

Cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal

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1. STRATEGY FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

The Programme Area

The Greece-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation area for the programming period 2014-2020 is identical to the current ETC programme. It extends to 40.202 km² and has a total population of 2.7 million inhabitants. It covers four territorial units at NUTS II level (Regions), and 11 territorial units at NUTS III level (Districts). The eligible area extends across the entire Greek-Bulgarian border and is neighbouring with Turkey (east) and FYROM (west), both countries aspiring to access to the EU. It is part of the most south-eastern non-insular area of EU, and it is situated between three seas: the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Ionian-Adriatic Sea. Finally, it sits at the crossroad of strategic fossil fuel pipelines supplying the EU market and TEN transport axes.

The settlement structure of the area is characterized by the presence of 10 medium-large cities (>50.000 inhabitants) which accumulate 38,2% of total population, and 25 small cities (10.000-50.000 inhabitants).

Despite the historically relatively small amounts of funds allocated, there is a long history of cooperation in the eligible area, which started with Community initiative INTERREG I (1989-1993).

STRATEGIC PROCESS FOLLOWED TO IDENTIFY COOPERATION PRIORITIES

Thematic Cooperation Priorities for the programme area were identified through a multi-criteria analysis and the consideration of Strategic Guidelines coming from other programming levels (Commission Recommendations, Partnership Agreements, etc.).

The multi-criteria analysis used 6 criteria against which all ERDF Thematic Objectives were evaluated:

1. Cross-border character: it evaluates the degree to which cooperation is necessary to resolve important policy issues of cross-border nature (i.e. not able to be resolved unilaterally) and relevant for the CB area or the degree to which cooperation adds significant value.
2. Continuity: it evaluates whether the thematic objective and its identified intervention areas capitalize on results achieved by previous programming periods.

3. Complementarity: it evaluates the existence of synergies and complementarities with mainstream programmes to be implemented during 2014-2020 in the CB area.
4. Relevance: it reflects the prioritization of needs and challenges in the cross-border area as portrayed in the analysis of the existing situation.
5. Demand: it reflects demand for specific interventions, as evidenced by the consultation process followed for the drafting of the programme.
6. Institutional capacity: it evaluates the existence of established institutional capacity in the border region to implement actions within the thematic objective, as evidenced by the consultation process followed for the drafting of the programme, data from the implementation of the current programme, specific evaluations, etc.

The results of the multi-criteria analysis were then combined with:

- The recommendations from the on-going evaluation of the current programme,
- The Recommendations from the Commission Position Papers for Greece and Bulgaria specifically in the field of cross-border cooperation, as they have been incorporated in the respective Partnership Agreements, and
- The results from 3 distinct consultation procedures:
 - phases A and B of the consultation process followed for the drafting of the present OP,
 - the consultation conducted in 2013 for the Strategic Projects, and
 - a preparatory study conducted by the responsible Greek Ministry in order to identify Strategic Guidelines for ETC programmes.

This process resulted in combined priority rankings for all Thematic Objectives (on a 0-6 scale) as follows:

- Thematic Objective 6: 6
- Thematic Objective 9: 5
- Thematic Objectives 3 & 7: 4
- Thematic Objective 5: 3
- Thematic Objective 8: 2
- Thematic Objectives 1, 4, 10: 1
- Thematic Objectives 2 & 11: 0

KEY CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THE PRESENT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

The present OP addresses challenges in five thematic objectives of Europe 2020:

- Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs,
- Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management,
- Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency,
- Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures, and
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination,

formulated into **four priority axes**. Thematic Objectives 5 and 6 are combined to produce an integrated approach to environmental protection and adaptation to climate change.

Furthermore, “Innovation” and “Institutional Strengthening” permeate all interventions of the programme as cross-cutting themes.

PROGRAMME GOALS AND CONTRIBUTION TO E2020 STRATEGY

The programme is designed to address the main challenges identified by the diagnostic report in the cross-border area where collaboration is either necessary or is expected to produce significant added value by either capitalizing on past results, or by being complementary to mainstream programmes and the “smart specialization” strategies, or by exploiting existing institutional capacities and/or expressed demand. It contributes to E2020 strategy as follows.

With respect to the “smart growth” objective by:

- strengthening the business fabric of the CB area and especially by promoting productivity improvements, export-orientation and the introduction of new products with a special focus on sectors identified by the “smart specialization” strategies,
- by promoting innovation at all levels,
- by promoting resource-efficiency,
- by exploiting the comparative advantages offered by the rich and diverse cultural and natural resources for promoting economic development (tourism), and
- by supporting integration and efficient use of CB transport systems.

With respect to the “sustainable growth” objective:

- by increasing the ability of the CB area to adapt to climate change,
- by reducing CB natural and man-made risks and enhancing the response capabilities of local stakeholders,
- by preserving cultural and natural heritage,
- by protecting and restoring biodiversity and the health of eco-systems, and
- by reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities in the CB area.

With respect to the “inclusive growth” objective:

- by enhancing CB connectivity and hence CB mobility,
- by promoting “access for all” to health care,
- by supporting employability especially for the most vulnerable groups, and
- by developing social entrepreneurship.

The precise problems/challenges that the present strategy is designed to address are highlighted below.

General Level of Development

The Greece-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation area is **one of the poorest in the European Union**, as the GDP per capita is below 50% of the E27 average. This has not changed considerably in the last 10 years, even though short-lived improvements were noted during 2002-2004 and then again in 2006-2009. The CB area is also characterized by large internal disparities, especially as it concerns the dichotomy between Bulgarian and Greek territories. Bulgarian districts exhibit a much lower level of economic development (below ¼) than their Greek counterparts, mainly attributable to the fact that Bulgaria has long been a transition economy.

The 2006-2009 period was marked by economic growth on both sides of the border, as was the general trend all over Europe. After 2009, the global recession effects resulted in slowing down the growth rates in the Bulgarian part (0,25% annually) and in negative growth rates in the Greek part (-9% annually).

Economy

Even though the CB area has been gradually converting from an agricultural/industrial economy to an industrial/service economy, this conversion has been rather slow. Compared to EU27, **the economy remains considerably more agricultural, less industrial, and more service-dependant**. However, this is far from being homogeneous. The Greek CB-area is considerably less agricultural and industrial than the BG CB-area part, and more service-oriented. This heterogeneity is even more pronounced at district level. We can discern 2 types of districts in the BG part, and 3 types of districts in the GR part:

- Blagoevgrad/Haskovo: industry and trade dominated
- Smolyan/Kardzhali: industry and agriculture dominated
- Exros/Drama/Thessaloniki: public administration and industry dominated
- Xanthi/Rodopi: public administration and agriculture dominated, and
- Kavala/Serres: industry and public administration dominated.

More than half of GVA produced in the CB area (59%) is produced in the district of Thessaloniki. All other areas exhibit low percentages. Particularly low percentages are observed in the Bulgarian districts Haskovo, Smolyan and Kardzhali (1-2%).

Some of the noteworthy intra-territorial structural developments that have taken place recently include:

- A gradual conversion between the two parts in terms of the portion of GVA attributable to the primary sector. Still, there remains a large differential between the two sides, with the Bulgarian territories being more heavily agricultural than the Greek territories, and even more heavily agricultural than the national (BG) average.
- A significant diversion between the two parts in the secondary sector, mainly attributable to the considerable losses of industrial activity experienced in the Greek part after 2006 (mainly due to relocations of labour-intensive industries in cheaper neighbouring countries).

Total labour productivity in the CB area is significantly lower than the EU27 avg. (approx. 1/5) and exhibits high differentials between the Greek (32800€/employee) and Bulgarian (5800€/employee) parts. CB area productivity is also below the respective national averages for both parts:

- for the Bulgarian part: ranging from 60% to 78% of the BG national average, and
- for the Greek part: ranging from 60% to 84% of the GR national average.

Tourism – and especially eco-tourism - has long been heralded as the “growth-industry” of the CB area, as it includes a significant number of pristine areas of high ecological value. Yet, it has a rather modest number of accommodation establishments compared to its population (43 establishments/100.000 inhabitants, when the EU27 average is 94), and unevenly distributed. The largest concentrations of accommodation establishments and beds are in the districts of Kavala, Thessaloniki and Smolyan.

Innovation

Both Greece and Bulgaria have outlined national or regional strategies for innovation in the context of “smart specialization”. Yet, **Bulgaria** is lagging far behind the other EU countries and is listed as a “**modest innovator**” in the 2014 “Innovation Union Scoreboard”, while **Greece**, although in a somewhat better position, falls below the EU average and is listed as a “**moderate innovator**”.

Yet, **the CB area possesses significant research facilities** currently which are however not collaborating with each other or with the business community. It also possesses similar productive systems, therefore exhibiting important opportunities for coupling entrepreneurship initiatives with innovation. The critical mass of research centres and other academic structures is located in Thessaloniki with the following fields of excellence: biotechnology, advanced production systems for chemical processes, energy and environmental technologies, information processing, virtual reality, security services, etc. R&D activities in East Macedonia and Thrace are concentrated in the public sector and particularly in the Demokritos University of Thrace (with a unique Genetics Department) and to a lesser degree in the Technical Education Institute (TEI) of Kavala. On the Bulgarian part, most important research infrastructure is located outside the CB area (mainly in Sofia and Plovdiv) and only Blagoevgrad seems to have any significant research structures. The South-West University “Neofit Rilski”- with nine faculties[1] – offers PhD programmes in many liberal arts fields (Education and Pedagogy, Literary Studies and Linguistics, History and Archaeology, Social Sciences, Law, etc. and Arts - with a specializations in choreography and cinema). Of particular importance for the CB area are the programmes in Economics (with a specialization in Tourism), Geography and Environmental Sciences, and IT technologies. Also, in Smolyan there are branches of the In Smolyan there are branches of the "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv with its Technical College and the Varna Free University "Tchernotisets Hrabar".

Climate change

According to the ESPON-CLIMATE project, **the programme area is substantially more vulnerable to climate change both compared to EU 27 and the Greek and Bulgarian national levels** as well. The districts with the highest vulnerability are Thessaloniki, Serres, Kardzhali and Haskovo.

Climate change will have major negative impacts to the CB area. It is estimated that it will affect the majority of the urban centers, by rising the number of heat-wave days to more than 50 by 2071-2100. Natural hazards in the area include flood risk zones (mainly in the vicinity of Nestos/Mesta and Evros/Maritza rivers), wildfire risk areas (mainly in the mountain ranges) and erosion risk areas (especially on the coast). Floods and wildfires can quickly spread across borders and their effective management is of cross-

border importance. Finally the areas with the highest risk of landslides are located in the basin of Maritsa East and in the coal development area in the South-west region. The largest studied landslide is located in the district of Smolyan at the location "Smolyan's Lakes".

In addition, the combined adaptive capacity of the CB area to climate change is similar to the national levels and the lowest in Europe. On the Greek side the district of Thessaloniki and on Bulgarian side the district of Blagoevgrad show a rather high adaptive capacity relative to the national values but still lower than the EU27 average.

Environment

The CB area is **characterized by many and important natural resources**, including a large number of protected natural sites (82 Natura 2000 areas, 6 Ramsar wetlands, etc), many of which are of pristine character. CB landscape consists of densely forested mountains, straits of rivers, valleys, plains, lakes, coastal wetlands, seashores and river deltas. The area comprises the mountain ranges of Rila, Pirin and Rhodopi, featuring outstanding forests, the cross-border rivers Strymon (Struma), Nestos (Mesta), Ardas (Arda) and Evros (Maritsa) and more than 400 kilometers of coastline. These important natural resources **have not been sufficiently exploited for development purposes in the past**.

In terms of the state of the environment, industry is among the major polluters on both parts of the border, and pollution hot-spots are concentrated in southwestern Bulgaria and near the Kavala urban area. **Both cross-border rivers - Nestos and Evros - are polluted** with urban as well as industrial effluents (e.g. BOD). The major problems in the management of urban wastewater result from the **lack of sewage treatment infrastructure** in settlements between 2,000-10,000 inhabitants. The problem is more acute on the Bulgarian portion of the CB area. In Bulgaria only 46% of the population is covered by wastewater treatment systems and most of the treatment capacity (71%) is located in the Danube and Black sea river basins (which are outside the CB area). On the Greek portion 88% of the population is covered by wastewater treatment systems.

Accessibility

The area possesses significant transport infrastructures. It is served by three ports of national/international importance (the Thessaloniki port, the double port of Kavala and the port of Alexandroupolis) and three main airports (the International Airport "Makedonia", at Thessaloniki, the Airport "Great Alexander" at Kavala and the Airport "Democritus" at Alexandroupolis), all of them on the Greek side.

The **most important transport infrastructure is the road network** and overall connectivity has improved significantly in the past:

- with the construction of the Egnatia motorway and several vertical axes connecting Greece to Bulgaria and
- the construction of large portions of motorways A3 and A4 in Bulgaria.

Nevertheless, lower-level roads are at various stages of disrepair (especially on the Bulgarian part) making **interconnections difficult and reducing mobility especially in the mountain ranges**. At the same time, several Egnatia vertical axes as agreed in the Transnational Agreement between Greece and Bulgaria in 1998 are still missing or under

construction (such as the connection of II-86 to the Greek transport system) and the motorways on the Bulgarian part are incomplete.

