

Rome, July 2014

Republic of Bulgaria
Ministry of Regional Development – DG Territorial
Cooperation Management
**EX-ANTE EVALUATION AND SEA OF THE
Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA II CBC
PROGRAMME 2014-2020
FINAL REPORT**



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Executive Summary

According to Art. 55 of the Regulation (EU), No 1303/2013 laying down common provisions, ex-ante **evaluations shall be carried out to improve the quality of the design of each programme**, under the responsibility of the authorities in charge of the preparation of the programme. Ex-ante evaluations shall be submitted to the Commission at the same time as the programme, together with an executive summary.

The purpose of this section is therefore to highlight the **main findings of the Ex-ante evaluation on the Bulgaria- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-border Draft Programme 2014-2020** for each **evaluation component**, namely:

- Programme Strategy;
- Indicators, monitoring and evaluation;
- Administrative capacity, data collection procedures and evaluation;
- Consistency of financial allocation;
- Contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Ex-ante Evaluator also assessed the **programming process itself**, analysing how **lessons learned** during the 2007-2013 programming period were taken into account in the elaboration of the new Operational Programme as well as the modalities adopted for **involving relevant stakeholders** in the programme design.

The following Tables aim to give evidence to **the main outcomes and recommendations drawn on the Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA CBC Draft OP (version 2.0 – 8 July 2014)** as well as to **related changes in the OP** implemented by the programmer following previous Ex-ante Evaluator’s suggestions¹.

The following table shows the main findings of the Draft Ex-ante evaluation.

Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations
Involvement of stakeholders	
<i>Involvement of stakeholders in the programme design</i>	<i>The process for involving stakeholders appears to have been implemented properly and with satisfactory results.</i>
<i>Continuous involvement of stakeholders throughout the programme implementation</i>	<i>The approach of using different methods, enabling their and their outcomes’ visibility appears a good practice to be empowered during the Programme for its implementation (e.g. online tools).</i>
Programme strategy	
<i>External coherence</i>	<i>Strong external coherence with all the three frameworks taken into account. A</i>

¹ See “Ex-ante evaluation and SEA of the Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA CBC Cross-border Programme 2014-2020”- DRAFT, June 2014



Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations
	<i>special coherence has been detected with the Macedonian framework and needs</i>
<i>Internal coherence</i>	<i>Good coherence among SOs though their influence on each other could be strengthened. Actions should be foreseen and defined taking advantage of the envisaged expected results so as to better define the appropriate interventions/typologies of actions</i>
<i>Linkage between supported actions, expected outputs and results</i>	<i>The link appear to be strong and featured by a consequential and logic linkage between the related indicators</i>
<i>Horizontal principles</i>	<i>The Programme appear to cope with the principles though they could be better defined in the SO and in the selected actions</i>
Indicators, monitoring and evaluation	
<i>Relevance of proposed indicators</i>	<i>The suggestion of resorting only to quantitative data is very appealing though challenging. A common understanding of the data (indicators) to be monitored should, therefore be mandatory.</i>
<i>Clarity of proposed indicators</i>	<i>The results indicators seem to be better defined since their first definition, though some room for improvement seems still existing. It appears more appropriate a monitoring which is not too ambitious (e.g. yearly) and that is in any case according with the state of implementation of the actions;</i>
<i>Quantified baseline and target value</i>	<i>As for the output indicators, they seem to be coherent and quite exhaustive. It appears important to underline that it is essential to have a deep look into the final budget allocation for each SO. The final figures would surely enable a sound assessment not only of baseline and target values but also of the relevance of the results identified. In this sense, as for the results indicators, it appears essential to define better the baseline so as to identify a proper and realistic target. Regarding the output indicators it would be interesting to have more information related to the strategic projects the implementation of which could affect the actual figures.</i>
Programme delivery mechanisms and structure	
<i>Composition and functions of the Joint Monitoring Committee</i>	<p>The list of members of the JMC shall identify more precisely which are the institutions and organizations which will take part in the work of the body.</p> <p>The number of members of the JMC is rather high, and this can affect the efficiency of its functioning in general and of decision making process in particular. It could be considered a selection of the most relevant types of organizations, simplifying the structure of the JMC, ensuring in the meanwhile that all relevant institutions and organizations are represented.</p> <p>The Programme may use the possibility of involving more bodies and/or individual experts in the work of the JMC with advisory role, since they can provide valuable input for the programme coordination.</p>
<i>Description of the functions of the bodies responsible for the management and of the programme</i>	<p>The set up and functionality of the management and control system should be better described. Programme specific information is needed in relation to the functions of the institutions involved</p> <p>More details are advisable related to the procedure of setting up the Joint Secretariat.</p> <p>The tasks of the JS should be better outlined, explained and clarified.</p> <p>The role of the JS in coordinating the work of the controllers is questionable</p> <p>The role and tasks of the National Authority should be described and explained</p>
<i>Compliance with the</i>	A brief description of the organization of the most important Programme



Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations
principle of separation of tasks between the management bodies	management procedures shall be included in order to have an overview of the system.
Efficiency and functionality of the management and control system	The description of the management and control system is missing.
Consistency of financial allocation	
<i>External coherence</i>	<i>The financial allocation between priorities appears coherent with what has emerged from the Thematic Concentration and SWOT. Further information on the intended projects (enabled by the clarification of the actions) would empower a more deepen assessment</i>
<i>Internal coherence</i>	
<i>Selected forms of support</i>	
Contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy	
<i>Links to Europe 2020 Strategy</i>	<i>The objectives and results identified by the Programme appear to properly feed the aims of the Strategy</i>

The following Table covers the ex ante recommendations dashboard.



Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations	Recommendation delivery	Acceptance	Comments
<i>Involvement of stakeholders in the programme design</i>	The process for involving stakeholders appears to have been implemented properly and with satisfactory results.	30th June Draft Final Report	☺	Accepted for information
<i>Continuous involvement of stakeholders throughout the programme implementation</i>	The approach of using different methods, enabling their and their outcomes' visibility appears a good practice to be empowered during the Programme for its implementation (e.g. online tools).	30th June Draft Final Report	☺	The recommendation will be taken into account during programme implementation stage. The following text is included in point 5.7. of the OP: "During Programme implementation, the Programme bodies will foster the active participation of stakeholders through both on-line instruments and periodic events aimed at sharing progresses gradually made."
<i>External coherence</i>	Strong external coherence with all the three frameworks taken into account. A special coherence has been detected with the Macedonian framework and needs	30th June Draft Final Report	☺	Accepted for information
<i>Internal coherence</i>	Good coherence among SOs though their influence on each other could be strengthened. Actions should be foreseen and defined taking advantage of the envisaged expected results so as to better define the appropriate interventions/typologies of actions	30th June Draft Final Report	☺	Definition of such actions to be provided in the OP by PPM and reflected in this table.
<i>Linkage between supported actions, expected outputs and results</i>	The link appear to be strong though in some cases could be enabled by a simplification/rationalization of the actions	30th June Draft Final Report	☺	Actions are revised according to the recommendation.
<i>Horizontal principles</i>	The Programme appears to cope with the principles though they could be better defined in the SO and in the selected actions	30th June Draft Final Report	☺	SO and actions to be revised accordingly by PPM and reflected in this table.



Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations	Recommendation delivery	Acceptance	Comments
<p><i>Relevance of proposed indicators</i> <i>Clarity of proposed indicators</i></p>	<p>The suggestion of resorting only to quantitative data is very appealing though challenging. A common understanding of the data (indicators) to be monitored should, therefore be mandatory. It appears that a cooperation programme could not completely avoid to measure qualitative aspects in a cost effective manner. Regarding the results indicators they seem, in some cases, not well defined (hence not clearly linked to their correspondent result/s) and/or too overlapping with the related results. The approach of having one result indicator for each expected result may not always be exhaustive. It appears more appropriate a monitoring which is not too ambitious (e.g. yearly) and that is in any case according with the state of implementation of the actions;</p> <p>As for the output indicators, they seem to be too many and not always exhaustive and sometimes could be classified as result indicators; It appears important to underline that it is essential to have a deep look into the final budget allocation for each SO. The final figures would surely enable a sound assessment not only of baseline and target values but also of the relevance of the results identified.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">30th June Draft Final Report</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">☺</p>	<p>Result Indicators are revised according to ex-ante and MA comments and recommendation. Result Indicator 1.1.2 is revised as qualitative.</p> <p>The revised Result Indicators in Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme on p. 31 to be transferred to the relevant sections of the OP – by PPM.</p> <p>Output Indicators are revised according to ex-ante and MA comments and recommendation.</p>



Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations	Recommendation delivery	Acceptance	Comments
<i>Quantified baseline and target value</i>	<p>It is essential to quantify as soonest the baseline so as to define realistic target for the results.</p> <p>Output indicators targets, though apparently in line with past experience and financial allocation, need more clarification as far as the methodology for their identification is concerned. Finally more info on strategic projects could be useful for a efficient assessment of those quantification</p>	<p>31st July Final Report</p>	<p>⊖</p>	
<i>Administrative capacity, data collection procedure and evaluation</i>	<p>It could be considered a selection of the most relevant types of organizations, simplifying the structure of the JMC, ensuring in the meanwhile that all relevant institutions and organizations are represented.</p> <p>The Programme may use the possibility of involving more bodies and/or individual experts in the work of the JMC with advisory role, since they can provide valuable input for the programme coordination</p> <p>The set up and functionality of the management and control system should be better described</p> <p>Procedures of establishing, role and tasks of the Secretariat could be stressed</p> <p>The role and tasks of the National Authority should be described and explained</p> <p>A brief description of the organization of the most important programme management procedures shall be included in order to have an overview of the system.</p> <p>The description of the management and control system is missing</p>	<p>31st July Final Report</p>	<p>⊖</p>	



Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations	Recommendation delivery	Acceptance	Comments
	Considering outcomes of the evaluation of 2007-2013 programming period			
<i>External coherence</i>	The financial allocation between priorities appears coherent with what has emerged from the Thematic Concentration and SWOT. Further information on the intended projects (enabled by the clarification of the actions) would empower a more deepen assessment	30th June Draft Final Report	☹	Accepted for information
<i>Internal coherence</i>				
<i>Selected forms of support</i>				
<i>Links to Europe 2020 Strategy</i>	The objectives and results identified by the Programme appear to properly feed the aims of the Strategy	30th June Draft Final Report	☹	Accepted for information

Legenda ☺ Accepted ☹ Partly accepted ☹ Not yet accepted



1 Foreword

1.1 Objectives of the Ex-ante Evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Regulatory framework for the period 2014-2020 drives European policies towards **results** which should contribute to the **Europe 2020 strategy** for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. To this end, the related Regulations increase the importance of well-designed programmes based upon evidence.

The **role of ex-ante evaluation** as an essential support to programming authorities in designing OPs' architecture and outline **suitable implementing and monitoring devices** to meet evaluation requirements **is therefore reinforced**.

