Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management                  | 5.789.852            | 1.021.739                   | 6.811.591            |
| PA<br>Tourism           | Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage   | 6.616.974            | 1.167.701                   | 7.784.675            |
| PA 3<br>Competitiveness | Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment | 2.481.365            | 437.888                     | 2.919.253            |
| PA 4<br>TA              | Technical Assistance  | 1.654.243            | 291.925                     | 1.946.168            |
| <b>Total</b>            |   | <b>16.542.434</b>    | <b>2.919.253</b>            | <b>19.461.687</b>    |

## **Selection of operations:**

**Calls for Proposals** will be organized for selecting projects that contribute to achieving the Programme's objectives. Applicants from both sides of the border may submit joint project proposals that address the respective Programme priorities and that satisfy certain cooperation criteria that will be separately announced. **Two types of actions** will be distinguished:

### investments

projects that have a predominant investment character with only a minor part of accompanying soft activities

### soft measures

projects that are mainly oriented at preparing studies, establishing networks, providing trainings, developing concepts, providing services for certain target groups, raising awareness on specific themes, etc. These projects may only have a minor investment part that is needed for delivering the soft measures in an effective way. Soft measures also include people-to-people type of actions, e.g. small scale initiatives among civil society institutions that aim at increasing direct contacts and cooperation across the border among the people and their associations in the region

The following **Types of Beneficiaries** may apply for projects under this Programme (under the various Priority axes slightly different criteria may apply and will be detailed for the specific calls):

- Local and regional authorities and organisations established and managed by local and regional authorities
- National authorities and organisations established and managed by national authorities
- Regional and sector development agencies
- Administrations of protected areas
- Regional touristic associations / NGOs in the field of tourism
- Business support structures - chamber of commerce, business association, business cluster
- Education and social institutions
- Research and academic institutes
- Cultural institutes (museum, library, art gallery, community centres, etc.)
- Civil Society / Non-governmental organisations

### **Management structures:**

The main **Management Structures** of the IPA CBC Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 comprise of:

The **Managing Authority** (MA), which is the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria, Directorate General “Territorial Cooperation Management. The managing authority is responsible for managing the operational programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management.

**National Authority** (NA) in the Ministry of Local Self-Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that cooperates with the MA in joint programming, management and implementation of the programme.

**Joint Monitoring Committee** (JMC): The JMC shall review the overall effectiveness, quality and coherence of the implementation of all actions towards meeting the objectives set out in the Programme. The JMC comprises of representatives from national and regional administration and bodies and other stakeholders, including civil society and private sector organisations from both countries.

**Joint Secretariat** (JS): will be established in Kyustendil, Bulgaria with branch office in Strumic (MK). The JS provides daily help to the Managing Authority, National Authority and the Joint Monitoring Committee of the Programme and assists where appropriate the Certifying Authority and Audit Authority in carrying out their respective duties. The JS also provides information and support to the beneficiaries of the Programme.

Certifying Authority (CA): is the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria, “National Fund” Directorate.

Audit Authority (AA): is the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria, Audit of European Union Funds Executive Agency

### **Programming process**

The drafting of the IPA CBC Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 was organised in compliance with the partnership approach as referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. The Directorate General "Territorial cooperation management" at the Ministry of Regional Development of Republic of Bulgaria, as future MA of the Programme coordinated the process together with JS support.

Maintaining a broad partnership was a guiding principle during the entire programming process. A Joint Working Group (JWG) was established in November 2013, based on partnership and 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 has been guiding the Programme development process and was approving the main stages of the programme preparation and the Programme as a whole.

The Draft final version of the Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 can be found at:

<http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/page.php?c=66>