The area is deficient in terms of railway and multi-modal infrastructure (despite the existence of important ports and airports). Both Greece and Bulgaria have been recently investing in the CB area railway network but it requires considerable investment which is outside the financial capabilities of the present programme. This heavy dependence on road transport also increases considerably the environmental footprint of transport activities in the area, especially at the border crossings (e.g. long lines of trucks) and especially during the tourist season. Last but not least, the area lacks accessible public transport for people with disabilities and cross-border public transport services.

Labour Market, Poverty and Social Inclusion

While in 2007 unemployment rates for the CB districts were on the average near or below the national rates and below the EU27 average rate, unemployment started to rapidly increase – especially in Greece - soon after the wake of the economic crisis in 2008 reaching record high levels in 2013. The Bulgarian districts succeeded to keep unemployment rates near or lower than the EU27 average. Currently, the high disparities among the CB districts have not dissipated. The latest data exhibit the following **high unemployment rates (2013): Xanthi 37,5%, Drama 36,8%, Thessaloniki 32,1%, Serres 22,9%, Kavala 22,8%, Evros 22%, Smolyan 20,3% and Rodopi 16,8%.**

In addition, long term unemployment rates have increased sharply - especially for the Greek regions - after 2009, indicating a **risk of large structural unemployment** which in turn implies the existence of inefficient labour markets and a mismatch between labour market demand and the available skills and locations of the workers seeking employment. According to the ESPON DEMIFER project the CB area shows significantly higher values of long-term unemployed persons compared to the EU27. Youth unemployment rates display similar trends and are attributed to the lack of economic growth, the rigid labour market, and the mismatch between potential employee skills and employers' needs in Greece and Bulgaria.

In addition, the CB area exhibits **considerably higher than EU27 percentages of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion** (3-4 times higher). The main reason for the large divergence is the comparatively higher long term unemployment rates, and the higher share of people living in areas with low work intensity and low income levels. With respect to the latter, the share of people living in areas with low work intensity has been rising since 2010 in Bulgarian and Greek territories alike.

The large number of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the CB area is also attributable to the **presence of various vulnerable groups** such as minorities, internal migrants, asylum seekers and foreign persons under subsidiary protection. The higher risk of poverty and social exclusion among these groups is primarily connected to long-term unemployment and economic inactivity.

The rising incidence of poverty has many social consequences, one of which is the **deteriorating public health conditions**. Even though the CB area enjoys the availability of basic health care resources (e.g. hospitals and doctors) at levels near, or even better in several cases, than the EU27 average, the average life expectancy is lower than EU27 levels and many epidemiological indicators record higher values. Overall, Greek districts have exhibited higher life expectancy than Bulgarian districts in the past, but since

poverty forces more people to resort to hospital care (more than a 20% increase has been documented in Greece after 2010), it appears that Greek districts may be more at risk of deteriorating health care conditions in the near future, thereby lowering overall public health levels in the CB area.

LESSONS LEARNT AND CAPITALIZATION OF PRIOR PROGRAMME EXPERIENCE

According to the findings of the on-going evaluation of programme Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013, the elements of the current programme with the highest added-value include:

- a better geographic concentration of resources (more resources directed to the CB area in total and to the smaller population centers) than through the mainstream programmes;
- approximately 1/3 of implemented projects being of genuine cross-border character (i.e. projects that would not be able to produce results through unilateral action), a rate which nevertheless needs to increase in the new programming period; and
- important intangible benefits received by the beneficiaries from the cooperative nature of the projects (such as “exchange of good practice”, “capacity building”, “joint strategies”, etc) as well as the gain of respect and trust between the cooperating partners and access to wider networks of cooperation.

However, the rate of capitalization of prior experiences in the current programme has been very low (reported by only 1.5% of beneficiaries) due to the lack of joint projects in previous programming periods (i.e. 2000-2006). Hence, capitalization on project results from the 2007-2013 period becomes of foremost importance. This conclusion was reinforced by a programme beneficiary survey, which demonstrated that the “knowledge gained” from the projects implemented and the “contacts established” are valuable results beneficiaries intend to use in the future.

The programme on-going evaluation also showed that – due to the orientation and due to the limited financial resources – the programme cannot solve the CB area major problems and can only be seen as complementary to mainstream programmes. Hence it needs to concentrate on major challenges of a CB nature such as:

- more movement of people and goods (i.e. open borders and increased accessibility);
- integration of the cross-border area in terms of social services, educational levels, living conditions, streamlining administrative procedures and systems, etc.;
- joint defence mechanisms against exogenous threats to the area; and
- the environmental and climate-change issues.

A decisive variable in this respect is the capacity of local stakeholders to implement the types of cooperative projects necessary. Public sector stakeholders exhibit a high exposure and experience due to their increased participation in current programme interventions as well as their involvement in other programmes. Greek beneficiaries seem to be more experienced than their Bulgarian counterparts, even though this result has not

been corroborated. However, socio-economic stakeholders and the private sector seem to have an advantage of being in a position to attract staff with higher education and skills levels. Overall, approximately half of CB area stakeholders are assessed as satisfactorily/highly competent to implement CB interventions which implies that CB area stakeholders are in a position to implement large, complex projects. This conclusion is reinforced by the good absorption rates of the current programme.

According to the on-going evaluation recommendations, the new programme needs to focus on fast “return-on-investment” policies. Therefore it should contain:

- more projects building on already existing systems, knowledge and infrastructure than projects building new ones;
- more projects producing tangible results; and
- more genuinely joint projects as they tend to create a higher CB added-value.

In order to accomplish this, the project selection process and the programme monitoring system need to be designed accordingly, i.e. content-related project selection criteria should receive a higher weight[2] than implementation-related criteria. Proper implementing procedures are already in place, project officers are highly experienced and the JTS has already implemented a risk appraisal and management system which needs to continue. The programme should actively attract other types of final beneficiaries apart from public entities (such as socio-economic actors and civil society organizations). Finally, strategic projects need to be opened earlier in the new programming period (we recommend 2018) so that the results are available by the start of the following programming period.

With respect to specific thematic areas, the most important conclusions from the current programme are as follows.

Entrepreneurship, competition and innovation

The current programme has not concentrated enough on boosting the competitiveness of the local economic systems through the use of innovation. Even though 15 projects contained actions networking businesses to research centers only 4 projects directly targeted research and technology transfer actions. As the CB area belongs (according to the RIS3 guide) to the “peripheral regions *with* structural inertia, de-industrialization trends, and lacking strong research strengths and international connections[3]”, the main policy strategy must “stimulate knowledge absorption (by the business community) and help regional research actors take first steps in international cooperation”. In other words, the focus of 2014-2020 policy should be in the incorporation of already existing technologies and innovation into the production structure – in order to increase productivity, improve product quality and reduce production costs - and the international networking and cooperation of the local research institutes in order to improve their capacity for the production of innovation in all fields of excellence. The outcomes from the strategic project on “smart specialization” strategies need to be taken into account in this respect.

The development of entrepreneurship was mostly done through targeted business improvement services - including sectoral studies and product certification (60%), and electronic platforms and web applications (40%).

Social conditions and unemployment.

The current programme has spent a fair amount of resources to stimulate employment and labour mobility in the CB area. The vast majority of the projects concerned support structures – mostly training, and some employment matching services. Employment was addressed indirectly – through the development of entrepreneurship – (see above). The overall impact of these interventions on employment has never been measured, as there were no impact assessment studies conducted.

During the programme implementation period, unemployment rose to unprecedented levels due to the economic crisis. Under these conditions, the expansion of economic activity is the only policy option certain to produce long-term sustainable results. One part of this policy can be implemented through the incorporation of innovation in the dominant economic sectors of the CB area (see above). The second part of this policy will need to aim at the creation of new business activity in the area, concentrating on labour intensive economic activities.

The final constituent of this policy area deals with the spread of poverty and social inclusion. The current programme has addressed health-related issues to a large extent and to a much lesser extent issues related to vulnerable groups (e.g. disabled people, etc). 30% of projects targeted epidemiological issues (e.g. studies, labs, prevention programmes), another 30% dealt with health policy and the prevention of health risk factors (safe driving, children obesity, environmental health risks, safe food supply) and 30% with common health systems (including e-health) and sharing infrastructures. Only a small portion of programme resources was directed to vulnerable groups (such as Roma, people with disabilities, etc)

As poverty has increased in the CB area during the last years, the new programme needs to concentrate more resources, especially as vulnerable groups are concerned.

Environment

The current programme devoted a large part of its resources to environmental protection but mostly to promotion. Twenty-five projects contained such actions 40% of which had as ultimate objective either the promotion of natural heritage for tourist development purposes or raising the quality of life (such as development of recreational sites) or public awareness raising on environmental issues. This outcome is directly linked to the fact that most programme beneficiaries come from the public sector. Other thematic areas – which attracted less attention - included:

- civil protection (28%);
- integrated water management (12%);
- energy (8%);
- biodiversity protection (4%); and
- integrated waste management (4%).

Future programmes will need to devote larger portions of resources for the environment as overall resources for environmental protection will become scarcer due to fiscal adaptation policies on the Greek side. Risk management and energy efficiency are important issues for the development of all economic activities in the area and need to be continued. Past experience shows that resources for biodiversity protection need to be

earmarked in order to increase the share of programme actions targeted in the area. Last, but not least, the new programme needs to:

- promote more comprehensive/holistic interventions - instead of incremental actions - in biodiversity, management of ecosystems and natural resources, and risk management/prevention; and
- link energy efficiency to competitiveness and innovation interventions.

[1] Faculties of Law and History, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Economics, Pedagogy, Philology, Philosophy, Arts, Public Health and Sports and a Technical College

[2] Due to the results-based orientation of cohesion policy in 2014-2020, the criteria that relate to project results – e.g. SMART indicators – need to receive higher weights. The same applies for the “project design” criteria, in which we need to add the project “intervention logic”.

[3] With Thessaloniki as the only exception.

1.1.2 Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities, having regard to the Common Strategic Framework, based on an analysis of the needs within the programme area as a whole and the strategy chosen in response to such needs, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure, taking into account the results of the ex-ante evaluation

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
03 - Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators	The cross-border area despite its scientific and socio-economic potential has had very poor results in innovative entrepreneurship. The links between the research community and businesses have overall been very weak. Existing entrepreneurship support centres are mainly concentrated in the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki while in other areas are virtually non-existent or very weak to have a broader impact.
03 - Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in	Businesses in the cross-border area have been rather slow in expanding their activity to the other side of the border. The borderline remains a barrier and business activity remains vastly local. Significant

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)	innovation processes	opportunities for innovation remain unexploited because of the limited geographical scope of the economic activity that deprives businesses of the necessary market size to support substantial innovation.
05 - Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems	The CB area is susceptible to severe flooding and extensive forest wildfire risks. Additional risks affecting the area include: erosion (especially for the coastal area) and landslides in some areas.
06 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage	The CB area is characterized by a richness of cultural and natural heritages, which can be used in order to address common challenges caused by external driving forces such as demographic change, economic pressures due to globalization, etc. Development of joint strategies and concepts to capitalize on opportunities can produce a CB added value. In the past, the competitive advantages provided by the rich natural and cultural resources have only been partially addressed (i.e. in relation to the promotion of localized eco-tourist activity).
06 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure	CB area biodiversity and ecological connectivity (e.g. migration patterns) require cross-border approaches. Also, the importance of some of CB area ecological resources (such as bird sanctuaries) imply a particular responsibility for their preservation within Europe. CB co-operation potential for this investment priority has not been fully exploited in previous programming periods.
06 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency	This investment priority presents significant opportunities for the programme to capitalize on previous results. Resource efficiency (especially with regards to water resources) and the use of innovative

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
	in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution	technologies aiming at protecting the environment has been identified as a long-standing strategic priority for the CB area. Its significance becomes even more important in view of the high vulnerability of the CB area to the effects of climatic change (which will increase pressures on water resources and on the natural environment).
07 - Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes	The CB area – despite the significant improvements achieved in the recent years through the construction of motorways – still lacks sufficient north-to-south interconnections. The secondary network connections to the area motorways is particularly insufficient and in a bad state of repair. Multimodality is almost non-existent as well as public transport means accessible to persons with disabilities.
07 - Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility	Environment is one of the most valuable CB area resources and environmental protection is of the highest priorities at all levels, including transport. Reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities is hence of the utmost importance.
09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based	CB area health status indicators have not been satisfactory for a long time despite the satisfactory levels (in terms of quantity) of healthcare infrastructure in the area, indicating a lack of effectiveness of such resources. The rise of poverty in the CB area now places more pressure on health care systems. Improving their effectiveness is hence of paramount importance. At the same time, economic recession and disinvestment prevent many CB area inhabitants from gaining access to healthcare services (lack of health-care

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
	services	insurance coverage).
09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9c - Providing support for social enterprises	The rise of poverty in the CB area places vulnerable groups at increased risk of peril. Social entrepreneurship has been successfully used to alleviate such problems in other EU regions/Member States but has not been sufficiently developed in the CB area.

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (i.e. Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

The financial allocation to each thematic objective (TO) corresponds to the importance of each TO for the cross-border area, as it was adjusted to account for the varying cost of typical interventions under each TO. The following figures represent the financial resources devoted to each thematic area exclusive of the resources for Technical Assistance.

Environment represents the highest priority for the CB area as documented both by the analysis of the existing situation and the partnership process during programme development. It is also a critical factor for the growth of a key economic sector: tourism. Environment is currently under pressure both from man-made activities (pollution, accidents, etc) as well as from the climate change. In order to preserve the area environmental resources in as much as possible pristine state, while at the same time exploit them for the development of sustainable tourism, the programme allocates to Priority Axis 2 almost 1/3 of programme resources. More specifically, TO 6 activities receive almost 22% and TO 5 activities close to 11%.