As stated in Chapter 2 "Objective, purpose and expected results" of the Terms of Reference², in the framework of the Ex-ante Evaluation and SEA of the forthcoming IPA CBC Bulgaria - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme, the Evaluator must consider the following issues:

- **Justification for thematic priorities** selected and **consistency with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Common Strategic Framework**;
- **Relevance and consistency of proposed result and output indicators**;
- **Plausibility of targets** and explanation of the **contribution of outputs to identified results**;
- **Administrative capacity** for the management and implementation of the programme;
- **Quality of the monitoring system and methods for collecting data**.

The main **expected results** of the evaluation is, hence, the **improved quality of Programme design** and its **consistence with relevant regulations, principles and requirements**.

Bearing in mind the concept of **utility of the evaluation** and according to the suggestions stated in the "Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation" drafted by the European Commission³, the Ex-Ante evaluation and SEA of the IPA CBC Bulgaria - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia OP will be conceived as an **iterative process** involving the Evaluator, the MA and the experts in charge of drafting the new OP, so as to provide appropriate **judgments and recommendations** for the successful design of both the future strategy and its implementing mechanisms.

Responding to this iterative and participative approach, the ex- ante evaluation and SEA tasks (and their deliverables) are going to be arranged in **tight cooperation with the Contracting Authority and programming authorities**, following the progresses gradually made by the programming itself and focusing on the specific MA's cognitive needs.

² Annex II: Terms of reference (including clarification before the deadline for submitting tenders) of the Service Contract

³ See "The programming period 2014-2020 – Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy", January 2013

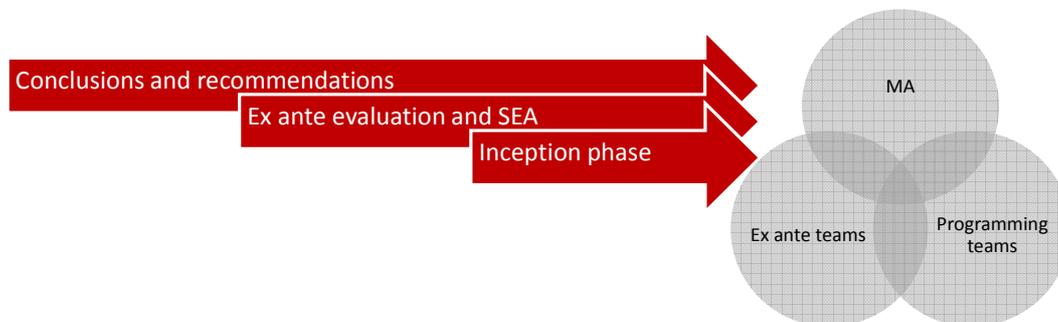


Therefore, the Evaluator will endorse a **flexible attitude**, open to whatever changes and **informative needs** may occur during the evaluation exercise.

In this context, the activities developed within the Interim Phase has allowed the Evaluators to give a **preliminary responses to some Evaluation Questions (EQs)** given in the “Terms of Reference” and to draw **provisional recommendations** addressing Programme’s needs, challenges and possible bottlenecks.

1.2 The evaluation process and coordination with the Managing Authority

The process of ex-ante evaluation considered as a whole has been divided into **three main integrated phases strictly linked and characterized by a continuous collaboration and sharing with the MA and programming teams.**



1. **Inception phase** aimed to better outline the structure of the ex-ante evaluation and SEA pathways, taking into account the concrete needs of MA and other relevant stakeholders as well as the **evaluation questions** exemplified in the “Terms of reference” and addressing the whole evaluation exercise. Methods and techniques has been further specified in the **Inception Report** and timing has been detailed in the up-dated time schedule duly shared with the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development;
2. **Analysis of the ex-ante evaluation components and SEA** aimed to give **timely feedbacks** throughout the programming process. This phase includes the assessment of the proposed Programme’s strategy, in terms of both external and internal coherence, and the related financial allocation; the efficiency of the monitoring system envisaged; the adequacy of foreseen human resources and administrative capacity for the management of the Programme. These tasks imply a preliminary **overview of primary and secondary information sources** (the first directly collected by the Evaluator and the second already existing) and the use of a **mix of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools**. To do so, the Tenderer has worked in close cooperation with the experts in charge of drafting the OP and has taken into account evaluation recommendations of past and current programming periods with the aim to **learn from experience and capitalize CBC**

Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia results. Activities developed within this phase allowed the Tenderer to draw **provisional recommendations** about possible bottlenecks. Results of these activities will be included in **the present Draft Report**, outlining main findings and conclusions and providing recommendations for improvement;

3. **Conclusions and recommendations** based on evidence. Bearing in mind the utility of the ex-ante evaluation and in line with the iterative process described above, the **final results** of the analysis developed will be summarized by conclusions and will be the basis for **clear recommendations addressing proposed Programme’s needs and challenges**. The main objective of this phase is to ensure **full and adequate responses to evaluation questions** to improve and strengthen the quality of the new OP. All the above will be part of the **Final Ex-Ante Evaluation Report (including SEA)** and will be subject to final approval.

Besides those three main phases, the ex-ante evaluation will also include the **management phase** and the **communication phase** aimed to **disseminate ex-ante evaluation’s main findings and results**.

For compiling this Draft the main source of assessment has been desk analysis on monitoring data coming from secondary sources of information. The following table shows the main documents investigated by the Evaluator.

Sources of information	
Programming Docs	
Thematic Concentration (Expert Proposal)	28 th March
Description of the CBC Programme Region	31 st March
SWOT Tables	31 st March
Intervention Logic	31 st May
OP Draft	16 th June & 8 th July
Partnership involvement Reports	
Reports on Consultative Forums	February/March and 4 th June
Report on Online Survey	February
Evaluation	
Final Evaluation Report – Ongoing evaluation of IPA CBC 2007-2013 managed by the Republic of Bulgaria	15 th October 2013



2 The ex ante evaluation

2.1 Designing the Programme

2.1.1 Lessons learnt from 2007-2013 period

At the end of 2012 the Programme has spent 61,45% of its budget (late contracting of the first call projects, delays in the execution of some of the contracts and in the verification of expenditure because the late setting of the FLC system in the fYRoM)

Conclusions and recommendations on going evaluation	Status in the new Programme
STRATEGY	
Clear demarcation between spheres of interventions and between Priority axes to be ensured	☺
All tourism related actions to be programmed under one sphere of intervention only	☺
A border region tourism strategy to be elaborated, which outline destinations and services with highest potential for tourism development, to identify priorities and to integrate tourism projects that will be supported	☺
INTEGRATION AND RESPECT OF HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES	
Indicators to be broken down by gender, where possible	☺
VALUE ADDED OF COOPERATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT	
The MA to consider the creation of thematic working groups for identification of information needs, discussion of project ideas and priority projects, and collection of good practices from other countries	☺
The MA to consider giving priority to projects, proposing strengthening or extending of existing networks and building on successful projects;	☺
The support to projects that over rely on external expertise and fail to provide for building sufficient capacity of the partner organisations to be limited	NV
The requirement of the evaluation for mandatory inclusion of soft actions under the investment projects to be reconsidered, as it leads to support of soft actions with low level of sustainability	☺
QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT GENERATION, SELECTION AND CONTRACTING PROCESS	
MA to consider the establishment of a system similar to PADOR	NV
CVs of administrative staff not to be requested with the Application forms	NV
MA to consider the introduction of restricted calls for proposals	NV



Conclusions and recommendations on going evaluation	Status in the new Programme
QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION RULES AND SYSTEM	
To consider replacement of Quarterly reports not related to payments by short project progress briefs, submitted by email	NV
MA to consider lifting of the requirement for separate notification of the minor changes in the time schedule of activities and to require they to be described in the progress report	NV
The MA to consider simplifying the procedure for single tenders, allowing use of local language and simple tender documents	NV
The MA to consider the translation of the Project Implementation Manual into the languages of the participating countries	NV
The MA to consider longer training on procurement for less experienced beneficiaries	NV
The MA to consider the publishing of a Document on most frequently made mistakes in project implementation that will to some extent prevent similar errors by the 2 nd and 3 rd call beneficiaries	NV
The MA to ensure regular payment of national contribution	NV
The MA to consider the preparation of bilingual tender dossiers for competitive negotiated and local open tender procedures	NV
The Administrative costs to be separated from Staff costs, and Staff costs separated from external services and experts	NV
The MA to use simplified budget options in the next programming period to the extent, allowed by the basic act	NV
In the new programming period to be followed the methodology for reporting of project achievement, developed by INTERACT	NV
QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME MONITORING SYSTEM	
MA to review and correct, where necessary, the indicators of the 2 nd call projects and to establish a system for verification of project level indicators prior contracting of at the beginning of project implementation for 3 rd call	NV

Legenda ☺ Accepted ☹ Partly accepted ☹ Not accepted NV Not evaluable



2.1.2 Involvement of stakeholders in the Bulgaria – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 design

One of the main innovations introduced by the regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 programming period is represented by the identification of **partnership** as the main **instrument for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy** and for executing public policies promoted by the Community Strategic Framework (CSF). In this regard, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) n.1303/2013 states that each Member State shall organize, for defining the Partnership Agreement and each Programme, a partnership representing institutions, political, economic and social entities working in their territories, with the objective to **develop strategies and propose actions really adhering to the needs and demands of those directly and indirectly involved in the program**, ensuring, at the same time, the **strengthening of a sense of collective ownership of Community policies**.

The involvement of stakeholders also encourages the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the preparation and implementation of strategies, increasing the **effectiveness and transparency of decision-making processes**. Moreover, the same art. 5 gives the Commission "the power to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 149, to establish a European code of conduct on the Partnership (the " Code of Conduct ") defining objectives and criteria to support the implementation of partnership and facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, results and good practices between Member States. This code of conduct rules, in particular, the active involvement of stakeholders throughout the life cycle of programs: preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The iterative process leading to the drafting and final submission of the IPA CBC OP to the European Commission has been featured by the active participation of relevant stakeholders of the CBC area and namely has been implemented with municipalities, regional and national administrations, regional NGOs, Universities and other relevant institutions.

So far, it mainly consisted of 3 main steps:

- A 1st round of consultative forums held in both regions aiming aims of which were to inform the stakeholders and discuss priorities and actions;
- An online forum in order to get further inputs for the OP;
- A 2nd consultative forum mainly to present the preliminary outcomes of the programming process

The following table illustrates the events organised for drafting the OP and their related main objectives and outcomes.



Date	Event	Objectives	Output	Main outcomes
Strumica (MK) 26.02.2014 Stip (MK) 27.02.2014 Kumanovo (MK) 28.02.2014 Kyustendil (BG) 06.03.2014 Blagoevgrad (BG) 07.03	Consultative Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inform regional stakeholders in all 5 program districts about the ongoing process and main findings present and discuss the thematic priorities discuss potential actions relevant for addressing the needs and challenges 	Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participants have been informed discussion for selection of priorities request for co financing of the government feedback need on unsuccessful applications certain difficulty in financing innovation projects need for a project preparation period scarce interest in technical documentation projects need for indicators on investments projects, need for tangible results, 20% contribution for projects outside the region
3-14.02.2014	On-line survey	Gathering expectations about scope and contents of the forthcoming CBC programme	Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all relevant bodies have reacted to the investigation (National authorities, local authorities, civil society and private individuals) Transport infrastructure highlighted in the questionnaires has not been considered as priority because financed by other funds
Strumica (MK) 04.06.2014	Second Consultative Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inform regional stakeholders on the status of the programming and results of the forums and selected priorities present the proposal of IL present and discuss SOs, Results and examples of activities as well as indicators present and discuss type of actions and cross cutting issues 	Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participants informed discussion on IL and other components IL of TP on Tourism agreed upon difficulties in the definition of some activities and output indicators strategic projects not to be identified at this stage

Each of the previous phase has lead to an improvement of the IL and of the OP.



Nevertheless, a further step of this process has been implemented by the MA which has handed out the Draft of the Programme in order to gather additional comments to its designing. This happened on the 20th of June through the consultation

Date	Event	Objectives	Output	Main outcomes
20/06/2014	Consultation on the first Draft of the IPA CBC Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme 2014-2020	Collecting comments and contributions on the proposed draft OP	Revised draft of OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further definition of the Programme

2.1.3 Conclusions and recommendations on the involvement of stakeholders and national administrations

Given the abovementioned information, it appears that, although figures about all relevant stakeholders are unknown, the response has been satisfactory in terms of participation. This can be confirmed also by the gender equality based participation which seems to have been, so far, encouraged and implemented.

It must be considered as positive also the use of different methods: namely workshops and online tools. Considering the latter, satisfactory figures appear from the on line survey, though the tool has been available in a short time frame.

The involvement of stakeholders seems to have raised a few concerns on procedural issues which need to be addressed when defining the interventions.

2.2 Programme strategy

As for the Programme strategy the following table shows the preliminary judgements of the Evaluator in order to answer to the relevant EQs according to a scale from high to low.

Evaluation questions' check list	
Are the identified national or regional challenges and needs in line with the Europe 2020 objectives and targets, the Council recommendations and the National Reform Programmes?	H
Do the investment priorities and their specific objectives consistently reflect these challenges and needs?	H
Were the key territorial challenges analysed and taken into accounts in the programme strategy?	H
Are the identified challenges and needs consistently translated into the objectives of the OP (i.e. the thematic objectives, the investment priorities and corresponding specific objectives)?	H



H high M medium L low

2.2.1 External coherence including contribution to Europe 2020

The ex ante evaluator is in charge of assessing the coherence of the Programme with the national or regional challenges and their relation with the specific objectives, as stressed by the European Commission within the “Guidance document on the ex-ante evaluation” of January 2013. The following tables represent the **ex ante evaluation initial outcomes** with reference to the **external coherence assessment**, identifying **direct and indirect link** of Programme specific objectives to the main European, national and regional policy frameworks.

The following table synthesizes the main outcomes of the analysis stemming from the answers to related evaluation questions

Evaluation questions' check list	
Is the programme coherent with other relevant instruments at regional, national and EU level?	H
Based on the evaluator's knowledge of the national and regional situation and taking into account the size of the programme, what is the potential contribution of the programme to Europe 2020 objectives and targets?	H

H high M medium L low

As it appears from the answers, the Programme seems to cope with the requirements in terms of satisfactory and effective contribution to other strategies and instruments at different levels.



Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020	Europe 2020						
	Smart Growth			Sustainable Growth		Inclusive Growth	
	Digital Agenda	Innovation Union	Youth on the move	Resource efficient Europe	An industrial policy for the globalization	An Agenda for new skills and jobs	European platform against poverty
SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area	+	++	+	+++	++	++	+
SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	+	+++	+	++	+++	++	+
SO 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	+	+	++	++	++	+++	+
SO 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	++	++	+++	++	+++	+++	++
SO 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	+	+	++	++	+++	+++	++
SO 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses	++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	++

+++ high ++ medium + low



According to Article 55 (3)(a) of CPR, the evaluators should assess “the contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, having regard to the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account national and regional needs.”

The following tables, highlighting the interaction between the Programme and the three related frameworks (EU, Bulgarian and Macedonian), must be read having the Specific Objective as leading element, the achievement of which would produce a direct or indirect impact on the elements in row.



EU Strategic Framework	Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020					
	Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives					
	TP 2 Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management		TP 4 Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage			TP 7 Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of SMEs, trade and investment
	SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area	SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	SO 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	SO 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	SO 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	SO 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses
ETC	✓	✓	✓	✓	D	✓
EUSDR	D	D	✓	✓	✓	D
INTERREG	D	D	✓	D	✓	D
Horizon 2020	D	D	✓	✓	✓	D
LIFE	D	D	D	✓	D	✓
COSME	✓	✓	✓	D	✓	D
CMCP	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓

Legenda: D=Direct contribution; ✓= indirect contribution

As from the table, it appears that regarding its coherence with the EU framework, the Programme is likely to produce many positive effects on the principle strategies operating in Europe.

As for the integration with other instruments as ESIF/CSF and URBACT, it appears that more information, actually not available from the documents, should be needed to provide the MA with relevant comments.

Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020						
Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives						
BG Strategic Framework	TP 2 Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management		TP 4 Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage			TP 7 Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of SMEs, trade and investment
	SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area	SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	SO 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	SO 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	SO 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	SO 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses
NDP Bulgaria 2020	D	✓	D	✓	D	✓
PA	D	✓	✓	✓	D	D
PP	D	✓	✓	✓	D	D
OPs ⁴	D	D	✓	✓	D	D

Legenda: D=Direct contribution; ✓= indirect contribution

As for the coherence with the Bulgarian framework, the Programme shows an attitude of being even more relevant for the achievement of certain national and regional aims. This appears to demonstrate the correct definition of the Priorities to be implemented.

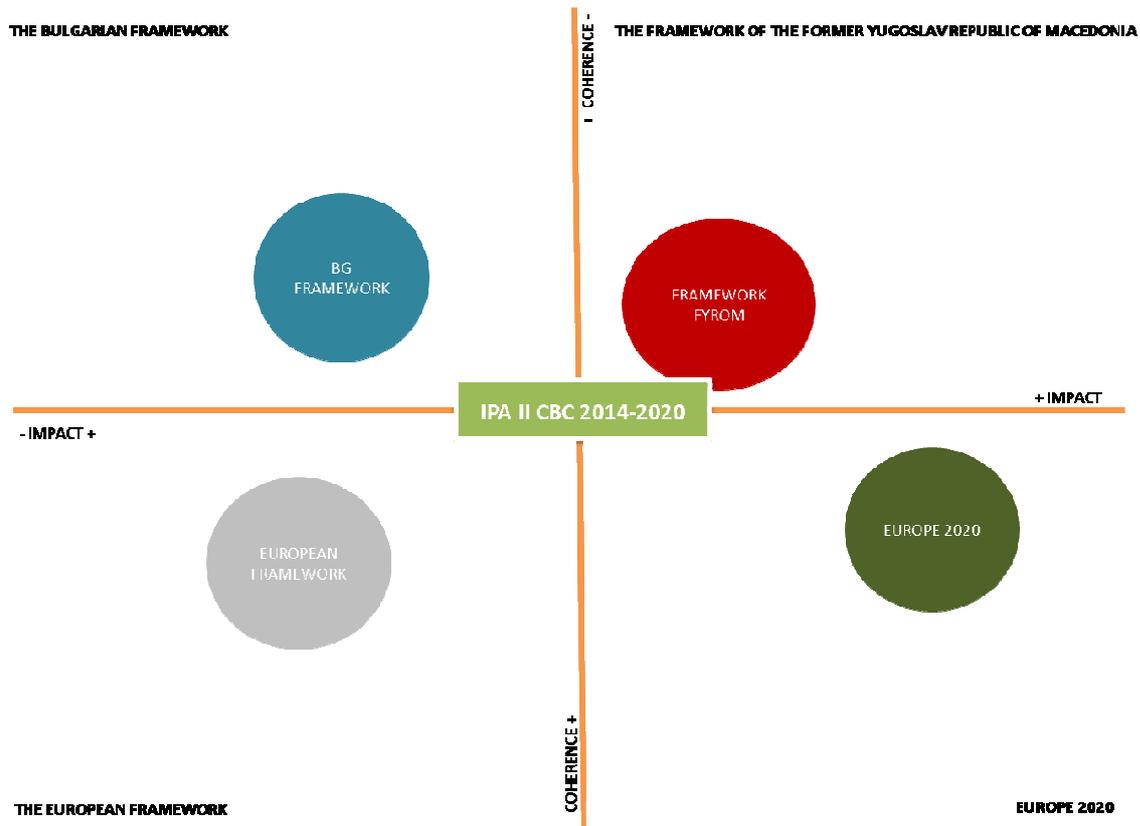
⁴ Human Resources Development, Environment, Transport and Transport Infrastructure, Innovation and Competitiveness, Science and Education for Smarth Growth, Regions in Growth, Good governance, Rural Development Programme



The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Strategic Framework	Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA II Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives					
	TP 2 Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management		TP 4 Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage			TP 7 Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of SMEs, trade and investment
	SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area	SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	SO 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	SO 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	SO 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	SO 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses
SRD of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2009-2019	D	D	D	✓	D	✓
NPAAC 2014-2016	D	D	✓	D	D	D
CSP	D	✓	✓	D	D	D