Transport (TO 7) – which together with entrepreneurship represent the third highest priority for the CB area – receives an increased amount of resources (over 26%) due to the significantly higher cost of the interventions foreseen under IP 7b. In addition, increased accessibility is expected to contribute to other programme objectives as well (such as entrepreneurship and economic development through the growth of tourism).

Social inclusion (TO 9) and entrepreneurship (TO 3) – which represent the second and third highest priorities for the CB area respectively – receive close to 19% and 16% of

programme resources respectively. Social inclusion and especially the combat against poverty is also expected to benefit from entrepreneurship interventions as well, hence rising the total impact of programme resources.

Thematic Objectives 3, 6, 7, and 9 together represent 83.1% of total programme resources, thus contributing to the concentration of resources.

The concentration of programme resources to a few thematic priorities (5 in total), and scaled according to the relative weight of each TO (in terms of CB area need and in terms of unit cost of typical intervention) increases the impact and effectiveness of EU policy.

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme

Priority axis	ERDF support (€)	Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme (by Fund)			Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Result indicators corresponding to the specific indicator
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)		
1	17,638,598.00	16.00%	0.00%	0.00%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 03 - Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 1 - To improve support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs, focused on cross-border cooperation. ▼ 3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 2 - To expand economic activity in the cross-border area, by encouraging innovation and exchanges 	[R0202, R0201]
2	36,170,149.00	32.81%	0.00%	0.00%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 05 - Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 3 - Reduce impacts from disasters. ▼ 06 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 4 - Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage ▼ 6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 5 - Enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities ▼ 6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 6 - Enhance water and soil management 	[R0203, R0206, R0204, R0205]
3	29,070,613.00	26.37%	0.00%	0.00%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 07 - Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes 	[R0208, R0207]

Priority axis	ERDF support (€)	Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme (by Fund)			Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Result indicators corresponding to the specific indicator
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)		
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 7 - Reduced travel times for people and goods ▼ 7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility ▼ 8 - Improve transportation environmental impacts 	
4	20,747,400.00	18.82%	0.00%	0.00%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination ▼ 9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 9 - Improve access to high-quality health services in the CB area ▼ 9c - Providing support for social enterprises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 10 - Increase the capacity of social enterprises in the CB area 	[R0210, R0209]
5	6,614,474.00	6.00%	0.00%	0.00%	11 - To manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently	[]

2. PRIORITY AXES

2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	1
Title of the priority axis	A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not Applicable

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	Public

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	3a
Title of the investment priority	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	1
Title of the specific objective	To improve support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs, focused on cross-border cooperation.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Improved capacities of regional actors/facilities to support the development/growth of businesses Improved Cross-Border business survival

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		1 - To improve support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs, focused on cross-border cooperation.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0201	Entrepreneurial business environment	entrepreneurship barometer	100.00	2014	120.00	Survey to a representative sample of target SMEs	1st survey 2015, 2nd 2018, 3rd 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p>Specific Objective: Improve support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs, focused on cross-border cooperation</p> <p><u>Types of Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement/modernization of business-hosting facilities such as business incubators, technology parks, etc and business support facilities such as market places, exhibition halls, outlets, depots and logistics centres, laboratories or other technological installations, etc. • Development of business support services such as ICT systems (e.g. web-platforms), business consulting, etc to support cross-border economic activity. • Development of services fostering productivity such as business-specific training programmes and actions facilitating the introduction of new techniques and technologies into the production process (such as transfer of intellectual property rights, technology transfer, introduction of organizational innovation, etc.) • Productive priority areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agro-food industry ○ Waste management for recycling or energy production ○ Renewable energy and energy saving and efficiency ○ Sustainable tourism <p><u>As part of the implementation mechanisms for the above types of actions, a flexible system of “project partner light” (PP Light) aimed at fostering of cooperation of small and medium sized enterprises in thematic areas targeted by the Priority Axis will also be used.</u></p>	

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p><u>Main target groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs, people intending to exercise entrepreneurial activity in the area <p><u>Types of beneficiaries:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for business support; • Business Chambers, NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, CB networks and other business associations dealing established in the CB area; • Universities and research institutes in the CB area. 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p>Priority will be given to projects that further youth entrepreneurship.</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects must demonstrate a cross-border added value and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Active engagement of project partners in joint activities will be required (simple parallel actions will not be allowed). • Projects that rely solely on analysing the current situation and/or making plans for future action will not be approved. • Projects should have a lasting impact. • Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
No financial instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators				
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	50.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	3d
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ID of the investment priority	3d
Title of the investment priority	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	2
Title of the specific objective	To expand economic activity in the cross-border area, by encouraging innovation and exchanges
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Increase in exports New products/services produced in collaboration between businesses/sectors on both sides of the border or of CB nature.

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		2 - To expand economic activity in the cross-border area, by encouraging innovation and exchanges					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0202	Awareness of business opportunities beyond local markets	awareness scale	100.00	2014	120.00	Survey to a representative sample of target SMEs	1st survey 2015, 2nd 2018, 3rd 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
<p>Specific Objective: Expand economic activity in the cross-border area, by encouraging innovation and exchanges.</p> <p><u>Type of actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of clusters or other types of “networks” (e.g. “value-chains”) for the achievement of cost-savings, common research and product development, common export promotion, etc. • Collaboration schemes between businesses and non-businesses (e.g. museums) for the tourism/culture area - such as accommodation facilities, convention centres, manufacturing businesses, transport facilities, cultural facilities, etc – in order to introduce integrated tourist destinations in the cross-border area, branding of areas, etc. • Development and test control systems for branding of “green”, and “traditional” products respecting and promoting the CB area cultural and natural heritage. • Joint R&D activities to benefit the local production system with a cross-border dimension, such as cross-border collaboration between businesses or business/Research Institutes/Lab schemes, R&D activities for more than one stakeholders, e.g. for a cluster, etc., study visits to other cross-border areas to gain familiarity with successful practices and capitalize on innovative know-how, etc. • Support for intellectual property right development (e.g. patents for new products or new technologies developed through joint research undertaken by collaborating CB businesses or business/R&D institution/Lab collaboration schemes) • Joint or common (horizontal) export support services for CB businesses (e.g. participation to exhibitions and business-promotion events). • Cross-border business-plans with pilot applications for individual businesses and/or sectors/sub-sectors in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross-border trade ○ Establishment of new cross-border “business organization models” (e.g. contract farming, “modular production networks”, etc) • Productive priority areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agro-food industry ○ Waste management for recycling or energy production ○ Renewable energy and energy saving and efficiency ○ Sustainable tourism <p>As part of the implementation mechanisms for the above types of actions, a flexible system of “project partner light” (PP Light) aimed at fostering of</p>	

Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
<p><u>cooperation of small and medium sized enterprises in thematic areas targeted by the Priority Axis will also be used.</u></p> <p><u>Main target groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs; people intending to exercise entrepreneurial activity in the area <p><u>Specific territories targeted:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><u>Types of beneficiaries:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for business support; • Business Chambers, NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, CB networks and other business associations dealing established in the CB area; • Universities and research institutes in the CB area; • Chambers, collective organizations and associations representing businesses and other professionals participating in the tourist value-chain as well as National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for CB cultural assets and protected natural areas. 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
<p>Priority will be given to projects that further the integration of R&D and technological transfer to SMEs, in order to lead to new production methods, to update and standardize the quality of the products and to introduce innovative technologies and product ideas, especially in the RIS3 priority sectors and in the sectors with high export potential.</p>	

Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
<p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects must demonstrate a cross-border added value and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Active engagement of project partners in joint activities will be required (simple parallel actions will not be allowed). • Projects that rely solely on analysing the current situation and/or making plans for future action will not be approved. • Projects should have a lasting impact. • Projects addressing tourism can involve both partners from the business and the non-business sectors. 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
No financial Instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority		3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes			
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO26	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	20.00	Programme MIS	Annually
O0201	Number of clusters and other collaborative schemes composed of stakeholders/enterprises from both sides of border	collaborative schemes	3.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.7 Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis		1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area					
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
CO01	O	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	0	50.00	Programme MIS	
F0201	F	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	2.531.657,51	20,751,291.11	Programme MIS	(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)
K0201	I	Selection of enterprises	Number	15		Programme MIS	selected – approved enter-prises, related to the above CO01, to participate

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.8 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
	062. Technology transfer and university-enterprise cooperation primarily benefiting SMEs	2,822,176.00
	063. Cluster support and business networks primarily benefiting SMEs	5,644,352.00
	067. SME business development, support to entrepreneurship and incubation (including support to spin offs and spin outs)	9,172,070.00

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
01. Non-repayable grant		17,638,598.00

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		17,638,598.00

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		17,638,598.00

2.A.9 A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Priority axis:	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
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Priority axis:	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
Not applicable	

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	2
Title of the priority axis	A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

The TO 6 has been complemented by an IP from TO 5 in order to allow for integrated and global solutions to environmental issues in the CB area (e.g. addressing biodiversity threats due to human activity but also addressing biodiversity threats due to climate change, address monument restoration needs but also protect them against natural disaster risks, etc). Also, the combination of IPs from TOs 5 and 6 in the same priority axis allows the implementation flexibility of combining different types of interventions under the same call for proposals – if this is deemed desirable (allowing for e.g. integrated water management systems tackling flooding and pollution issues simultaneously).

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	Public

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	5b
Title of the investment priority	Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	3
Title of the specific objective	Reduce impacts from disasters.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Strengthened <i>capacity</i> of local actors to prevent / limit damage caused by CB natural disasters Increased resilience to CB natural disasters.

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		3 - Reduce impacts from disasters.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0203	Areas protected against flooding with new-upgraded plans/actions.	% of hectares	0.00	2014	25.00	Authorities for civil protection / Pro-gramme MIS	2018, 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
<p>Specific Objective: Reduce impacts from disasters.</p> <p>Type of actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies and action plans • Adaptation/mitigation pilot actions (for specific risks) with positive mitigation effects: e.g. conservation/rehabilitation of peatland, “buffer zones”, innovative methods/technologies, etc. • Capacity-building actions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Actions for building up a common knowledge base: data observation/processing capacities, mechanisms for the exchange of information and early warnings, joint risk prevention and emergency response plans, etc; ○ ICT tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), detection and monitoring systems, alert systems, risk mapping and assessment systems, etc; ○ Harmonized action plans and standards in the CB area (including common definitions of emergencies and stages of alert) for better forecasting and managing natural disasters; ○ Training/educational support to enhance stakeholder (including volunteers) capacity in emergency response. • Risks and disaster management actions for specific cross-border risks such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Investment in risk prevention and management (including small-scale infrastructure and small-scale construction works), including pilot actions; ○ Land improvements for areas with high and medium hazard risk level. • Priority areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ weather-related risks of a cross-border nature (such as flooding, extreme temperature events, and forest fires); ○ industrial risks or accidents of a cross-border nature. <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CB area and surrounding area (affected directly & indirectly by climate changes and risks in the area) population 	

Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
<p>Specific territories targeted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the most vulnerable territories to the above-mentioned risks. <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for spatial planning, natural disaster management, civil protection and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time; • Environmental NGOs, Non-Profit-Organisations, social enterprises, CB networks and other civil society associations dealing with natural disasters and civil protection, and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time; • Universities and research institutes dealing with natural disasters and civil protection, and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time. 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
<p>Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to projects listed in or implied by the National and Regional Flood Risk Management Plans. Also, projects addressing risks and disaster management at an adequate bio-geographical scale (e.g. at river basin level, or a mountainous zone etc) will receive priority over other actions.</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects must demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. • Active engagement of project partners in joint activities will be required (no parallel actions will be allowed). • Projects that rely solely on analysing the current situation and/or making plans for future action will not be approved. It is instead expected that projects validate conclusions with testing and pilots which provide a sound basis for other regions and/or organisations to build on these results. • Projects should have a lasting impact. • Projects should be in line with mandatory 'risk assessments' (Council requirement: Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of 	

Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
<p>the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism) as well as flood risk plans (Flood Directive: Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks) or national 'civil protection / risk management' strategies or plans of Member State.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities. 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
No financial Instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority		5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems			
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	300,000.00	Authorities for Civil Protection	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	6c
Title of the investment priority	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	4
Title of the specific objective	Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Improved capacities of regional actors <i>to</i> sustainably use natural and cultural resources in <i>the</i> CB <i>area</i> Preserved/protected cultural assets (tangible and intangible)

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective	4 - Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage
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ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0204	Satisfaction from visits to the supported sites	Satisfaction scale	100.00	2014	120.00	Visitor satisfaction survey	1st survey 2015, 2nd 2018, 3rd 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
Specific Objective: Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage	
Types of Actions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building actions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ knowledge transfer and exchange of good practices in the area of preservation of natural and cultural heritage; ○ joint development and pilot testing of innovative techniques in the area of cultural heritage preservation, including training; • Rehabilitation/protection of cultural assets of cross-border significance (all structures rehabilitated under this action will be required to be accessible to people with disabilities); rehabilitation/protection of natural assets of cross-border significance; small infrastructure interventions necessary for ensuring accessibility of sites. • CB area-wide cultural initiatives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ joint events/actions promoting cultural identity (including traditional agricultural products specific to the CB area) and enhancing the awareness of CB area cultural heritage; ○ youth cross-border exchanges; ○ cross-border exchanges of cultural events (including art and archaeological exhibitions). ○ actions to re-invent/preserve traditional jobs. 	

Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
<p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> visitors, tourists, area businesses <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with natural and cultural heritage; National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with regional development planning; Protected area management bodies; NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, social enterprises, and other civil society associations dealing with natural resources, and cultural issues; Institutions specialized in education, training and capacity building. 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
<p>Funds will be channelled on a priority basis to projects adopting an integrated territorial approach which stresses or exploits the common features on both sides of the border. Also, projects with broad area impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter, it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area (transferability).</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects have to demonstrate an added value resulting from cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Projects must define the precise need(s) addressed by the project, how this affects each partner, and the specific benefits expected from the cooperation. Projects will be required to observe the principles of sustainable and inclusive growth. Especially as far as cultural facilities are concerned, they 	

Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
will all be required to be disabled-accessible, as well as every cultural initiative (events, exhibitions, services provided etc).	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
No financial Instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage				
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
O0202	Number of cultural assets rehabilitated/protected	cultural assets	8.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	6d
Title of the investment priority	Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	5
Title of the specific objective	Enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Mainstreaming successful approaches in biodiversity protection New methods and technologies for biodiversity monitoring and management

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		5 - Enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0205	% of Natura areas participating in biodiversity preservation strategies and pilot actions in the the 2014-2020 programming period	% of hectares	0.00	2014	34.00	Official Country Registers of Natura sites / Programme MIS	2018, 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure
<p>Specific Objective: Enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities</p> <p>Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of CB frameworks and platforms for the interoperability of existing databases and the integration of management approaches (hazard and risk assessment, planning methodologies, management plans, sustainability assessments, etc.); • Development of joint strategies & procedures (and pilot applications of such) for sustainable management of resources, for the development of green infrastructure, for biodiversity protection, for landscape management and for the establishment of green corridors; • Development (and pilot application) of joint negotiation, mediation, participation and conflict resolution models in the context of land use management with a view to protecting biodiversity; • Design risk assessment & management models and strategies for CB protected areas; <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protected natural areas <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for environmental protection, biodiversity protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning; • Protected area management bodies; • Environmental NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, social enterprises, CB networks and other civil society associations dealing with biodiversity, nature protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning; • Universities and research institutes dealing with biodiversity, nature protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning. 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure
Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to projects in compliance with the National Priority Action Plans for biodiversity, and on projects which focus on prevention methods (pro-active).	
The following conditions will also be observed:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All projects need to address specific protected areas, or species within these areas. Projects addressing the preservation of endangered species or protected natural areas of international importance will receive priority over other actions.• Projects must demonstrate a need or an increased added value resulting from cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner.• Active engagement of project partners in joint activities will be required (no parallel actions will be allowed).• Projects that rely solely on analysing the current situation and/or making plans for future action will not be approved. It is instead expected that projects validate conclusions with testing and pilot applications which provide a sound basis for other regions and/or organisations to build on these results. Projects should have a lasting impact.	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure
No financial Instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure
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Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure				
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
00203	Number of biodiversity preservation projects	Projects	9.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	6f
Title of the investment priority	Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	6
Title of the specific objective	Enhance water and soil management
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Improved surface and groundwater management <i>capacity</i> Prevention of soil erosion and desertification

ID of the specific objective	6
Title of the specific objective	Enhance water and soil management
	Rehabilitation of contaminated lands

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		6 - Enhance water and soil management					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0206	% of total renewable CB area water resources under improved management systems in the 2014-2020 programming period	% of hm3	0.00	2014	30.00	Water Basin Management Plans / Programme MIS	2018, 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution
Specific Objective: Enhance water and soil management	
Types of Actions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of CB frameworks and platforms for the interoperability of databases and the integration of management approaches in the areas of water management (pollution control and efficient use) and soil management (including contaminated lands); 	

Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of CB eco-innovation partnerships and participation in European Innovation Partnerships in the areas of water management (pollution control and efficient use) and soil management (including contaminated lands); • Pilot applications or mainstreaming of existing innovative methods/technologies in the areas of water management (pollution control and efficient use) and soil management (including contaminated lands) and joint development of new methods, including e.g. the use of forests and other areas with woody vegetation for ensuring water quality and quantity; • Promoting “green behavior” campaigns in the areas of water and soil management. <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water management bodies and utilities (as end users), farmers, industrial zone management bodies, residents and businesses in intervention areas <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments in charge of subjects related to water and soil management; • Universities and research institutes dealing with subjects related to water and soil management. • Chambers, collective organizations and associations representing businesses and other professionals, and social enterprises in areas relevant to water and soil management. 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution
<p>Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to technology development projects with high transferability potential. Technologies developed under the approved projects should have the potential to be adopted into standard working practices in the respective field. Also, the transfer of existing state-of-the-art environmental technologies and their adoption into standard practice by CB stakeholders will be targeted.</p>	

Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution
<p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects have to demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. • Projects with broad area potential impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter, it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area. 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution
No financial Instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority		6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution			
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
O0204	Number of joint projects dealing with common water management issues	projects	7.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.7 Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis		2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area					
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
CO20	O	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	0	300,000.00	MIS, Ministries of Environment	
F0202	F	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	5.191.480,24	42,553,116.71	Programme MIS	(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)
K0202	I	Selected projects CO20 (Decision of approval)	Projects	4		Programme MIS	Selected projects as action plans, construction works, special tools and equipment, training of specific groups etc. that contribute to the above output indicator CO20

Priority axis		2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area					
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
K0205	I	Selected projects O0202 (Decision of approval)	Projects	5		Programme MIS	Selected projects such as construction works, ICT applications and equipment, etc. that contribute to the above output indicator O0202
O0202	O	Number of cultural assets rehabilitated/protected	cultural assets	0	8.00	Programme MIS	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.8 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	
	Code	Amount (€)
	021. Water management and drinking water conservation (including river basin management, water supply, specific climate change adaptation measures, district and consumer metering, charging systems and leak reduction)	5,710,496.00

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	
085. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure		7,011,342.00
087. Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks e.g. erosion, fires, flooding, storms and drought, including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures		12,033,773.00
091. Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas		3,804,846.00
094. Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets		7,609,692.00

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	
	Code	Amount (€)
01. Non-repayable grant		36,170,149.00

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		36,170,149.00

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		36,170,149.00

2.A.9 A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Priority axis:	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	
Not Applicable		

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	3
Title of the priority axis	A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not applicable

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	Public

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	7b
Title of the investment priority	Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	7
Title of the specific objective	Reduced travel times for people and goods
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Reduced travel times for people and goods</p> <p>Better connectivity for <i>the</i> “less accessible” areas</p> <p>Improved traffic security</p>

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		7 - Reduced travel times for people and goods					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0207	Travel-distance reduction at reconstructed/rehabilitated roads	%	0.00	2014	30.00	Trasnport studies	2018, 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes
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Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes
Specific Objective: Improve accessibility of the CB area	
Types of Actions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of new or upgrading of existing infrastructure and construction works of CB importance especially through the completion of gaps in the TEN-T network and the existing secondary and tertiary network connected to it; • Construction of new or upgrading of existing complementary infrastructures and connections (e.g. border-crossings); • Planning/studies for logistics centers, multimodal nodes, etc 	
Main target groups:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitors, residents and businesses in intervention areas, transport service providers 	
Types of beneficiaries:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments in charge of transportation planning, construction and management issues; • Universities, research institutes and Specific bodies dealing with subjects related to transportation planning, management and construction issues; • Collective organizations and associations representing businesses and other professionals in areas relevant to transportation planning, management and construction issues; 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes
Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to projects completing the secondary TEN-T road network in the CB area.	
The following conditions will also be observed:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects have to demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Projects must 	

Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes
<p>define the precise need(s) addressed by the project, how this affects each partner, and the specific benefits expected for the entire CB area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects with broad area impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. • All project proposals should comply with regulation No 1315/2013, on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU. • Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes
No financial Instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority		7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes			
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO14	Roads: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km	37.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	7c
Title of the investment priority	Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	8
Title of the specific objective	Improve transportation environmental impacts
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Reduced transportation environmental footprint Better integration <i>with</i> urban and rural sustainable development

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective	8 - Improve transportation environmental impacts
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ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0208	Number of intelligent transport system users	Annual number of users	0.00	2014	3,000.00	Measurements by the intelligent transport system operators	2018,2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
<p>Specific Objective: Improve transportation environmental impact</p> <p>Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport investments aiming at reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities (including transport services); • Development and introduction of transport monitoring systems (targeting passenger and/or goods mobility, infrastructure state-of-repairs, etc) and intelligent transport systems for goods and passengers; • Development of new technologies/methods for the design and implementation of environment-friendly transport infrastructures and systems. <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitors, residents and businesses in intervention areas, transport service providers. <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p>	

Investment priority	7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National institutions and Specific bodies in charge of transportation planning, construction, monitoring and management issues as well as respective bodies engaged in environmental monitoring/protection; • Universities, research institutes and Specific bodies dealing with subjects related to transportation planning, monitoring and management as well as research institutes engaged in the development of smart transport systems/technologies; • Local stakeholders engaged in the provision of transport services (such as public bus-service providers, Municipalities which engage in transport, etc) 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
<p>Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to projects diverting private car usage in favour of collective transport solutions (public transport, car-pooling, etc) and to projects optimizing road traffic conditions in order to reduce CO2 emissions.</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects have to demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation or increased added value resulting from cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Projects must define the precise need(s) addressed by the project, how this affects each partner, and the specific benefits expected from the cooperation. • Projects with broad area impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter – which may be pilot applications - it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area. • Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
No financial Instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority	7c - Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility				
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
O0205	Number of projects on intelligent transport systems interventions	projects	2.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.7 Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis		3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area					
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
CO14	O	Roads: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km	0	37.00	Programme MIS	
F0203	F	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	4.172.487,96	34,200,721.00	Programme MIS	(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)
K0203	I	Projects with at least one signed Contract of technical - construction works sub-projects	number	2		Projects that contribute to the above CO14	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.8 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
	034. Other reconstructed or improved road (motorway, national, regional or local)	26,604,637.00
	044. Intelligent transport systems (including the introduction of demand management, tolling systems, IT monitoring control and information systems)	2,465,976.00

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
	01. Non-repayable grant	29,070,613.00

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
	07. Not applicable	29,070,613.00

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		29,070,613.00

2.A.9 A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Priority axis:	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	
Not applicable		

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	4
Title of the priority axis	A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not applicable

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	Public

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	9a
Title of the investment priority	Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	9
Title of the specific objective	Improve access to high-quality health services in the CB area
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Increased “access for all” <i>to</i> basic healthcare services.</p> <p>Increased access <i>to</i> healthcare for vulnerable groups and marginalised communities <i>with</i> highCB mobility</p> <p>Implementation of ICT innovations and e-Health solutions <i>to</i> ensure efficient use of CB resources</p>

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		9 - Improve access to high-quality health services in the CB area					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0209	Population covered by improved health services	inhabitants	0.00	2014	720,000.00	Official population statistics	2018, 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services
<p>Specific Objective: Improve access to high-quality health services in the CB area</p> <p>Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support centres of reference (for health threats, rare diseases, organ donation) and develop joint cross-border plans and principles for the sharing of human and information resources; • Promote cooperation between healthcare authorities by implementing the shared use of resources and expertise in the cross-border healthcare provision wherever added value can be achieved; • Support to renovation and equipping of existing and new primary health care practices in CB areas with serious limitations in access to primary health care; • Development of cross-border mobile services, telemedicine and telecare infrastructure and other technology-oriented health care provision methods will be supported, in order to alleviate the local lack of healthcare workers; <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vulnerable population groups (e.g. disabled, poor, etc), population groups exhibiting high incidence of health problems and high CB mobility (e.g. Roma, transients, illegal migrants, etc), areas with low access to health care <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based and Primary health care providers (only public sector stakeholders), Municipalities, and social enterprises engaged in health care provision; • Hospitals; • Medical Faculties of Universities. 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services
<p>Priority will be given to projects capitalizing on /continuing past successful experience and projects complementing past investments in the CB area. Also priority will be given to projects increasing the access of vulnerable groups (specific to the CB area) to health care.</p>	
<p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects have to demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Projects must define the precise need(s) addressed by the project, how this affects each partner, and the specific benefits expected from the cooperation. • Projects with broad area impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter, it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area. • Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services
<p>No financial instruments will be used</p>	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services				
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
O0206	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	Health care institutions	12.00	Programme MIS	Annually
O0207	Number of ICT systems developed	ICT systems	12.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	9c
Title of the investment priority	Providing support for social enterprises

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	10
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Title of the specific objective	Increase the capacity of social enterprises in the CB area
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Broadened social services provided <i>by</i> social enterprises in local communities, especially in terms of <i>better</i> employability and employment <i>of</i> the vulnerable groups in <i>the</i> CB area.</p> <p>Improved visibility and recognition of social entrepreneurship, facilitating mutual learning and <i>capacity</i> building.</p>

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		10 - Increase the capacity of social enterprises in the CB area					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R0210	Increase in CB employment at social enterprises	Number of employees	384.00	2013	496.00	Social Enterprises / Programme MIS	2018, 2023

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Specific Objective: Increase the capacity of social enterprises in the CB area	
Types of Actions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the establishment and provision of operational support to Social Enterprises that offer innovative solutions, promote inclusive CB 	

Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
<p>labour markets and social services accessible to all in the CB area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for social franchising which is the cross-border transfer of a social enterprise business model from one side of the border to the other. • Support for the development and implementation of methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of social, economic and environmental impacts of social economy in the CB area. <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unemployed, vulnerable groups, marginalized communities. <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social economy organisations (cooperatives/social enterprises, mutual societies, associations, foundations); NGOs; Non-Profit Organisations 	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
<p>Priority will be given to projects capitalizing on /continuing past successful experience and projects complementing past investments in the CB area. Also priority will be given to projects increasing the access of vulnerable groups (specific to the CB area) to employment/services through social enterprises.</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects have to demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Projects must define the precise need(s) addressed by the project, how this affects each partner, and the specific benefits expected from the cooperation. • Projects with broad area impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter, it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area. • Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non 	

Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
No financial instruments will be used	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
No major projects will be implemented	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises				
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
O0208	Number of supported social enterprises	social enterprises	14.00	Programme MIS	Annually

2.A.7 Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis		4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area					
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
F0204	F	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	2.977.862,13	24,408,706.00	Programme MIS	(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)
K0204	I	Projects with at least one signed Contract of (technical - construction works or other) sub-projects	Number	6		Programme MIS	Projects that contribute to the above output indicator O0206
O0206	O	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	Health care institutions	0	12.00	Programme MIS	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.8 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
	053. Health infrastructure	10,788,648.00
	081. ICT solutions addressing the healthy active ageing challenge and e-Health services and applications (including e-Care and ambient assisted living)	3,042,977.00
	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment	6,915,775.00

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
	01. Non-repayable grant	20,747,400.00

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		20,747,400.00

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		20,747,400.00

2.A.9 A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Priority axis:	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	
Not applicable		

2.B DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.B.1 Priority axis

ID	5
Title	Technical Assistance

2.B.2 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	Public

2.B.3 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
11	To manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently	High absorption capacity for high quality projects which contribute to the objectives of the programme. Support structures which enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• informed decisions by programme management bodies and effective steering; and

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beneficiaries performing their planned activities efficiently. <p>A monitoring and control system that provides adequate insight in the regularity and quality of the supported actions with as little administrative burden to beneficiaries and programme bodies as possible.</p> <p>Suitable channels and activities for the communication, dissemination and application of <i>the</i> results of cooperation operations.</p>

2.B.4 Result indicators

Table 10: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Priority axis	11 - To manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting

2.B.5 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives (by priority axis)

2.B.5.1 Description of actions *to be* supported and their expected contribution *to* the specific objectives

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
Specific Objective: To manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently	
Types of Actions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish and manage Joint Secretariat and Infopoints:• programme management and steering:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ organisation, preparation and facilitation of meetings of the programme steering bodies;○ evaluations, analysis and studies related to the delivery of the programme in support of the continuous improvement of its management and implementation.• monitoring, control and reporting:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ an IT system for programme management, monitoring, audit and control;○ guidance and support to ensure adequate control of the programme at all levels (partners, controllers, partner State Bodies responsible for first level control) e.g. through seminars, guidance documents and counseling;○ coordinating and organising of programme level audit activities, including the (external) audits on operations and supporting the Group of Auditors;○ regular reporting to the European Commission on programme progress.• project generation and selection:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ application forms, calls for proposals/terms of reference and guidance documents for potential applicants;○ assistance and advice to potential applicants before and during calls, e.g. through seminars, bilateral consultations and contacts, partner search forums, etc;	

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ quality assessment of project applications (scoring); ○ risk assessment of projects. • support to project partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ tools and guidance documentation (manuals, supporting operation beneficiaries implement their project); ○ assistance and advice to lead partners and partners on the implementation of their project e.g. through seminars on implementation procedures, first level control seminars, etc. ○ meetings, events and “on-the-spot visits” to projects to address progress, outputs and results as well as obstacles to implementation. • communication, dissemination and promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ development and maintenance of the programme website; ○ publishing of programme information and publications; ○ organisation of events to generate interest for participation in the programme, showcase and disseminate results of the programme supported projects to professional audiences and the wider public, and facilitate inter-operation interaction and cooperation. <p>In addition to the activities and programme bodies described above, the Programme may decide to use Technical Assistance funding to contribute to activities carried out by Partner States.</p> <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential project applicants and project partners of selected projects, steering committee, European commission <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JTS, MA, infopoints

2.B.5.2 Output indicators expected *to* contribute ~~to~~ results (by priority axis)

Table 11: Output indicators

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance			
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data

2.B.6 Categories of intervention

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 12-14: Categories of intervention

Table 12: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
Code	Amount (€)
121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	4,744,474.00
122. Evaluation and studies	595,000.00
123. Information and communication	1,275,000.00

Table 13: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
Code	Amount (€)
01.Non-repayable grant	6,614,474.00

Table 14: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance	
	Code	Amount (€)
07.Not applicable		6,614,474.00

3. FINANCING PLAN**3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in €)****Table 15**

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
ERDF	5,468,050.00	7,984,093.00	11,401,792.00	20,716,987.00	21,131,327.00	21,553,953.00	21,985,032.00	110,241,234.00
Total	5,468,050.00	7,984,093.00	11,401,792.00	20,716,987.00	21,131,327.00	21,553,953.00	21,985,032.00	110,241,234.00

3.2.A Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (in €)

Table 16: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e) (2)	For information	
					National public funding (c)	National private funding (d)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
1	ERDF	Public	17,638,598.00	3,112,694.00	3,112,694.00	0.00	20,751,292.00	85.00%		
2	ERDF	Public	36,170,149.00	6,382,967.00	6,382,967.00	0.00	42,553,116.00	85.00%		
3	ERDF	Public	29,070,613.00	5,130,108.00	5,130,108.00	0.00	34,200,721.00	85.00%		
4	ERDF	Public	20,747,400.00	3,661,306.00	3,661,306.00	0.00	24,408,706.00	85.00%		
5	ERDF	Public	6,614,474.00	1,167,260.00	1,167,260.00	0.00	7,781,734.00	85.00%		
Total	ERDF		110,241,234.00	19,454,335.00	19,454,335.00	0.00	129,695,569.00	85.00%		
Grand total			110,241,234.00	19,454,335.00	19,454,335.00	0.00	129,695,569.00	85.00%	0.00	0.00

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

3.2.B Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Table 17

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
1	Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)	17,638,598.00	3,112,694.00	20,751,292.00
2	Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	12,033,773.00	2,123,607.00	14,157,380.00
2	Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	24,136,376.00	4,259,360.00	28,395,736.00
3	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	29,070,613.00	5,130,108.00	34,200,721.00
4	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	20,747,400.00	3,661,306.00	24,408,706.00
Total		103,626,760.00	18,287,075.00	121,913,835.00

Table 18: Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%)
2	17,122,508.20	15.53%
3	986,390.40	0.89%
Total	18,108,898.60	16.43%

4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development, taking into account the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, including in relation to regions and areas referred to in Article 174(3) TFEU, having regard to the Partnership Agreements of the participating Member States, and showing how it contributes to the accomplishment of the programme objectives and expected results

No integrated territorial development tools will be used by the programme.

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

Approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and principles for identifying the areas where they will be implemented

Not applicable

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

Principles for identifying the urban areas where integrated actions for sustainable urban development are to be implemented and the indicative allocation of the ERDF support for these actions

Not applicable

Table 19: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF support

Indicative amount of ERDF support (€)
0.00

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

Approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis

Not applicable

Table 20: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2 (aggregate amount)

Priority axis	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (€)
	0.00

4.4 Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the relevant Member States and taking into account, where applicable, strategically important projects identified in those strategies (where appropriate)

(Where Member States and regions participate in macro-regional and sea basin strategies)

The eligible programme area is subjacent to two (2) EU sea basins for which macro-regional strategies are under development: (a) the Black Sea basin and (b) the Mediterranean Sea basin. Both of them could have a significant impact to “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”.

The EU strategy for the Black Sea is reflected in EU Parliament resolution “For an EU Strategy for the Black Sea Region to be launched” voted on 20/1/2011, where the main objective is to establish an area of peace, democracy, prosperity and stability, founded on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and providing for EU energy security. The Black Sea 2007-2013 JOP, declares as its main objective to provide for a “a stronger and sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin”, by reaching three specific objectives: (a) Promoting economic and social development in the border areas, (b) Working together to address common challenges and (c) Promoting local, people-to-people cooperation.

The new Black Sea 2014-2020 JOP (as per draft version of 23/5/2014), has select two Thematic Objectives (a) Business and SME development and (b) Environmental protection, climate change adaptation. Finally its specific objectives are to:

- (a) Promote business and entrepreneurship within the Black Sea Basin and
- (b) Promote coordination of environmental protection and joint reduction of marine litter in the Black Sea Basin.

Both objectives are strongly related to two (2) “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020” priority axes (PA 1: A competitive and Innovative Cross-Border area and PA 2: A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area).

The EU strategy for the Mediterranean Sea basin, having its origins in the Barcelona Declaration in 1995, was re-launched – as a planning process - in 2008 through the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The new MED 2014-2020 programme (as per draft version of 17/3/2014), has selected four (4) priority axes:

PA1: Promoting Mediterranean *innovation capacity* to develop smart and sustainable growth,

PA2: Fostering *low-carbon strategies* and *energy efficiency* in specific MED territories: cities, islands and remote areas,

PA3: *Protecting and promoting* Mediterranean natural and cultural resources and

PA4: A *shared* Mediterranean Sea.

The above priorities exhibit strong synergies with three (3) “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020” priority axes (PA 1: A competitive and Innovative Cross-Border area, PA 2: A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area and PA 3: A better interconnected Cross-Border area).

5. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 21: Programme authorities

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes of the Hellenic Ministry of Development & Competitiveness	Georgios EMMANOUIL (Mr)
Certifying authority	Paying Authority for the CSF, the Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund of the Hellenic Ministry of Development and Competitiveness	Dimitris SOUSOUNIS (Mr)
Audit authority	General Accounting Office /Financial Audit Committee of the Hellenic Ministry of Finance	Vassilis KATRIVESIS (Mr)

The body to which payments will be made by the Commission is:

- the Managing authority
 the Certifying authority

Table 22: Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Minister of Regional Development or authorised by him/her person	Ekaterina Zaharieva Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Policy, Minister of Regional Development and Minister of Investment Planning
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Paying Authority for the CSF, the Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund of the Hellenic Ministry of Development and Competitiveness	Dimitris SOUSOUNIS (Mr)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	“Territorial Cooperation Management” Directorate General, Ministry of Regional Development	Maria Duzova Director General
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	General Accounting Office /Financial Audit Committee of the Hellenic Ministry of Finance	Vassilis KATRIVESIS (Mr)

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	“Audit of EU Funds” Executive Agency	Dobrinka MIHAYLOVA (Ms), Executive Director

5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

In accordance with Article 23(2) of the ETC Regulation, the managing authority (MA), after consultation with the participating countries, shall set up the joint secretariat (JS) to support and assist the managing authority (MA) and the joint monitoring committee (JMC) in carrying out their respective functions. Moreover, it may assist the Audit Authority in organising the meetings of the group of auditors, provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the programme and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations. The exact functions and the role of the JS shall be determined, in agreement with the MA and the Member States participating in the Programme, in its rules of procedure.

The Joint Secretariat will be located near the MA registered office (Article 23 par.2, Regulation 1299/2013)) and will be composed of a balanced number of staff members from the participating Member States. Job profiles for each individual position within JS structure shall be confirmed by the national authorities of the participating countries. Job profiles shall be a part of the Description of the Management and Control System (DMCS).

The selection process as well as contracting shall be organized by the MA. Selection of JS staff shall be done jointly by the participating countries who shall jointly take the decision on the selection of candidates.

The participating countries delegate the task to the Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes to carry out all necessary actions for the swift and smooth transition from the 2007-2013 implementing structures to the 2014-2020 implementing structures.

5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

The following section describes the implementation structure of the CBC Programme Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020. More detailed provisions will be included in the Description of the Management and Control System (DMCS), approved according to Article 124 of the CPR, and in the programme guidance documents (application and implementation manuals, Control & Audit Guidelines) which will form integral part of the DMCS. Guidance documents shall be adopted by the JMC.

The programme language is English.

Greece and Bulgaria, which are the participating states in the Programme, established a shared management system to manage, coordinate and supervise the implementation of the programme.

5.3.a. Managing Authority

The Managing Authority (MA) shall be responsible for managing and implementing the Operational Programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and carry out the functions set out in Article 72 and 125 of Regulation 1303/2013 and article 23 of Regulation 1299/2013.

The MA shall:

- (a) support the work of the Joint Monitoring Committee and provide it with the information it requires to carry out its tasks, in particular data relating to the progress of the operational programme in achieving its objectives, financial data and data relating to indicators and milestones;
- (b) draw up and, after approval by the Joint Monitoring committee, submit to the Commission annual and final implementation reports;
- (c) make available to intermediate bodies and beneficiaries information that is relevant to the execution of their tasks and the implementation of operations respectively;
- (d) establish a system to record and store in computerised form data on each operation under the Operational Programme necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, including data on individual participants in operations, where applicable;
- (e) ensure that the data referred to in point (d) is collected, entered and stored in the system referred to in point (d), and that data on indicators is broken down by gender.
- (f) ensure that the implementation reports of the Operational Programme referred to in article 14 of Regulation 1299/2013 are carried out in accordance with article 51 par.1 and 2 of Regulation 1303/2013;
- (g) set up a Joint Secretariat after consultation with the Member States participating in the Programme and supervise the work of the Joint Secretariat (article 23 of Regulation 1299/2013);
- (h) prepare and submit for approval by the JMC a communication strategy (article 115 and 116 of Regulation 1303/2013) of the Operational Programme and designate contact persons to be responsible for information and publicity informing the Commission accordingly.
- (i) ensure the establishment of a single website or a single website portal providing information on, and access to, all operational programmes in the participating Member States, including information about the timing of implementation of programming and any related public consultation processes;
- (j) inform potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the cooperation programme;

(k) Publicise to Union citizens the role and achievements of cohesion policy and of the Programme through information and communication actions on the results of the Programme and operations.