Legenda: D=Direct contribution; ✓= indirect contribution

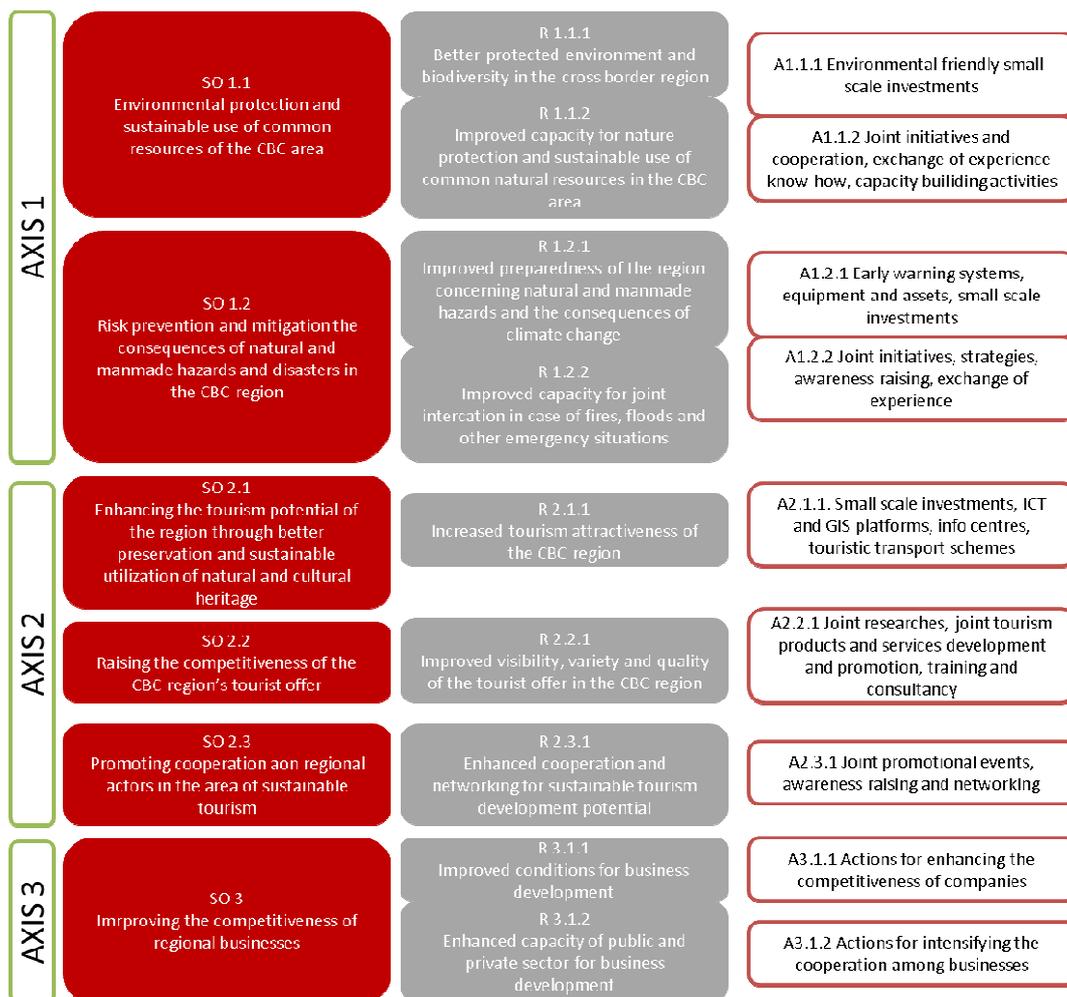
As far as the coherence of the Programme with the Macedonian framework is concerned, it appears to be, by far, the highest. That appears to confirm the particular attention given by the programming team and the MA towards this country's and its actors' needs in defining the Intervention Logic



The figure illustrates the coherence and impact of each of the framework and relative elements taken into consideration for the analysis and it is based on the level of linkage assessed with the IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme.

2.2.2 Internal coherence

In order to implement the analysis in subject, the Evaluator has, preliminary, tested the existing links between objectives so as to assess the synergies of the IL defined by the MA and the programming team.



The hierarchy of objectives for each priority axis will be summarized through **tree-diagrams** showing different levels of objectives and clearly demonstrating relationships or lack of links between them (see Picture above). Relations between objectives will be further assessed by using a **cross-objectives analysis table** for estimating the intensity and direction of links between objectives at the same hierarchy level as shown in the table below. The aim of this exercise is to determine the degree of influence and sensitivity for each objective, while assuring the absence of contradictions. As a matter of fact, objectives having no influences on the others will be neutral towards their achievement, other objectives might be strategic to each other, while objectives with high degree of influence will be considered as leverage points of the programme. The following tables, highlighting the interaction between the Programme's SOs, must be read having the Specific Objective in column as leading element, the achievement of which would produce an high, medium or low impact on the elements in row.

Objectives	SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area	SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	SO 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	SO 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	SO 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	SO 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses
SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area		+++	+++	++	++	++
SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	+++		+	++	++	++
SO 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	+++	++		++	++	++
SO 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	+	+	+++		++	+++
SO 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	++	+	+++	+++		+++
SO 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses	+	+	++	+++	+	

Legenda: +++ high; ++ medium; + low

The analysis seems to suggest a few preliminary considerations. In general it would be appropriate to clearly recall the cooperation aim in the definition of the SOs so as to enable and ease their logic connection to each other. Given the high correspondence detected by the matrix, the Evaluator underlines two elements on which focus a further examination:

- A merging of SO 2.1 and 2.2 in order to avoid possible overlapping and unclear accountability;
- Reconsider the definition of SO 3.1 for empowering its link with other SOs.



Actions	Action 1.1.1	Action 1.1.2	Action 1.1.3	Action 1.1.4	Action 1.1.5	Action 1.1.6	Action 1.2.1	Action 1.2.2	Action 1.2.3	Action 1.2.4	1.2.5 Action	1.2.6 Action	1.3.1 Action	Action 1.3.2	Action 1.3.3	Action 1.4.1	Action 1.4.2	Action 1.4.3	Action 1.4.4	Action 1.4.5	Action 1.4.6	
	Objectives																					
SO 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+	+	+++
SO 1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	+++	+++	+++	++	+	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+	+	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++

Legenda: +++ high; ++ medium; + low

A similar exercise has been, then, conducted for the examples of actions so far envisaged for each SO. As shown by the 1st table, the related examples of actions appear to have a good consistence for the achievement of the related SOs

Actions	Action 2.1.1	Action 2.1.2	Action 2.1.3	Action 2.1.4	Action 2.1.5	Action 2.1.6	Action 2.1.7	Action 2.1.8	Action 2.1.9	Action 2.2.1	Action 2.2.2	Action 2.2.3	Action 2.2.4	Action 2.2.5	Action 2.2.6	Action 2.2.8	Action 2.3.1	Action 2.3.2	Action 2.3.3	Action 2.3.4	Action 2.3.5	Action 2.3.6
	Objectives	Restoration and maintenance of touristic sites of historical and cultural importance	Conservation and protection of tangible and intangible natural, historical and cultural heritage	Rehabilitation of access roads to natural, cultural and historical touristic sites	Building of new and/or reconstructing or upgrading of existing cycling routes and walking paths	Building of new and/or rehabilitation and upgrading of tourist attractions	Public utilities upgrade related to touristic sites	Development of cross border transport schemes to touristic sites	Establishment and reconstruction of info centres and/or kiosks to guide potential visitors	Development of facilities for access to or in the tourist sites for disabled people	Elaboration and implementation of joint thematic routes and thematic tourism clusters	Development of new/alternative/sustainable tourism products and services	Joint actions, tools and initiatives for the promotion of the cross border tourist products	Promotion and branding initiatives on themes and in areas related to joint crossborder tourism products	Joint elaboration and implementation of plans for development of tourism activities, new tourist destinations and experience	Joint initiatives to improve the service quality in tourism	Support to start up initiatives for exploiting local assets to create new tourism products and services	Awareness raising campaigns on all levels on issues related to sustainable utilization and promotion of the region's intangible cultural and natural heritage	Creating/developing/strengthening of joint networks for exchange of good practices in sustainable tourism management	Developing/implementing joint policies, strategies, training and capacity building events for the valorization of the cultural and natural heritage through its restoration and promotion for sustainable economic uses	Organization of various joint cultural events for the promotion of the region's cultural identity	Creating networks for addressing youth initiatives in the border area, incl. the participation of young people in cultural initiatives
SO 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	+++	+++	++	+++	++	+	+	++	+	++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+
SO 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++
SO 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	+	+	+	++	+	+	+++	++	+	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+	+	+++	+++	+++	+++	+

Legenda: +++ high; ++ medium; + low

Some examples of actions appear to be potentially overlapping to each other, though they are quite cross cutting. It would be preferable to reconsider their merging in some cases. A tendency to identify actions umbrella in which specific interventions can be envisaged should therefore be appreciated.

Actions	Action 3.1.1	Action 3.1.2	Action 3.1.3	Action 3.1.4	Action 3.1.5	Action 3.1.6	Action 3.1.7	Action 3.1.8	Action 3.2.1	Action 3.2.2	Action 3.2.3	Action 3.2.4	Action 3.2.5
	Objectives	Support to joint start up and self employment initiatives	Support for the development of cross border business clusters	Support to social enterprises and social entrepreneurship	Joint approaches for promoting innovations in businesses	Promoting and implementing of joint business development training and capacity building schemes	Introduction of programmes for cooperation and exchange of experience in modern managerial practices	Joint initiatives for export promotion; organization and participation of cross border fairs, exhibitions, trade missions; joint	Joint initiatives and exchange of experience for stimulating the growth of innovative/higher added value industries	Joint initiatives for investments promotion	Exchange of experience and good practices for boosting the economic development of the region	Cooperation between business and the educational institutions in the field of technology transfer and the promotion of knowledge based	Creating networks for enhancing the employment potential of young people, women and vulnerable/marginalized groups
SO 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++

Legenda: +++ high; ++ medium; + low

The examples of actions are all intensively coherent with the SO. Although this confirms the forcefulness of the choice made so far, the Evaluator suggests to further define the actions so as to make the picture of the IL fully clear and consistent with the financial allocation.



The following table highlights the outcomes stemming from the exercise illustrated in the pages above.

Evaluation questions' check list	
Have complementarities and potential synergies been identified between the specific objectives of each priority axis, and between the specific objectives of the different priority axis?	H
Actions to be supported	
Are the proposed actions to be supported in each priority axis, including the main target groups identified, the specific territories targeted and the types of beneficiaries sufficiently described?	M
Do the proposed actions take into account the (non-exhaustive) list of key actions provided in the Common Strategic Framework?	H
Outputs and results	
Will the proposed actions lead to the expected outputs and intended results?	M
Were external factors that could influence the intended results identified (e.g. national policy, economic trend, change in regional competitiveness, etc.)?	M
Are the policy assumptions underpinning the programme logic backed up by evidence (e.g. from previous experiences, evaluations or studies)?	H
Do other possible action or outputs exist that would be more conducive to the intended results?	M
The rationale for the form of support proposed (based on Article 55 (3f))	
Are the proposed forms of support suitable to for the types of beneficiaries and the specific objectives of the programme?	H

H high M medium L low

2.2.3 Horizontal principles

Evaluation questions' check list	
Has the principle of equality been taken into account? Are the planned measures adequate to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination?	M
Are the planned measures adequate to promote sustainable development?	H

H high M medium L low

As for the horizontal principles, the Evaluator, though considers satisfactory the existing approach of the OP as it is, suggests to further develop them into both actions' and SOs' definition and/or aims.

The table below aims at highlighting how the Programme tackle with those challenges.

Sustainable development
Specific Objective
1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of common natural resources of the CBC area
1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region
2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation & sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage
Expected results
Increased capacity in using common natural resources
Increased interventions in the field of risk prevention and management
Increased joint initiatives related to risk prevention and management
Increased public awareness regarding tourism and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources
Actions
Environmental friendly small scale investments
Joint initiatives and cooperation, exchange of experience know-how, capacity building activities
Joint initiatives, strategies, awareness raising, exchange of experience
Small scale investments, ICT and GIS platforms, info centres, touristic transport schemes
Joint researches, joint tourism products and services development and promotion, training and consultancy
Actions for intensifying the cooperation among businesses
Equal opportunities and non discrimination & Equality between men and women
Specific Objective
2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism
3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses
Expected results
Increased created/supported joint tourism products and services
Increased cross border business networks created or extended
Increased awareness on the business opportunities offered by the region
Actions
Joint promotional events awareness raising and networking
Actions for enhancing the competitiveness of companies

Source: ex ante Evaluator



As shown by the table, the Programme seems to have considered the horizontal issues in defining its action. This is particularly evident regarding the Priority 1 and 2 strictly related to a sustainable development, while the horizontal themes related to social inclusion are tackled in a more cross cutting way.

2.3 Indicators, monitoring and evaluation

2.3.1 Relevance, clarity and measurability of proposed programme indicators

As relevant part of the document delivered on the 30th June, the Evaluator had assessed the proposed set of indicators: herewith some general comments stemming from that assessment are shown.

General comments from the Draft Report	Acceptance of the Programme
As far as the indicators system as a whole is concerned, it must be noticed that the suggestion of resorting only to quantitative data is very appealing though challenging in different ways: it requires, in fact, a reliable and efficient monitoring system especially at project level. In this sense it is also important to stress that a common understanding of the data (indicators) to be monitored should, therefore be mandatory in order to fully achieve this objective. Nonetheless, such an approach needs the logical links between specific objectives (result indicators) and actions (output indicators) to be clear and undisputed so as to enable the quantification of results from quantitative data;	☺
Apart from what stated above, it appears that a cooperation programme could not completely avoid to measure qualitative aspects (such as the awareness). To this end it seems appropriate to reflect on proper data source which could be cost effective;	☺
Regarding the results indicators they seem, in some cases, not well defined (hence not clearly linked to their correspondent result/s) and/or too overlapping the related results (which sometimes appear underestimated – whereas they cannot be compared with previous performances – and/or too vague or overambitious). For these reasons, the approach of having one result indicator for each expected result may not always be exhaustive. Finally it appears more appropriate a monitoring which is not too ambitious (e.g. yearly) and that is in any case according with the state of implementation of the actions;	☺
As for the output indicators, they seem to be too many and not always exhaustive to measure the actions achievements. In this sense a clear distinction between typology of actions (investments, soft measure and people2people measure yet very well defined) could enhance the identification of useful and SMART output indicators. As it is now, in fact, some of the output indicators identified should be better classified as result indicators;	☺
Moreover, it appears important to underline that in order to double check the system, it is essential to have a deep look into the final budget allocation for each SO. The final figures would surely enable a sound assessment not only of baseline and target values, but also of the relevance of the results identified.	☺

Legenda ☺ Accepted ☺ Partly accepted ☺ Not yet accepted

2.3.2 Methodology applied

From the methodological point of view, the ex-ante Evaluator has focused his analysis on the observation of the degree of **coherence between objectives and indicators**, following the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach which states that the role of indicators is “to describe general and specific objectives and results in operational terms. By specifying indicators as quantifiable measures, they act as instruments aiming to control the objectives’ achievement and represent the base for the monitoring system”. According to the PCM’s approach, a good indicator has to be **objectively verifiable**, allowing the examination of different levels of objectives in an operational, concise and reliable way⁵.

It is therefore essential for indicators to have an **explanatory power** representing a suitable benchmark for the formulation of an assessment about the degree of effectiveness of the intervention taken into consideration. Given these premises and taking into account the objective of verifying the suitability of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020’s proposed set of indicators, the Evaluator had recourse to methodological instructions known in scientific literature as the **S.M.A.R.T.**⁶ indicators. The acronym stands for:

- **Specific** for the objectives that the indicator aims to observe;
- **Measurable** both in quantitative and qualitative terms;
- **Available** at reasonable costs;
- **Relevant** with reference to the informative needs expressed by Programme’s joint management structures and significant stakeholders;
- **Time-bound**.

To analyse proposed result and output indicators, the Ex-ante Evaluator took in to account not only indicators’ formulation, but also the overall information given in the Draft OP, such as measurement units, baseline and target values, source of data as well as frequency of reporting. Moreover, to make the analysis more usable, the ex-ante Evaluator found it appropriate to specify the meaning of the S.M.A.R.T. criteria by linking them to objective assessment parameters that were given a specific score (from 1 to 3) as shown in the Table below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE S.M.A.R.T. CRITERIA’S METHODOLOGY

S.M.A.R.T. Criterion	Assessment parameter	Maximum score
Specific Indicator related to the objectives that intends to measure and able to give useful and appropriate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the indicator give appropriate information relating to the objectives that it intends to measure? (1 point) • Is the indicator significant? (1 point) • Is the indicator clear and easily understandable? (1 point) 	H
Measurable Indicator suitable to be quantified, observed and analysed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the indicator be observed through a clear measuring method/instrument? (1 point) • Can the indicator be numerically quantified? (1 point) • Can the indicator be measured through primary or secondary informative sources? (1 point) 	H
Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the indicator be measured through available 	H

⁵ European Commission, EuropeAid – Project Cycle Management Guidelines, 2004.

⁶ *Ibidem*



DESCRIPTION OF THE S.M.A.R.T. CRITERIA'S METHODOLOGY

S.M.A.R.T. Criterion	Assessment parameter	Maximum score
The information used to quantify the indicator are available at reasonable costs	information? (1 point) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the necessary information available at reasonable costs according to the "saving principle"? (1 point) • Are the necessary information easily achievable? (1 point) 	
Relevant Indicator able to measure the phenomenon for which it has been proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the indicator suitably measure the analysed objectives? (1 point) • Does the indicator give information about the characteristics and the added value of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme? (1 punto) • Is the indicator connected to the informative needs of the Programme's joint management structures and relevant stakeholders? (1 point) 	H
Time-bound Indicator duly put into temporal bounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the indicator be referred to punctual span of time? (1 point) • Is the indicator repeatable? (1point) • Can the indicator be processed, fastly and easily updated with reference to the objectives analysed? (1point) 	H

Explanatory score list: 1=LOW, 2=MEDIUM, 3=HIGH

Source: elaboration by the ex-ante Evaluator

The following Tables show the results of the analysis on both result and output indicators per Priority axis, following S.M.A.R.T. criteria.

The overall judgment on each indicator's suitability to proper monitor Programme's achievements is expressed through smileys:

- **smiling** meaning that the indicator is **highly S.M.A.R.T.**;
- **straight** stands for indicator that are **still good**, but might need some fine-tunings;
- **sad** describing indicators, which are **not fully suitable** for assessing expected results.

2.3.2.1 Protecting environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management

In the Draft Report delivered on the 30th June the Evaluator had made a number of comments related to the then identified set of indicators.

Comments	
<p>As for the Specific objectives, the SO1a appear to be quite ambitious containing two expected results: one related to the protection of nature sites and the other related to a better use of natural resources. In this sense, the Evaluator suggest to maintain them separate and consequently build around them appropriate result indicators (namely “increased number of supported nature sites” - to be measured in terms of n. of sites that have implemented related actions’ outputs and/or n. of sites that have been protected through the use of related actions outputs – and “increased capacity in using common natural resources” – to be measured through indicators such as n. of people trained on common natural resources use and/or n. of joint measures on common natural resources use implemented). The monitoring of these indicators could be based on the monitoring system and, given their quantitative nature, they could be quantified on a yearly basis.</p>	☹
<p>As for the actions related to this SO (better to its two expected results) as explicated in the Annex, they could be more clearly linked to the results (and related indicators) and to appropriate outputs indicators whether they would be aggregate into 3 main typology (investments, soft measures and people2people measures) so as to enable a clear understanding of the intended achievements. The characterization of the actions could therefore be guaranteed by the definition of detailed output indicators which could specify some elements (e.g. targets, subjects, typology of people/bodies, etc.).</p>	☹
<p>As far as SO1b is concerned, it appears that the actual related expected results must be better defined in order to capture the real objective of the Programme (the second appears to be a specification of the first one). To this end they could be featured in a more understandable and proper way by associating to each a given element (e.g. preparedness to prevention and risk management related to infrastructure, to training, to public bodies, etc.). would be this the approach, the second expected result (R1.2b) could be associated to the raising of awareness of the territory for the protection and risk management (so related more to people2people actions) and consequently be measured through qualitative surveys. Hence, the frequency of reporting may not be guaranteed on a yearly basis.</p>	☹

Legenda ☺ Accepted ☹ Partly Accepted ☹ Not yet Accepted

As stemming from the table, though it seems that there could be more room for further improvements, the set of indicators in subject appears to having developed in a more coherent and efficient way since its first version. Consequently to this analysis, the Evaluator has assessed the new set.



PRIORITY AXIS 1 – ENVIRONMENT: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON RESULT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Result Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of the common natural resources of the CBC area	R1.1.1 Better protected environment and biodiversity in the crossborder region	RI1.1.1 Increased supported nature protected sites	H	H	H	H	H	☺
	R1.1.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources	RI1.1.2 Increased capacity in using common natural resources	H	H	H	H	M	☺
1.2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	R1.2.1 Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and manmade hazards and the consequences of climate change	RI1.2.1 Increased interventions in the field of risk prevention and management	M	M	H	H	M	☺
	R1.2.2 Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	RI1.2.2 Increased joint initiatives related to risk prevention and management	H	H	H	H	H	☺

Legenda ☺ High Smartness ☹ Medium Smartness ☹ Low Smartness

All indicators appear to be specific and relevant while some issues arise about the Measurability and Time bound as far as intangible results as concerned: however this concern, common for those kind of results can be overcome during the implementation of the programme.

PRIORITY AXIS 1 – ENVIRONMENT: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON OUTPUT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Action	Output Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of the common natural resources of the CBC area	Environmental friendly small scale investments	OI1.1.1 Number of supported investments for improving the environmental conditions in the programme region	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI1.1.2 Number of nature protected areas addressed by supported interventions	H	H	H	H	H	😊
	Joint initiatives and cooperation, exchange of experience know-how, capacity building activities	OI1.2.1 Number of supported joint mechanisms for environmental protection ,promotion of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI1.2.2 Number of institutions/organizations involved in environmental related actions	M	H	H	M	H	😊
1. 2 Risk prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and manmade hazards and disasters in the CBC region	Early warning systems, equipment and assets, small scale investments	OI1.3.1 Supported investments for improving disaster management and risk prevention	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI1.3.2 Supported investments for adaptation and mitigation of climate change consequences	H	M	H	H	H	😊
	Joint initiatives, strategies, awareness raising, exchange of experience	OI1.4.1 Supported joint mechanisms for disaster management and risk prevention and for promotion of climate change awareness	H	M	H	H	H	😊
		OI1.4.2 Number of institutions/organizations involved in initiatives related to risk prevention and management	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI1.4.3 Number of participants in trainings and campaigns in the field of risk prevention (including marginalized communities and other vulnerable groups)	H	H	M	M	M	😊

Legenda 😊 High Smartness 😊 Medium Smartness 😊 Low Smartness

All indicators appear highly relevant and as far as their measurability is concerned it could be surely better defined looking at the specific activities behind the actions.