Regarding the selection of operations, the Managing Authority shall:

(a) draw up and, once approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee, apply appropriate selection procedures and criteria in accordance with the Union and national rules that:

(i) ensure the contribution of operations to the achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority;

(ii) are non-discriminatory and transparent;

(iii) take into account the general principles of promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination and sustainable development

(b) ensure that a selected operation falls within the scope of the ERDF and can be attributed to a category of intervention of the operational programme;

(c) ensure that beneficiaries are informed of the specific conditions concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, the time limit for execution and the financial and other information to be kept and communicated; satisfy itself that the beneficiary has the capacity to fulfil these conditions before the approval decision is taken; ensure that the procedure for evaluating proposals was carried out under the terms of the call for proposals, including the operations selection criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee;

(d) ensure that the Lead beneficiary of an operation is provided with a document setting out the conditions for support of the operation, including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, and the time-limit for execution

(e) satisfy itself that the Lead beneficiary has the administrative, financial and operational capacity to fulfil the conditions referred to in point (c) before approval of the operation;

(f) satisfy itself that, where the operation has started before the submission of an application for funding to the managing authority, applicable law relevant for the operation has been complied with;

(g) ensure that operations selected for support from the ERDF do not include activities which were part of an operation which has been or should have been subject to a procedure of recovery in accordance with Article 71 of Regulation 1303/2013 following the relocation of a productive activity outside the programme area;

Regarding the financial management and control of the Joint Operational Programme, the Managing Authority shall:

(a) Ensure that each Member State shall designate the body or person responsible for carrying out verifications in relation to beneficiaries on its territory (the 'controller(s)') according to article 125, paragraph 4 of Reg. 1303/2013 and article 23 of Reg. 1299/2013

The managing authority shall satisfy itself that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by a designated controller referred to in article 23 of Regulation 1299/2013, within a period of three months of the submission of the documents. Verifications, pursuant to article 125 Regulation 1303/2013 paragraph 5, shall include the following procedures:

- administrative checks, concerning the verification of expenses for each application of reimbursement, by the designated controllers of both countries ;
- on-the-spot checks of operations,

Where the managing authority is also a beneficiary under the operational programme, arrangements for the verifications referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 4 shall ensure adequate separation of functions.

(b) ensure that Lead beneficiaries involved in the implementation of operations are reimbursed on the basis of eligible costs actually incurred, maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to an operation;

(c) put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the risks identified;

(d) set up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of point (g) of Article 72 of Regulation 1303/2013;

(e) draw up the management declaration and annual summary referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation.

5.3.b. Bulgarian National Authority

The institution supporting the activity of the MA in implementing the programme on the Bulgarian side will be the Ministry of Regional Development.

The functions and tasks of the Bulgarian National Authority shall be laid down in the **Partner's State Agreement**.

5.3.c. Certifying Authority

The Certifying Authority shall be responsible for certifying statements of expenditure and applications for payment before being sent to the Commission. In this context, the certifying authority shall carry out the functions envisaged in article 24 of Regulation 1299/2013 and 126 of Regulation 1303/2013, and in particular for:

- (i) drawing up and submitting payment applications to the Commission, and certifying that they result from reliable accounting systems, are based on verifiable supporting documents and have been subject to verifications by the managing authority
- (ii) drawing up the accounts referred to in point (a) of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;
- (iii) certifying the completeness, accuracy and veracity of the accounts and that the expenditure entered in the accounts complies with applicable law and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the operational programme and complying with applicable law;
- (iv) ensuring that there is a system which records and stores, in computerised form, accounting records for each operation, and which supports all the data required for drawing up payment applications and accounts, including records of amounts recoverable, amounts recovered and amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation or operational programme;
- (v) ensuring, for the purposes of drawing up and submitting payment applications, that it has received adequate information from the Managing Authority on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure included in statements of expenditure;
- (vi) taking account when drawing up and submitting payment applications of the results of all audits carried out by, or under the responsibility of, the audit authority;
- (vii) maintaining in computerised form accounting records of expenditure declared to the Commission and of the corresponding public contribution paid to beneficiaries;
- (viii) keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation. Amounts recovered shall be repaid to the budget of the European Union, prior to the closure of the Operational Programme, by deducting them from the subsequent statement of expenditure;

The Certifying Authority designated by the Programme is the Paying Authority for the CSF, the community initiatives and the Cohesion Fund, at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness, Greece.

5.3.d. Audit Authority

The Audit Authority shall be responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme. In this context, the Audit Authority shall be responsible for carrying out the functions envisaged in articles 25 of Regulation 1299/2013 and 127 of Regulation 1303/2013, and in particular:

- (i) ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme,
- (ii) ensuring that audits are carried out on operations, on the basis of an appropriate sample, to verify expenditure declared to the Commission and in that respect determine the appropriate sampling method to be used in accordance with the requirements of article 59 par.5 of the Financial Regulation. The declared expenditure shall be audited based on a representative sample and, as a general rule on statistical sampling methods. A non- statistical sampling method may be used on the professional judgment of the audit authority, in duly justified cases, in accordance with internationally accepted audit standards and in any case where the number of operations for an accounting year is insufficient to allow the use of a statistical method. In such cases, the size of the sample shall be sufficient to enable the audit authority to draw up a valid audit opinion in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation. The non-statistical sample method shall cover a minimum of 5 % of operations for which expenditure has been declared to the Commission during an accounting year and 10 % of the expenditure which has been declared to the Commission during an accounting year.
- (iii) preparing, in accordance with article 127 par.4 of Regulation 1303/2013, within eight months of the adoption of the operational programme, an audit strategy for performance of audits, setting out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on operations and the indicative planning of audits to ensure that the main bodies are audited and that audits are spread evenly throughout the programming period; The Audit Authority shall submit the audit strategy to the Commission upon their request,
- (iv) The Audit Authority shall draw up:
 - control report setting out the main findings of the audits (systems and operations) carried out in accordance with the audit strategy including findings with regard to deficiencies found in the management and control systems, and the proposed and implemented corrective actions.
 - an audit opinion, in accordance with the second subparagraph of article 59 par. 5 of the Financial Regulation.

The Audit Authority shall ensure that the audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards.

In the course of carrying out its functions, the Audit Authority shall ensure that personal data and confidential information, received by it and/or audit bodies operating under its control, are protected.

The Audit Authority of this Operational Programme is the Financial Control Committee (EDEL), set up following the decision of the Minister for Economy and Finance, at the Ministry of Finance – General Accounting Office of the State), Greece. The Financial

Audit Committee consists of seven members and is independent of the Managing and Certifying Authorities.

5.3.e. Group of Auditors

The Audit Authority of the operational programme shall be assisted by a group of auditors comprising a representative from each Member State participating in the operational programme, carrying out the duties provided for in article 127 of Regulation 1303/2013. The group of auditors shall be set up within three months of the decision approving the operational programme. The group shall draw up its own rules of procedure. The group of auditors shall be chaired by the Audit Authority of the operational programme (25(2) of Regulation 1299/2013). Each participating country shall be responsible for audits carried out on its territory.

Each representative from each participating country in the cooperation programme shall be responsible for providing the factual elements relating to expenditure on its territory that are required by the audit authority in order to perform its assessment.

5.3.f. Audits *carried out by the* Audit Authority

In carrying out its functions, the audit authority shall ensure that audits on systems, Authorities and intermediate bodies are carried out and assess their reliability.

Audits on operations shall be carried out on-the-spot, on the basis of documentation and records held by the beneficiary. Audits shall verify that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a. the operation meets the selection criteria for the operational programme, has been implemented in accordance with the approval decision and fulfils any applicable conditions concerning its functionality and use or the objectives to be attained;
- b. the expenditure declared corresponds to the accounting records and supporting documents held by the beneficiary;
- c. the expenditure declared by the beneficiary is in compliance with Community and national rules;
- d. the public contribution has been paid to the beneficiary in accordance with article 127 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

In the framework of an audit strategy, audits shall be carried out on the basis of an annual plan approved by the audit authority. Additional audits, not included in the plan, shall also be carried out, whenever required.

When problems detected appear to be systemic in nature and therefore entail a risk for other operations under the operational programme, the Financial Control Committee shall ensure that further examination is carried out, including additional audits where necessary, to establish the scale of such problems.

5.3.g. Joint Secretariat

The Managing Authority, after consultation with the Member States represented in the programme area, shall set up a Joint Secretariat to be located near its registered office (Article 23 par.2, Regulation 1299/2013).

The Joint Secretariat shall assist the Managing Authority, the Joint Monitoring Committee and the Joint Steering Committee in carrying out their respective duties. Moreover, it may assist the Audit Authority in organising the meetings of the group of auditors.

Indicatively, the JS shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Assist the MA in organising the meetings of the Joint Monitoring Committee and the Joint Steering Committee and provide all necessary documents to ensure the quality of the implementation of the OP in the context of its specific goals.
2. Draw up the criteria for selecting the operations and submit them to the Managing Authority for further actions.
3. Prepare the material concerning the call for proposals and submit it to the Managing Authority for further actions.
4. Provide information and assistance to (potential) beneficiaries. during the preparation of proposals and/or throughout the implementation period of the operations by all means considered appropriate.
6. Assist the MA and the Joint Steering Committee in order to ensure that operations selected for funding comply with all applicable Community and national rules or guidelines ;
8. Assist the MA in collecting and recording data and records required for financial management, monitoring, verification, audit and evaluation;
9. Assist the MA in collecting and keeping all documents relating to expenditure and audits, in order to ensure an effective audit trail in accordance with the requirements of article 125 par. 2 (d) of Regulation (EC) 1303/2013 by all means considered appropriate.
10. Prepare annual reports, as well as the final report on the OP in cooperation with MA.
11. Support the MA to ensure compliance with information and publicity requirements referred to in article 115 and 116 of the Regulation 1303/2013
12. Prepare the Technical Assistance annual plan in cooperation with the MA.

The functions and the role of the JS shall be determined, in agreement with the MA and the Member States participating in the Programme, in its rules of procedure. The JS shall comprise a balanced number of staff members from the participating Member States.

5.3.h. Intermediate Body

In order to simplify and speed up the Programme implementation as well as to overcome administrative complexities and ensure efficiency, the Managing Authority may propose to the Monitoring Committee the designation of an intermediate body, according to Article 123 par.7 of the Regulation 1303/2013).

5.3.i. Info Point

An Information Office shall be set up in Bulgaria.

The main responsibilities of the Information Office shall be:

- to provide support to beneficiaries from the Bulgarian side during the preparation of proposals and throughout the period of implementation of operations;
- to implement information and publicity actions at national level, in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the OP.

The Information Office shall be financed by the Programme Technical Assistance budget.

5.3.j. *Reported* opinion of an independent Body on *the* designation of *the* management structures of *the* Programme referred ~~in~~ *art. 124 par. 2* of regulation 1303/2013

According to article 124 of Regulation 1303/2013 “Procedure for the designation of the managing authority and the certifying authority”, an independent audit body assesses the fulfillment of the management and control systems laid down in articles 72, 73 and 74 of Regulation 1303/2013 prior to the submission of the first application for interim payment to the Commission. The independent authority is the Audit Authority of the operational programme.

5.3.k. Body Responsible for Making Payments *to* Beneficiaries

The body responsible for making payments to beneficiaries shall be the Certifying Authority for the programme according to the provisions of article 21 par.2 of Regulation 1299/2013 and article 132 of Regulation 1303/2013. The certifying authority shall receive the payments made by the Commission and shall, as a general rule, make payments to the lead beneficiary. No amount shall be deducted or withheld from payments made to beneficiaries and no subsequent charges shall be levied that would reduce these amounts.

The procedure for making payments to beneficiaries is described in Section 6.11.2 (financial flow of public expenditure).

5.3.l. Generation and Selection of Operations

5.3.l.i Preparation and Publication of Call for Proposals

Preparation of the calls for proposals is done by the Joint Secretariat in cooperation with and under the instructions of the MA. which launches the calls for proposals – after the approval of JMC - informing potential beneficiaries about financing, the particular conditions and requirements applicable to their eligibility under the call, the selection procedures and criteria, the main obligations to be undertaken by beneficiaries in case an operation is selected for funding under the OP etc.

5.3.l.ii Submission of Proposals and Selection of Operations

Potential beneficiaries will prepare a proposal in cooperation with the Lead Beneficiary, who submits it to the Joint Secretariat.

The Joint Secretariat shall check the proposals and make certain that:

- proposals are submitted within the deadline;
- all standard documents required are completed;
- beneficiaries are eligible.

Evaluation of proposals is carried out based on the operations selection criteria, and the relevant manual (if any) approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee After the Managing Authority makes sure that the procedure for evaluating proposals was carried

out in accordance with the terms of the call for proposals and the approved operations selection criteria, it submits to the Joint Steering Committee:

- the application forms of the submitted project proposals;
- a ranking list of the evaluated project proposals;
- all evaluation forms.