2.3.2.2 Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage

As for the previous priority the Evaluator has taken in consideration what had suggested in the Draft version of the Report.

Comments	
Regarding the SO2.1, the actual result indicator cannot be considered as such. The Evaluator suggests to change it with a different one (e.g. number of visitors in natural, historical and cultural sites supported).	☹
The SO2.2, instead actually appear not too clear and, therefore, distinctive from the previous one. To this end – and to enable the intended linking between levels of indicators – it would be useful to feature more clearly the two above mentioned SOs connecting the first mainly to infrastructural investments while the other to small investments and soft measures. Would this be the adopted approach a suitable result indicator for SO2.2 would be n. of visitors using sustainable touristic products, n. of touristic businesses selling sustainable touristic products, etc.).	☹
Finally, for the SO2.3 and its result indicator, which appears to be related to the public awareness, the comments stated above could for R1.2b be recalled.	☺

Legenda ☺ Accepted ☹ Partly Accepted ☹ Not yet Accepted

Also in this case the synergic exchange between Evaluator and Programming team appears to have enabled a proficient development of the set of indicators

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – TOURISM: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON RESULT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Result Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	R2.1.1 Increased tourism attractiveness of the CBC region	RI2.1.1 Increase of tourists to the cross border region	H	M	H	H	M	☺
2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	R2.2.1 Improved visibility, variety and quality of the tourist offer in the CBC region	RI2.2.1 Increased created/supported joint tourism products and services	H	M	H	H	M	☺
2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	R2.3.1 Enhanced cooperation and networking for sustainable tourism development potential	RI2.3.1 Increased public awareness regarding sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	H	M	H	H	M	☺

Legenda ☺ High Smartness ☹ Medium Smartness ☹ Low Smartness



PRIORITY AXIS 2 – TOURISM: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON OUTPUT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Action	Output Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through better preservation and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	Small scale investments, ICT and GIC platform, info centres, touristic transport schemes	OI2.1.1 Number of cultural and historical touristic sites reconstructed/restored/covered by conservation and protection actions	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI2.1.2 Length of new or reconstructed or upgraded access roads to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites, cycling routes and walking paths	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI2.1.3 Number of newly built or reconstructed or upgraded tourist related facilities and attractions	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI2.1.4 Number of created /reconstructed facilities for disabled people for access to or in the supported touristic sites	H	H	H	H	H	😊
2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	Joint researches, joint tourism products and services development and promotion, training and consultancy	OI2.2.1 Number of joint touristic products, services, brands, thematic routes	H	M	H	H	M	😊
		OI2.2.2 Number of actions, tools and initiatives developed and/or implemented for promotion of sustainable tourism potential of the eligible border area	H	M	M	H	M	😊
		OI2.2.3 Number of participants in joint trainings and qualification initiatives in the field of sustainable tourism	H	H	H	M	H	😊
2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	Joint promotional events, awareness raising and networking	OI2.3.1 Number of cross border networks established or strengthened in the field of sustainable tourism	H	M	H	H	H	😊
		OI2.3.2 Number of cultural events held for promoting the region's cultural identity	H	H	H	H	H	😊
		OI2.3.3 Number of participants in youth initiatives	H	H	H	H	H	😊

Legenda 😊 High Smartness 😊 Medium Smartness 😊 Low Smartness

The indicators appear to well monitor the kind of interventions to be implemented covering a wide variety of aspects. Nevertheless their actual and punctual measurability must be empowered through detailed project forms.



2.3.2.3 Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of small and medium sized enterprises, trade and investment

A preliminary analysis on acceptance of previous suggestions has been implemented also for the third priority

Comments	
Finally, analyzing the SO3 appears that its expected results could be better implemented through networking activities (both soft and people2people measures) therefore monitored in an appropriate way	☺
As for the first expected result, it could be useful to utilize an indicator such as n. of cross border business networks created.	☺
As for the second expected result, concerning awareness, the same comments given before are valid. Related considerations about monitoring data and frequency are given in the Annex.	☺

Legenda ☺ Accepted ☹ Partly Accepted ☹ Not yet Accepted

In the case of the competitiveness the Programming team appear to have taken particularly in consideration the comments provided by the Evaluator in the previous version of the Ex ante Evaluation Report.

PRIORITY AXIS 3 – COMPETITIVENESS: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON RESULT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Result Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses	R3.1.1 Improved conditions for business development	RI3.1.1 Increased cross border business networks created or extended	H	M	H	H	M	☺
	R3.1.2 Enhanced capacity of public and private sector for business development	RI3.1.2 Increased awareness on the business opportunities offered by the region	H	M	H	H	M	☺

Legenda ☺ High Smartness ☹ Medium Smartness ☹ Low Smartness

Given the aims of such a priority, the indicators assessed appear to show an high volatility as regards their Time bound and Measurability. However, as analysed in the previous pages this concern may be overcome during the implementation of the Programme.

PRIORITY AXIS 3 – COMPETITIVENESS: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON OUTPUT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Action	Output Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses	Actions for enhancing the competitiveness of companies	OI3.1.1 Supported investments for improving the competitiveness of businesses in the programme region	H	M	H	H	H	☺
		OI3.1.2 Supported joint start-up and self-employment initiatives	H	M	H	H	M	☺
		OI3.1.3 Number of participants (split into men and women) in supported training and qualification initiatives	H	H	H	H	H	☺
	Actions for intensifying the cooperation among businesses	OI3.2.1 Supported initiatives for economic development and investment promotion	H	H	H	H	M	☺
		OI3.2.2 Number of cooperation networks	H	M	H	H	H	☺

Legenda ☺ High Smartness ☹ Medium Smartness ☹ Low Smartness

2.3.3 Quantifying the baseline and targets of IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The process of setting targets is a difficult and risky task, especially when the effects are of intangible nature. The following pages illustrates the path towards the identification of targets for the results indicators of the Programme together with a preliminary assessment of the figures identified for both results and output indicators. Taking advantage of the first version of the Programme delivered on the 16th June, the Evaluator had developed some tables in which ad hoc comments are highlighted and, hence, a proposal for new indicators aiming at avoiding the criticalities detected is drawn. Following this exercise the Programming team has further developed those tables.

Priority axis: environment. Specific result indicators: Programme 16th June

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting	Comments
R-1.1 Better protected environment and biodiversity in the cross-border region	RI-1.1 Increased number of guest nights in the CBC region	Number		2013		AIRs	Annually	The indicator is not in line with the results expected from the Programme. On propose to replace it with a more appropriate indicator: "Increased number of supported nature sites", measured in terms of n. of sites that have implemented related actions outputs and/or n. of sites that have been protected through the use of related actions outputs. The monitoring of these indicators could be based on the monitoring system and, given their quantitative nature, they could be quantified on a yearly basis.
R-1.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	RI-1.2 Increased number of joint initiatives related to nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources	Number		2013		AIRs	Annually	The indicator is not in line with the results expected from the Programme. On propose to replace it with a more appropriate indicator: "Increased capacity in using common natural resources", measured in terms of n. of people trained on common natural resources use and/or n. of joint measures on common natural resources use implemented. The monitoring of these indicators could be based on the monitoring system and, given their quantitative nature, they could be quantified on a yearly basis.
R-2.1 Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and environmental hazards and the consequences of climate change	RI-2.1 Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management	Number		2013		AIRs	Annually	It could be better to associate the indicator to each a given element (e.g. preparedness to prevention and risk management related to infrastructure, to training, to public bodies, etc.). The monitoring of these indicators could be based on the monitoring system and, given their quantitative nature, they could be quantified on a yearly basis.
R-2.2 Improved capacity for	RI-2.2 Increased number of joint	Number		2013		AIRs	Annually	This indicator appears to be a specification of the previous. On propose to replace it with



Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting	Comments
joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	initiatives related to risk prevention and management							"Joint initiatives related to nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources/ Total initiatives related to nature protection". The baseline can be calculated with survey and the frequency can be 2015, 2019, 2023. The target will be calculated from the baseline and the number of actions to be implemented.



Priority axis: environment. Specific result indicators: proposal for a modified table

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-1.1 Better protected environment and biodiversity in the cross-border region	RI-1.1 Increased number of supported nature sites	N. of sites that have implemented related actions outputs and/or n. of sites that have been protected through the use of related actions outputs	To be established	2014	Increase	Monitoring system	Annually
R-1.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	RI-1.2 Increased capacity in using common natural resources	N. of people trained on common natural resources use and/or n. of joint measures on common natural resources use implemented	To be established	2014	Increase	Monitoring system	Annually
R-2.1 Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and environmental hazards and the consequences of climate change	RI-2.1 Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management related to infrastructure (specifying the theme: infrastructure, training, etc.)	N. of interventions supported in the field of risk prevention and management related to specific theme	To be established	2014	Increase	Monitoring system	Annually
R-2.2 Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	RI-2.2 Joint initiatives related to nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources/ Total initiatives related to nature protection	Percentage	To be established	2015	Increase	Survey among target groups	2015 2019 2023



Priority axis: environment. Specific result indicators: Programme 8th July

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-1.1 Better protected environment and biodiversity in the cross-border region	RI-1.1 Increased number of supported nature sites	%	To be established	2014	Increase	Survey/Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
R-1.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	RI-1.2 Increased capacity in using common natural resources	Scale for measurement of capacity (1-10)	To be established	2014	Increase	Survey	2018 2023
R-2.1 Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and environmental hazards and the consequences of climate change	RI-2.1 Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management related to infrastructure (specifying the theme: infrastructure, training, etc.)	%	To be established	2014	Increase	Survey/Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
R-2.2 Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	RI-2.2 Joint initiatives related to nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources/ Total initiatives related to nature protection	%	To be established	2015	Increase	Survey/Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023

As it appears clear from the tables, the progressive interaction between programming team and evaluator has enabled the development of a clearer set of information. Nonetheless, some issues still arise when looking at the last table: as regards measurement unit for instance it must be clarified how the scale for measurement of capacity will be defined, while it is essential to identify as soon as possible the baseline value so as to define the target (Increase). As for the latter, given the methodology identified for the definition of the baseline, it is important to implement it accordingly to the table (2014) so as to confirm the frequency of reporting or re arrange it consequently.