In evaluating proposals, the Joint Secretariat may be assisted by external experts, selected in agreement with the participating member states.

The Joint Steering Committee shall select the operations to be funded.

On the basis of the decision of the Joint Steering Committee (selected operations), the Managing Authority shall contract the lead beneficiaries of the selected operations.

5.3.m. Joint Steering Committee

For optimum effectiveness in the exercise of the operations selection role, a Joint Steering Committee shall be set up having the exclusive responsibility for selecting the operations to be funded under the OP. According to Article 12(1) of Regulation 1299/2013, the Joint Steering Committee shall report to the Joint Monitoring Committee.

The Joint Steering Committee is co-chaired by designated representatives from the participating Member States or their substitutes. The Joint Steering Committee shall consist of a few members, taking into account the principle of proportionality. Its composition shall be decided by the participating Member States, taking into account that Member States are equally represented.

On his/her own initiative or at the request of the Joint Steering Committee, the Commission's representative shall participate in the meetings in an advisory capacity.

The Managing Authority attends the Joint Steering Committee's meetings in an advisory capacity. Moreover, specialists or experts in economic, technical, social, scientific and other matters, depending on the agenda items, may be invited to attend the meetings in an advisory capacity.

The Joint Secretariat provides secretarial support mainly by organising the meetings, preparing the agenda and keeping the minutes.

The Joint Steering Committee shall prepare its own rules of procedure under the institutional, legal and financial framework of the Member State, in which the Managing Authority of the Programme is based. At its first meeting, the Joint Steering Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure in agreement with the Managing Authority.

5.3.n. Responsibilities of the Lead Beneficiary and of Other Beneficiaries

For each operation, a lead beneficiary shall be appointed by the beneficiaries among themselves (article 13 par.1 of Regulation 1299/2013). The lead beneficiary shall:

(i) shall lay down the arrangements with the other beneficiaries participating in the operation in an agreement comprising, inter alia, provisions guaranteeing the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid according to article 27 par.2 of Regulation 1299/2013.

If the lead beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment from other beneficiaries, the Member State, on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located, shall reimburse the managing authority any amounts that were unduly paid to that beneficiary;

(ii) shall assume responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the entire operation;

shall ensure that the expenditure presented by all beneficiaries participating in the operation has been incurred for the purpose of implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between those beneficiaries and is in accordance with the document provided by the managing authority pursuant to Article 12(5);

(iii) it shall verify that the expenditure presented by other beneficiaries participating in the operation has been verified by a controller;

(iv) it shall ensure that the other beneficiaries receive the total amount of the contribution from the funds as quickly as possible and in full.

Each beneficiary participating in the operation shall assume responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure which it has declared.

5.3.o. Certification of Expenditure and Financial Flows

5.3.o.i. Certification of Expenditure

The member state (Greece) designates the public authority “Special Service Paying Authority” as a “Certifying Authority” (Article 123 of Reg. 1303/2013). The certifying authority shall be responsible for drawing up and submitting payment applications to the Commission, and certifying that they result from reliable accounting systems, are based on verifiable supporting documents and have been subject to verifications by the competent body, and for all other functions in accordance to article 126 of Reg. 1303/2013. The verifications of expenditure of operations will be carried out according to article 125, paragraph 4 of Reg. 1303/2013 and article 23 of Reg. 1299/2013. The verification of expenditure for the Greek partners will be conducted under the responsibility of the competent Special Service of the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness.

Bulgaria will assign the verification tasks to controllers in accordance with national public procurement procedures (decentralized system).

5.3.o.ii Financial Flow of Public Expenditure

The Certifying Authority receives ERDF contribution payments from the European Commission. The Certifying Authority transfers the ERDF contribution to the lead beneficiaries. The lead beneficiaries are responsible for distributing the ERDF contribution to the beneficiaries concerned.

The Greek national contribution is ensured by the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness to the Greek beneficiaries. The national contribution of Bulgaria is ensured by the Ministry of Regional Development to the Bulgarian beneficiaries.

5.3.p Monitoring

5.3.p.i Joint Monitoring Committee

The Joint Monitoring Committee of the OP is set up according to the provisions of article 47 par.1 of Regulation 1303/2013..

Its composition is decided by the participating Member States, taking into account that Member States shall be equally represented and complying with the partnership principle in managing, monitoring and evaluating the operations in all stages of programme implementation. The representatives of Member States shall come from national, regional and local authorities.

The Joint Monitoring Committee shall be co-chaired by the designated representatives of the participating Member States or their substitutes.

It shall be ensured that men and women are, as much as possible, equally represented on the Joint Monitoring Committee.

The Managing Authority attends the Joint Monitoring Committee meetings in an advisory capacity. Moreover, specialists or experts on economic, technical, social, scientific and other matters, depending on the agenda items, may be invited to attend the Joint Monitoring Committee meetings in an advisory capacity.

The Joint Secretariat undertakes the secretarial support to the Joint Monitoring Committee, mainly by organising the meetings, preparing the agenda and keeping the minutes.

The Joint Monitoring Committee shall draw up its own rules of procedure, within the institutional, legal and financial framework of the Member State where the programme Managing Authority is based, and approve them, in agreement with the Managing Authority, so that it can carry out its functions in accordance with Regulation 1303//2013 and Regulation 1299/2013. At its initial meeting, the Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure.

The Joint Monitoring Committee shall be responsible for the functions set out in article 49 of Regulation 1303/2013, and in particular it shall:

- consider and approve the criteria for selecting the operations to be financed within six months of the approval of the Operational Programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs;
- periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets of the Operational Programme on the basis of documents submitted by the Managing Authority;
- examine the results of implementation, particularly the achieving of the targets set for each priority axis and the evaluations
- consider and approve the annual and final reports on implementation referred to in (article 14 (1) of Regulation 1299/2013 and article 50 (1) of Regulation 1303/2013.;
- be informed of the annual control report, or of the part of the report referring to the Operational Programme concerned, and of any relevant comments the Commission may make after examining that report or relating to that part of the report;
- may propose to the Managing Authority any revision or examination of the Operational Programme likely to make possible the attainment of the ERDF's objectives referred to in article 3 or to improve its management, including its financial management;
- consider and approve any proposal to amend the content of the Commission decision on the contribution from the ERDF;
- approve the material of the call for proposals;
- approve the Technical Assistance annual plan

Additionally, monitoring is ensured through indicators set, annual report and annual review meeting, ex-ante and on-going evaluations. Analytical information provided in the full description of Monitoring and Control System.

5.3.r. Communication Strategy

As stipulated in article 116 of Regulation 1303/2013, the Member States and the Managing Authority for the Operational Programme shall draw up a communication strategy for the Programme so as to ensure the required publicity thereof. The

information shall be addressed to the European Union citizens and beneficiaries at the aim of highlighting the role of the Community and ensure that assistance from the ERDF is transparent. Implementation of the communication strategy and the information and publicity requirements is described in Annex XII of Regulation 1303/2013.

5.3.s. Electronic Exchange of *Data*

For the purposes of Articles 74 of Regulation 1303/2013, all official exchanges of information between the Managing Authority, the Member States and the Commission shall be carried out using an electronic data exchange system.

According to the provisions of article 122 par.3 of Regulation 1303/2013 the Managing Authority shall ensure that no later than 31 December 2015, all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and itself, the certifying authority, the audit authority and intermediate bodies can be carried out by means of electronic data exchange systems.

The systems referred to above shall facilitate interoperability with national and Union frameworks and allow for the beneficiaries to submit all information referred to in the first subparagraph only once.

5.4 Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States in case of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Provisions of articles 85, 122(2) 143 of Regulation 1303/2013 concerning financial corrections and recoveries apply as well as article 27(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

In particular, the managing authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the lead beneficiary. Beneficiaries shall repay to the lead beneficiary any amounts unduly paid.

If the lead beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment from other beneficiaries or if the managing authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead beneficiary, the Member State or third country on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the managing authority any amounts unduly paid to that beneficiary. The managing authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union.

Each Member State shall establish its own national rules regarding the procedure for the recovery of unduly paid funds to beneficiaries directly linked to financial corrections

detected by the appropriate authorities within the operations funded under the Operational Programme.

The Member States shall in the first instance be responsible for investigating irregularities and for making the financial corrections required and pursuing recoveries. In the case of a systemic irregularity, the Member State shall extend its investigation to cover all operations potentially affected.

Member States shall make the financial corrections required in connection with individual or systemic irregularities detected in operations or the Operational Programme. Financial corrections shall consist of cancelling all or part of the public contribution to an operation or to the Operational Programme. The Member States shall take into account the nature and gravity of the irregularities and the financial loss to the ERDF and shall apply a proportionate correction. Financial corrections shall be recorded in the accounts by the Managing Authority for the accounting year in which the cancellation is decided.

The contribution from the ERDF cancelled in accordance with the above-mentioned provisions may be reused by the Member State within the operational programme concerned, subject to the condition that the contribution cancelled may not be reused for any operation that was the subject of the correction or, where a financial correction is made for a systemic irregularity, for any operation affected by the systemic irregularity.

In any case a financial correction by the Commission shall not prejudice the Member State's obligation to pursue recoveries under article 143(2) of Regulation 1303/2013 and to recover State aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU and under Article 14 of Council Regulation (EC) No 659/1999.

5.5 Use of the Euro (where appropriate)

Method chosen for the conversion of expenditure incurred in another currency than the Euro

Article 28 of Regulation 1299/2013 is applicable and states that:

By way of derogation from Article 133 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, expenditure incurred in a currency other than the euro shall be converted into euro by the beneficiaries using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission in the month during which that expenditure was submitted for verification to the managing authority or the controller in accordance with Article 23 of this Regulation

The conversion shall be verified by the managing authority or by the controller in the Member State or third country in which the beneficiary is located.

5.6 Involvement of partners

Actions taken to involve the partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 in the preparation of the cooperation programme, and the role of those partners in the preparation and implementation of the cooperation programme, including their involvement in the monitoring committee

Involvement of partners during programme preparation

The drafting of the Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Operational Programme was organized in compliance with the partnership approach as referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 24 No 1303/2013. The European Territorial Cooperation Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat of the Programme (MA/JTS) coordinated the process. A Joint Programming Committee (JPC) - as the main decision making body - and a Joint Programming Task Force (JPTF) - for discussing particular topics and draft proposals - were established in 2013. The JPC and JPTF were composed of national and regional representatives from the two countries participating in the Programme.

In addition three different stakeholder consultation phases were implemented during February – August 2014:

Phase A: Investigation of needs & priorities within a wide target-set of partners.

During February and March 2014 a survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire. The main aim was to gather as much knowledge about developmental challenges / needs of the CB area which have cross-border importance/impact or can be of great value to cross-border cooperation, and gain insight on aspects regarding the implementation of the current programme (good practices to be continued; problems to be corrected/avoided).

An open process of publicizing the survey was used (via the programme website, the MA website and links on other Greek and Bulgarian Ministry sites). Additionally, special notifications were sent via e-mail and follow-up calls to potential beneficiaries previously participated in calls for proposals. The website announcement and the e-mail notifications included:

- a description of the purpose of Consultation,
- a questionnaire to be completed by the stakeholders, and
- an explanatory note with directions regarding the completion of the questionnaire.

Inputs from this consultation were analyzed and systematized by the Technical Consultant supporting the drafting of the programme and presented to the Joint Task Force as the basis for elaborating the next phase of consultation.

Phase B: Workshops with selected Stakeholders for the formulation of strategy and priorities:

This phase started immediately after the finalization of SWOT analysis and the Consultant's Diagnostic Report on the CB area existing situation and lasted for about 4 weeks (in May 2014).

The main aim was to incorporate proposals by the stakeholders regarding the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities. Two (2) workshops were organized in total: 1 in Greece (Komotini) and 1 in Bulgaria (Sandanski). Participants-partners were requested to express interest and register in advance. Caution was taken to include all 3 categories of partners in line with the relevant EU regulations (see Article 4 of the C(2013) 9651 final).

The workshops were structured around specific issues to be analyzed by the participants:

- commenting on the Diagnostic Report;
- evaluation of thematic objectives using a multi-criteria approach; and
- proposals of intervention types to address identified CB area needs/challenges.

Workshop participants were also offered the opportunity to submit their comments in writing within a 10-day period after the workshop to JTS.

Phase C: Wide public consultation through internet.

An earmarked web page was created in order boost stakeholders' involvement and to collect their perspectives on the first programme draft. This web page contained the 1st draft of the European Territorial Cooperation Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2014 – 2020" and the Financing Table by Priority Axis. It also contained a link to a questionnaire (using Google Forms), calling stakeholders to express their opinions on the appropriateness of strategy, on the specific objectives and the types of interventions selected, and the appropriateness of the financial allocation. They were also asked to contribute with proposals on appropriate types of interventions to be included in the programme by investment priority.

The announcement of the 3rd consultation phase was posted on various official web sites (MA, JTS, national authorities, etc) in order to reach the wider public. In addition, targeted dissemination was performed through emails to specific recipients (about 950 email addresses). This phase ended on 5/8/2014, lasting 19 days (from 18/7/2014 till 6/8/2014). Fifteen (**15**) stakeholders participated, 12 from the Hellenic Republic and 3 from the Republic of Bulgaria, providing a total of **17** responses.