Priority axis: tourism. Specific result indicators: Programme 16th June

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting	Comments
R-2.1 Increased tourism attractiveness of the CBC region	RI-2.1 Increased number of guest nights in the CBC region	Number		2013		Statistical data	Annually	The value of the baseline should be updated to 2014. The target is related to the number of initiatives that will be developed on the subject. It could be add the indicator "Percentage of tourist attractions accessible to people with disabilities and / or participating in approved programs in terms of accessibility." This indicator aims to analyze the issue of equal access for people with disabilities. The baseline data should be available c / o national agencies operating in the tourism. The target is related to the number of initiatives that will be developed on.
R-2.2 Increased contribution of tourism to the regional economy	RI-2.2 Increase in contribution of tourism sector to regional GDP	Percentage		2013		Statistical data	2018 2023	The indicator appear to be quite ambitious: it seems hard to find local and sectorial data to estimate the contribution of tourism to regional GDP in a specific area.
R-2.3 Enhanced cooperation and networking for sustainable tourism development potential	RI-2.3 Increased public awareness regarding tourism and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	Percentage		2013		Survey	2018 2020 2023	It's possible to add a further indicator "Percentage of tourist attractions adopting a policy or plan of protection of cultural heritage." The baseline data should be readily available c / o national agencies operating in the cultural heritage. The target is related to the number of initiatives that will be developed on the subject.

Priority axis: tourism. Specific result indicators: proposal for a modified table

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-2.1 Increased tourism attractiveness of the CBC region	RI-2.1.a Increased number of guest nights in the CBC region	Number	To be established	2014	Increase	Statistical data	Annually
	RI-2.1.b Percentage of tourist attractions accessible to people with disabilities and / or participating in approved programs in terms of accessibility	Percentage	To be established	2014	Increase	National statistics on Tourism (BG & MK)	Annually
R-2.2 Increased contribution of tourism to the regional economy	RI-2.2 Increase in contribution of tourism sector to regional GDP	Number	To be established	2014	Increase	Estimate on statistical data	2018 2023
R-2.3 Enhanced cooperation and networking for sustainable tourism development potential	RI-2.3.a Increased public awareness regarding tourism and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	Percentage	To be established	2015	Increase	Survey among target groups	2018 2023
	RI-2.3.b Percentage of tourist attractions adopting a policy or plan of protection of cultural heritage	Percentage	To be established	2014	Increase	National statistics on Cultural heritage (BG & RS)	Annually

Priority axis: tourism. Specific result indicators: Programme 8th July

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-2.1 Increased tourism attractiveness of the CBC region	RI-2.1.1 Increase of tourists to the cross border region	%	To be established	2014	Increase	Statistics Survey	2018 2023
R-2.2 Increased contribution of tourism to the regional economy	RI-2.2.1 Increased created/supported joint tourism products and services	%	To be established	2014	Increase	Survey and Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
R-2.3 Enhanced cooperation and networking for sustainable tourism development potential	RI-2.3.1 Increased public awareness regarding sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	%	To be established	2014	Increase	Survey and Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023

As far as the tourism priority is concerned, it is possible to draft the same conclusions highlighted for the previous priority, especially regarding the definition of baseline and the consequent target values.



Priority axis: competitiveness. Specific result indicators: Programme 16th June

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting	Comments
R-3.1 Improved conditions for business development	RI-3.1 Increase of the regional GDP	Percentage		2013		National statistics	2018 2023	It's difficult to calculate the contribution of the actions supported to the GDP's growth. Analyzing the SO3 appears that its expected results could be better implemented through networking activities therefore monitored in an appropriate way. It could be useful to utilize an indicator such as: "n. of cross border business networks created"
R-3.2 Enhanced capacity of public and private sector for business development	RI 3.2 Increased awareness on the business opportunities offered by the region	Percentage		2013		Survey	2018 2023	On should specify the target of actors involved in the survey

Priority axis: competitiveness. Specific result indicators: proposal for a modified table

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-3.1 Improved conditions for business development	RI-3.1 N. of cross border business networks created	Number	To be established	2014	Increase	Monitoring system	2018 2023
R-3.2 Enhanced capacity of public and private sector for business development	RI 3.2 Increased awareness on the business opportunities offered by the region	Percentage of actors (to be specify)	To be established	2015	Increase	Survey among target groups	2018 2023

Priority axis: competitiveness. Specific result indicators: Programme 8th July

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-3.1 Improved conditions for business development	RI-3.1.1 Increased cross-border business networks created or extended	%	To be established	2014	Increase	Survey / Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
R-3.2 Enhanced capacity of public and private sector for business development	RI 3.2.1 Increased awareness on the business opportunities offered by the region	%	To be established	2014	Increase	Survey among target groups	2018 2023



The last table confirms what stated above for the other two.

Following the assessment on results indicators, the Evaluator has analysed the output indicators and their related tables as from the Programme in its version of 8th July.

To this end in the following pages a table for each priority illustrating measurement unit, target value, source and frequency of reporting is represented.

As for the information given by the Programme, generally the targets defined appear in line with the financial allocation given in 2007-2013 and the approximate cost established for the implementation of the two kind of intervention (investment and soft measure).

Nevertheless some more information should be needed in order to assess properly the figures defined: for instance it would be interesting to understand the modalities for the definition of the strategic projects to be implemented during the Programme whose number could affect the abovementioned figures.



Priority axis: environment. Output indicators: Programme 8th July

Output Indicators	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OI 1.1.1. Number of supported investments for improving the environmental conditions in the programme region	Number	15	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.1.2 Number of nature protected areas addressed by supported interventions	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.2.1 Number of supported joint mechanisms for environmental protection, promotion of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.2.2 Number of institutions/organizations involved in environmental related activities	Number	20	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.2.3 Number of participants in environmental related trainings and campaigns	Number	300	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.3.1 Supported investments for improving disaster management and risk prevention	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.3.2 Supported investments for adaptation and mitigation of climate change consequences	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.4.1 Supported joint mechanisms for disaster management and risk prevention and for promotion of climate change awareness	Number	3	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.4.2 Number of institutions/organizations involved in initiatives related to risk prevention and management	Number	10	AIRs	Annually
OI 1.4.3 Number of participants in trainings and campaigns in the field of risk prevention	Number	300	AIRs	Annually



Priority axis: tourism. Output indicators: Programme 8th July

Output Indicators	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OI 2.1.1 Number of cultural and historical touristic sites reconstructed/restored/covered by conservation and protection actions	Number	25	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.1.2 Length of new or reconstructed or upgraded access roads to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites, cycling routes and walking paths	Km	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.1.3 Number of newly built or reconstructed or upgraded tourist related facilities and attractions	Number	10	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.1.4 Number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people for access to or in the supported touristic sites	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.2.1 Number of joint touristic products, services, brands, thematic routes	Number	10	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.2.2 Number of actions, tools and initiatives developed and/or implemented for promotion of sustainable tourism potential of the eligible border area	Number	10	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.2.3 Number of participants in joint training and qualification initiatives in the field of sustainable tourism	Number	50	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.3.1 Number of cross-border networks established or strengthened in the field of sustainable tourism	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.3.2 Number of cultural events held for promoting the region's cultural identity	Number	15	AIRs	Annually
OI 2.3.3 Number of participants in youth initiatives	Number	150	AIRs	Annually



Priority axis: competitiveness. Output indicators: Programme 8th July

Output Indicators	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OI 3.1.1 Supported investments for improving the competitiveness of businesses in the programme region	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 3.1.2 Supported joint start up and self employment initiatives	Number	5	AIRs	Annually
OI 3.1.3 Number of participants in supported training and qualification initiatives	Number	150	AIRs	Annually
OI 3.2.1 Supported initiatives for economic development and investment promotion	Number	10	AIRs	Annually
OI 3.2.2 Number of cooperation networks	Number	10	AIRs	Annually

Evaluation questions' check list	
<i>Result indicators</i>	
Does each priority axis include at least one result indicator?	H
Do(es) the result indicator(s) reflect the operations and objectives of the priority axes?	M
Is (Are) the result indicator(s) relevant (e.g. Do they cover the most important intended change? Is their value influenced as directly as possible by the actions funded under the priority axis?)	H
<i>Output indicators</i>	
Are the output indicators relevant to the actions supported?	M
Are the intended outputs likely to contribute to the change in result indicators?	H
<i>Common indicators</i>	
Are the Common indicators used where relevant to the content of the investment priorities and specific objectives?	
<i>Clarity</i>	
Do programme-specific indicators have a clear title and an unequivocal and easy to understand definition?	M
Do the indicators have an accepted normative interpretation (e.g. Is there a common understanding that a change in the value of the indicator is positive or negative?)	H
Are the indicators robust (e.g. Their values cannot unduly be influenced by outliers or extreme values)?	M
Are data source for result indicators identified and available?	M
<i>Baseline and target value</i>	
Where no quantified baseline has been set for a programme-specific result indicator: Is it possible to set a quantified baseline? What is the quantified baseline based on most recent and appropriate data?	M

H high M medium L low

2.3.4 Administrative capacity, data collection procedure and evaluation

This section is intended to analyze the organization of the management system of the Bulgaria-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia CBC IPAll Programme. The ex-ante evaluation is based on the information contained in the draft version of the Cooperation Programme presented in June 2014. It examines the conformity with the relevant regulatory provisions in force, and the functionality and efficiency of the envisioned programme management system. The analysis is containing comments and proposals, mostly based on the experiences of the previous programming period.



Ex-ante evaluation component	Compliance with the regulatory provisions	Functionality of the programme delivery mechanism and structure	Comments
<p>Composition of the Joint Monitoring Committee</p>	<p>+++</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>The indicative list of the members of the JMC is composed of a list of categories of institutions and organizations. This is insufficient for the proper identification and assessment of the relevance of the composition.</p> <p>The high number and heterogeneity of the categories of institutions and organizations envisioned to take part in the JMC impose a risk on the efficiency and functionality in general, and on the decision making process in particular.</p>
<p>Description of the functions and responsibilities of the bodies responsible for the management of the programme</p>	<p>+++</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>In the current version of the Cooperation Programme the description of the management and control system is a compilation of provisions from the relevant European Regulations (with the exception of the Joint Secretariat). Without a more programme specific description the exact functions of the bodies involved in the system cannot be determined.</p> <p>The description of the first level control system in Bulgaria is missing for the moment.</p>
<p>Compliance with the principle of separation of tasks between the</p>	<p>+++</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Since the programme specific tasks of the bodies involved in the management of the programme is not</p>



Ex-ante evaluation component	Compliance with the regulatory provisions	Functionality of the programme delivery mechanism and structure	Comments
management bodies			available, the separation of functions cannot be determined.
Efficiency and functionality of the management and control system	+	+	Due to lack of details, the system cannot be assessed from the point of view of efficiency and functionality

In general, the programme delivery mechanisms and structures are insufficiently described and in many cases not tailored on the Programme's specific character. All the relevant institutions and bodies are included in the description, but their specific role in the Programme is not presented. The lack of description of the programme management and control arrangements under point 5.4 makes it difficult to understand and assess their efficiency and viability.

The clear indication of the role of the Joint Secretariat is especially needed, since its role is not precisely determined within the Regulations. Therefore, it is important to have a presentation of its tasks, especially in relation to the organization of the procedure for selection of operations and of concluding the Subsidy Contracts. The present description should be revised and included under point 5.4.

Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations
Programme delivery mechanisms and structure	
Composition and functions of the Joint Monitoring Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The indicative list of members of the JMC shall identify more precisely which are the institutions and organizations which will take part in the work of the body. - The number of members of the JMC is rather high, and this can affect the efficiency of its functioning in general and of decision making process in particular. Please consider a selection of the most relevant types of organizations, simplifying the structure of the JMC, ensuring in the meanwhile that all relevant institutions and organizations are represented. - The Programme may use the possibility of involving more bodies and/or individual experts in the work of the JMC with advisory role, since they can provide valuable input for the programme coordination.
Description of the functions of the bodies responsible for the management and of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The set up and functionality of the management and control system should be better described. Programme specific information is needed in relation to the functions of the institutions involved - More details are advisable related to the procedure of setting up the Joint Secretariat. - The tasks of the JS should be better outlined, explained and clarified. - The role of the JS in coordinating the work of the controllers is questionable - The role and tasks of the National Authority should be described and explained
Compliance with the principle of separation of tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A brief description of the organization of the most important programme management procedures shall be included in order to have an overview of the system.



Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations
between the management bodies	
Efficiency and functionality of the management and control system	- The description of the management and control system is missing.

Considerations about the *Guiding principles for the selection of operations*

The selection criteria are logically grouped in Strategic Coherence, Operational Quality and Compliance to horizontal principles. Going further into details, the Strategic Coherence makes general comments on the criteria while it's being given "primacy over the other two criteria", without detailing the degree/strength of the "primacy" (vague formulation).

The "Operational Quality" criteria is very well detailed and gives a clear understanding of the appraising procedures, contributing to selecting well designed projects.

The selection criteria for **Strategic Projects** makes general comments on the effects envisaged by the respective initiatives; **more detailed/clearer criteria should have been selected.**

In addition to the considerations reported in the box below, during the 2007-2013 programming period has been stressed the importance of **strategic projects**, with particular reference to cross-border cooperation Programme.

While carrying out on-going evaluations in the 2007-2013 programming period many evaluators underlined the main characteristics that are considered mandatory for defining projects as "strategic" in order to facilitate the MAs in financing and selecting them.

The following table presents the result of the ex ante evaluator exercise on the main issues a strategic project should cover in order to be complete and valuable. These issues are, at the same time, useful as criteria to be applicable in the **quality assessment for the projects' selection criteria.**

A STRATEGIC PROJECT SHOULD...

Main criteria	Sub-Criteria
Impact on the cooperation area	<p>Have a wide and balanced geographical coverage of the cross-border cooperation area</p> <p>Contribute to reduce the unemployment rate in the cooperation area, also in the light of worsening of the socio-economic situation surfacing from the global crisis</p> <p>Address the criticism of lack of statistic information and data available mainly for CC of the cooperation area, in order to pave the way for reaching common settlement patterns between MS and CC in identifying and implementing more effective and strategic territorial/spatial development policies</p> <p>Be directly useful for Local, Regional and National Authorities/other relevant stakeholders and their results should be of benefit for all the cooperation area, directly or indirectly through a wide dissemination strategy</p> <p>Involve Local and Regional authorities as much as possible in the project's strategic life cycle, moreover with the aim to promote a better governance in the area and foster the institutional and administrative capacity as well as the ownership of territorial institutions</p> <p>Take into account the most successful/relevant CBC projects implemented within the framework of ordinary Call for proposal (i.e. through cross-fertilisation activities between common topics; by establishing capitalisation activities in connection with standard projects focused on common topics; by complying missing project types in the portfolio of at present approved projects)</p>
Strong and coherent partnership	<p>Rely on the building of large partnership of key actors in the specific field of intervention, involving decision-makers, thematic experts, specialised bodies and end-users As a result, partnership should refer to a multi-level governance model as well as to a multi-dimensional governance system</p> <p>Have strict relation between project's general and specific objectives and institutional and administrative competences/skills of partners</p> <p>Involve the most relevant partners able and "politically" committed to achieve the envisaged outputs and results; the project partnership must be competent/committed to develop, implement and disseminate jointly elaborated approaches and tools</p> <p>Have representativeness at national level and the linked partnership has to show capacity to mobilise target groups/stakeholders and assure cross-border involvement/role in international networks on the matters addressed by the proposed projects (permanent partnership, beyond specific co-operation projects)</p>
Sustainability of results	<p>Ensure sustainability at institutional level and include statements and activities which will guarantee that the results achieved will be further used and promoted by other Programmes and projects after the end of the project</p> <p>Be sustainable in economic terms, being able to mobilise additional private and/or public funds to pursue, if necessary, its activities after the end of the project</p>
Coherence with European, national and regional policies	<p>Be developed in coherence with the EU, national and regional policies and with existing cooperation initiatives in the area</p> <p>Be built on the basis of a deep knowledge of existing state of art and taking into account former and current public policies and projects implemented within the area, in order to produce real added value related to existing needs</p>



A STRATEGIC PROJECT SHOULD...

Be concretely aimed at supporting specific objectives of mainstream Programmes within the framework of a cross-border dimension (i.e. Regional Operational Programmes, Macro-Regional Strategies)

An **efficient informative monitoring system** is the backdrop for a sound Programme's management. In light of this, it is mandatory to build the informative system, learning from experience, stemming also from similar contexts.

Alongside the abovementioned, the ex ante evaluator provides the MA with a preliminary list of **hints and suggestions** useful for implementing a sound management and monitoring informative system and, besides, for reducing potential administrative burdens on beneficiaries.

Positive factors for an efficient informative monitoring and management system	Evaluator's hints and suggestions
Single Management and Monitoring System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimization of project lifecycle and of its monitoring in progress: from the creation of the proposal to its physical and financial Monitoring
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimization of logging-in timing of potential beneficiaries (unitary User account to send even more than one project proposal/Application Form) ▪ System User-friendliness concerning on-line notification after beneficiaries data-entry ▪ System User-friendliness concerning the financial tables interconnection. They allow crossed checks among different data, automatic calculation in different fields and immediate notification for eventual errors or inconsistencies
Programme Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Granted support to status and Beneficiaries Progress Reports monitoring, related to the developed activities, as well as the inserted financial data ▪ logging-in linearity and traceability of expenditure certifications created by final beneficiaries of the approved projects ▪ Efficiency in Application for reimbursement by the Lead Beneficiary after Declaration and validation of Expenditures as well as in Payment Order from the MA to the CA ▪ Rationalization of the Controls organization on the expenditures (First Level Control and others)

Elaboration by the ex ante evaluator

2.3.5 Measures planned to reduce administrative burden on beneficiaries

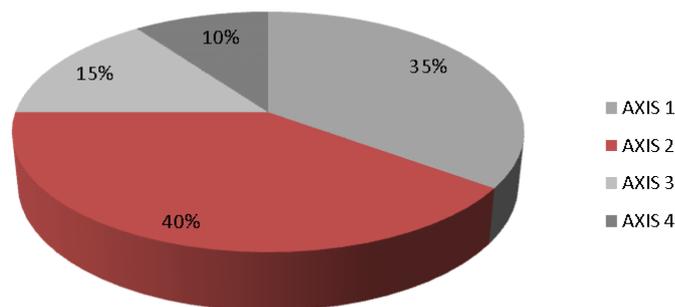
2.3.6 Conclusions and recommendations

Ex-ante Evaluation Component	Conclusions and recommendations
Indicators, monitoring and evaluation	
<i>Relevance of proposed indicators</i>	
<i>Clarity of proposed indicators</i>	
<i>Quantified baseline and target value</i>	<i>See proposal</i>

2.4 Consistency of financial allocation

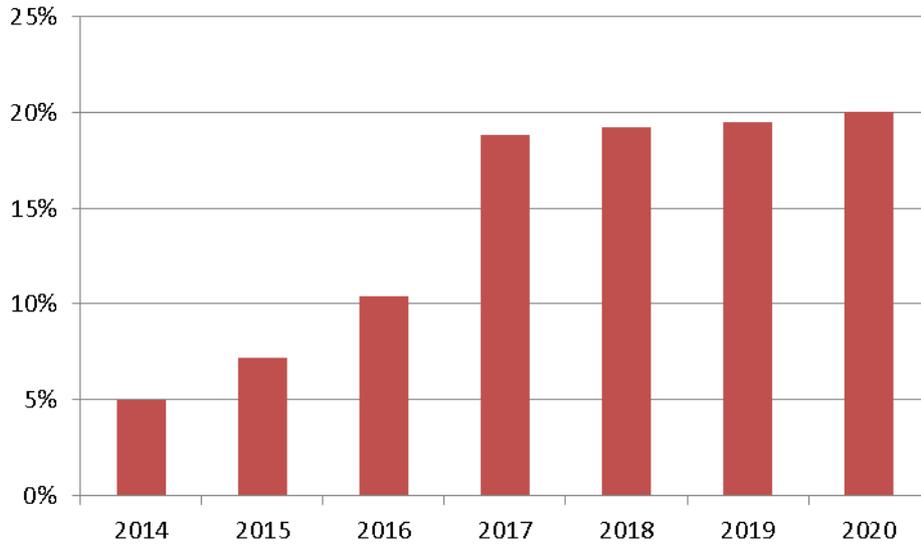
According to Article 55 (3)(c) of CPR, the evaluators should assess “the consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme”.

As it looks now the financial allocation between priorities seems to reflect what has emerged from the Thematic Concentration and the SWOT. Nevertheless a further clarification about the intended interventions/actions (investments versus soft measures) would enable a clearer understanding and proper assessment of the forcefulness of the budget sharing.



The actual figures about n of investment projects and soft measures must, in fact, be clarified to avoid under and/or over estimation and, hence, not to cope with the planned results.

Nevertheless the envisaged trend of expenditure (shown in the following graph), which increases during the years, appears logical, foreseeing possible bottlenecks at an early stage of the Programme implementation;



The following table summarizes the outcomes of the analysis in terms of answers to the related evaluation questions.

Evaluation questions' check list	
Do the financial allocations concentrate on the most important objectives in line with the identified challenges and needs and with the concentration requirements set out in the Regulations?	H
Are the financial allocations to each priority axis and to categories of interventions consistent looking at the identified challenges and needs that informed the objectives as well as at the planned actions?	H
Do the allocations correspond to the selected forms of support?	M
Are the resources coming from different Funds adequately combined?	-

H high M medium L low