(See: <http://www.interreg.gr/en/news/bilateral-cooperation-programmes/greece-bulgaria/735-greece-bulgaria-3rd-phase-of-the-public-consultation-for-the-preparation-of-the-etc-programme-greece-bulgaria-2014-2020.html>)

How the relevant partners will be involved in the implementation of the programme

The programme aims to take on board the partners' opinions during the implementation and evaluation IPA II Greece-Albania 2014-2020 programme.

The composition of the MC shall be designed in compliance with Article 5 of CPR and the Delegated Act for the Code of conduct of partnership. As for the involvement in the

Joint Monitoring Committee, and in view of the proportionality principle, the programme partners will receive both the draft agendas of the JMC meetings and a summary of the minutes. This will allow them to send any specific input and to be updated on the latest programme developments. In case specific partners would be interested in sending input to the JMC discussions, the partner should contact the national contact, who will gather all inputs from the respective territory. Finally, the MA will publish a summary of the relevant decisions of the Joint Monitoring Committee meetings.

As for the involvement in programme implementation, all partners will be given the opportunity to participate at the inception meetings carried out before each call for proposals during which information will be disseminated from the MA/JS to the potential beneficiaries but also input will be gathered from them. Finally, they will be considered for participation in the evaluation process (via targeted surveys) which will preferably be conducted in 2018 linking it to the appraisal for the performance framework..

6. COORDINATION

The mechanisms that ensure effective coordination between the ERDF, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and other Union and national funding instruments, including the coordination and possible combination with the Connecting Europe Facility, the ENI, the European Development Fund (EDF) and the IPA and with the EIB, taking into account the provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework as set out in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. Where Member States and third countries participate in cooperation programmes that include the use of ERDF appropriations for outermost regions and resources from the EDF, coordination mechanisms at the appropriate level to facilitate effective coordination in the use of these resources

General Coordination Functions

In order to ensure coordination among the various European Funds, the National Coordination Authority (NCA) - seated at the Greek Ministry for Development and Competitiveness - will continue to be responsible for the coordination of all programmes of the Greek Partnership Agreement 2014-2020. NCA's responsibilities include among others: synergies among all programmes and funds, compliance with National and European priorities, thematic concentration of financial resources, horizontal programming and monitoring of implementation, and the operation of an Integrated Management Information System. The fact that the Managing Authority for all European Territorial Cooperation Programmes in Greece - including the cooperation programme Greece-Bulgaria - is seated at the same Ministry, ensures full coordination with the Greek sectoral and regional programmes. The respective coordination with the Bulgarian sectoral and regional programmes is ensured by the Bulgarian National Authority which is the Ministry of Regional Development.

At the cooperation programme (CP) level, the Managing Authority ensures complementarity and synergy with the interventions of other programmes within the eligible area of the CP, by closely collaborating with the respective MAs so as to ensure that there is no overlap and that the programmes do not function on a competitive basis. In that framework, the CP Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 will need to collaborate with:

- the MAs of the Regional Operational Programmes of Central Macedonia and Eastern Macedonia-Thrace,
- the Bulgarian National Authority (for coordination with all Bulgarian OPs),
- the MAs of the Greek sectoral programmes
 - Transport infrastructure, environment and sustainable development;
 - Competitiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation; and
 - Human resource development, training and life-long learning.
- the MAs of the transnational cooperation programmes
 - Adriatic-Ionian programme;
 - Black Sea CBC programme; and
 - MED ETC programme.

Coordination Mechanisms - Procedures

The establishment of “targeted” project selection criteria will contribute to the synergy among funds and programmes. More specifically the Greece-Bulgaria CP will establish

criteria to select on a priority basis projects which capitalize on the results achieved from prior interventions and projects which exhibit a high degree of synergy/complementarity with other interventions in the eligible area.

In addition, the MA will participate in Committees and/or Networks established by NCA. More specifically, the MA will participate in the Coordination Network for Smart Specialization, the Evaluation Network, the Network for Horizontal Institutional Capacity issues and the National Environmental Network.

On a bilateral coordination basis the MA will coordinate the calls for proposals with other operational programmes implementing interventions in the Greece-Bulgaria eligible area so as to achieve complementarity.

As per the Greek Partnership Agreement 2014-2020, and in order to achieve better coordination of all ETC programmes, the Joint Coordination Committee between the Ministries of Development and Foreign Affairs will expand to include appropriate stakeholders and the National Info Point for the Adriatic-Ionian Programme.

Finally the programme MA will seek coordination with other programmes and financing means at European level by focusing especially at:

- synergies with the programme LIFE;
- synergies with the programme Employment and Social Innovation;
- synergies with the programme Start-up Europe; and
- Synergies with the Connecting Europe Facility – CEF.
- Synergies with Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD)

7. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce the administrative burden.

At National level several actions have been taken to streamline procedures in order to simplify the implementation of 2014-2020 programmes. These actions include:

- electronic signature of documents;
- interconnectivity of the central MIS system with localized MIS systems (e.g. of beneficiaries, the public contracts system, etc);
- integrated electronic exchange and electronic management of all procedures and documents concerning inputs of beneficiaries and intermediary bodies to the MIS;
- automated support mechanism for messages to beneficiaries regarding their applications, comments, etc;
- support to control procedures through electronic access to the audit trail of all interventions;
- electronic payments;
- electronic management of bidding/procurement procedures;

In addition to the above and in order to simplify procedures for the implementation of the Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 programme, simplification and harmonization will be sought in 4 main areas:

1. Streamlining and harmonization of implementation tools (HIT). In accordance with the European Commission's goal to simplify cohesion policy and move towards a smooth delivery of results orientated Programmes, harmonizing and streamlining implementation tools with other ETC Programmes will benefit Programme management and involved beneficiaries. In response to this goal, the Greece-Bulgaria Programme will translate this into the refinement, implementation, and utilization of packaged documents developed by INTERACT in conjunction with all ETC Programmes, under the name of Harmonized Implementation Tools (HIT).

These documents are targeted at ETC Programmes and projects by harmonizing and simplifying assessment criteria, project application forms, reporting forms, monitoring checklists, appeal procedures, eligibility of expenditures, indicators, and the sets of data required for monitoring. All HITs should meet minimum Programme requirements, and will take legal requirements as specified in the legislative package for 2014-2020 into account. The GR-BUL OP will, where possible, adopt the 'off the shelf' ETC tools applicable for the 2014- 2020 Programme, which can be smoothly integrated into an online monitoring system helping the Programme shift its focus towards results and quality. Where necessary or desired, the GR-BUL OP will add Programme specific elements.

2. E-cohesion tool In line with the requirements of art 122 p3 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 [CPR], the Programme will implement an IT solution embedding a set of simplification measures based on IT technologies, so called "e-cohesion". The following measures will be developed:

- a. Implementation of a communication platform that will allow any exchange of information between the beneficiaries and Programme bodies. The communication

platform will ensure secure exchange of information in both directions: from the Programme to the beneficiaries and vice versa. Beneficiaries will be granted exclusive access to the platform through an online interface available without the need to download additional software. The portal will work as a unique information centre, where the beneficiary will be able to access the documentation relevant to their operation as well as submit the information required by the Programme. The communication portal will also allow exchange of information between relevant Programme bodies, so as to avoid information redundancy and reduce the risk of error (application of the interoperability requirement).

b. Implementation of a core database that will collect input data in a secure system. The database will be connected with the communication portal and will ensure that information already submitted by the beneficiary will be displayed anytime useful (application of the only-once encoding principle). Beneficiaries will therefore be provided with structured documents partly filled in for those fields that were completed once before in the life of the operation. Moreover, the database will be equipped with a set of automatic functionalities to ensure correctness and completeness of the information encoded.

3. Simplification of procedures and Programme rules. One of the key elements to achieve a reduction of the administrative burden is the application of simplified rules and procedures. In the GR-BUL OP, the following measures are considered for implementation:

1. The introduction of flat rates for staff, office and administrative costs, and travel costs.
2. The introduction of simplified cost options, as regulated in Article 67 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, in the field of supporting certain project activities, such as the project preparatory phase (e.g. preparation costs reimbursed on a lump sum basis).
3. The implementation of the Delegated Act on General Rules on Eligibility of Expenditure for Cooperation Programmes when preparing the programme's eligibility rules and financial structures (e.g. budget lines). Harmonization of eligibility rules will reduce the need for beneficiaries participating in different programmes to study and understand various interpretations of eligibility rules. It will also simplify the work for the first level controllers.
4. Review and, if possible, streamlining of procedures for shared costs, in-kind contributions and other items related to the project budgets.
5. The GR-BUL OP plans to apply the measures above from the beginning of the new programme period.

4. Lean management throughout all implementation processes The implementation processes within the GR-BUL OP will be evaluated and monitored on an ongoing basis to enable continuous improvements during the programme period. The aim will be to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries and programme bodies, as well as to reduce the risk for administrative errors to a minimum.

8. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

8.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

Sustainable development is one of the main pillars of the Programme which supports several specific objectives with actions that focus fully on sustainable development, notably:

Priority 2/Specific Objective 2.1(Reduce impacts from (natural) disasters) with indicative actions: Adaptation/mitigation pilot actions (for specific risks) with positive mitigation effects. Building up a common knowledge base: data observation/processing capacities, mechanisms for the exchange of information and early warnings, joint risk prevention and emergency response plans, etc;

Priority 2/Specific Objective 2.3(Enhance water and soil management) with indicative actions: Development of CB eco-innovation partnerships and participation in European Innovatio- Partnerships in the areas of water management (pollution control and efficient use) and soil management (including contaminated lands; Pilot applications or mainstreaming of existing innovative methods/technologies in the areas of water management (pollution control and efficient use) and soil management (including contaminated lands) and joint development of new methods; Promoting “green behavior” campaigns in the areas of water and soil management.

Priority 3/Specific Objective 3.2 (Improve transportation environmental impact) with indicative actions: Transport investments aiming at reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities (including transport services);Development of new technologies/methods for the design and implementation of envi-ronment-friendly transport infrastructures and systems.

The other Priority Axes 1 “A competitive and Innovative Cross-Border area” and 2“ A socially inclusive Cross-Border area” as well as the other Specific objectives of the 2nd and 3rd Axis, do not directly focus on sustainable development issues. However, it is quite likely that projects supported under those priorities also address aspects of sustainable development in their work. This may for instance be the case for SMEs or natural and cultural heritage related projects that focus on capacities and skills for eco-innovation, or projects that concentrate on the green technology sectors.

Project applicants under these Priority Axes will be invited to explain in their application how their project will comply with and possibly even strengthen sustainable development. At the end of the project the partners will be asked to report how their project activities and outputs actually contributed to this horizontal principle. However, no specific selection criteria are foreseen to favour the development of projects dealing with this issue.

All projects funded by the Programme can incorporate efforts to ‘green’ their activities and/or minimize the carbon footprint of their activities, for example by:

- including env-ronmental criteria in their procurement procedures (Green procurement procedures, GPP);
- adopting greening measures for the organization and implementation of events;

- giving preference to environmentally friendly transport options for short travel distances;
- following the procedures described in the environmental management system and certification (EMAS).

Consideration should be given to adopting a green business model encompassing the following principles and practices: Resource sufficiency (e.g. sharing models, ‘less is more’, higher energy efficiency, higher levels of recycling); Greater use of renewable energy; Implementing the concept of Eco-efficiency (e.g. enhancing resource productivity, giving preference to long-lasting materials over those with a short lifespan, slow-food, and slow-travelling); Efficiency beyond the market (use of open-source development software, wikis, shared knowledge environments, new non-monetized markets); Regional supply chain (reducing supply chain length and CO2 emissions); and Use of video conference facilities

Further to the above, the programme has conducted a Strategic Environmental Assessment during its preparation and will apply Directive 2001/42 – as incorporated in the National Legal Framework - regarding Environmental Impact Assessment to certain projects (e.g. large construction projects, road works, etc)

8.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of the specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the cooperation programme and, in particular, in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination, and in particular, the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The ETC Programme GR-BG adopts social inclusion, which also implies equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as a cross-cutting theme, to be applied in relevant cases within the scope of the programme’s action.

The Programme strives for promoting equal opportunities and preventing any discrimination based on for instance sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during its life cycle and in particular in relation to access to funding. It will take into account the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disability.

The Priority Axis 4 focus fully on social inclusion, notably with actions as: Support to renovation and equipping of existing and new primary health care practices in CB areas with serious limitations in access (mainly for specific disadvantage groups) to primary health care; Support for the establishment and provision of operational support to Social Enterprises that offer innovative solutions, promote inclusive CB labour markets and social services accessible to all in the CB area; Support for social franchising which is the cross-border transfer of a social enterprise business model from one side of the border to the other; Support for the development and implementation of methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of social, economic and environmental impacts of social economy in the CB area.

Additionally to the Priority Axis 4, this cross-cutting theme is most likely to emerge in projects under the specific objectives 1.1 and 1.2 dedicated to supporting SME development and entrepreneurship. Even if the primary focus of this specific objective is not on addressing the equal opportunities/non-discrimination principle, it is anticipated that certain Interregional Cooperation Projects may emerge that focus on, or at least incorporate the equal opportunities principle. It may benefit the innovation climate to encourage diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion and age, etc. to provide a broadened framework for the projects.

Under this specific objective Projects could for instance address the issue of promoting entrepreneurship among specific target groups at risk of discrimination (e.g. Roma, unemployed youth, elderly persons, disabled people, women, long-term unemployed and migrants). The development of such Projects, among the possible applications that may come forward in the corresponding Priority Axis, would be welcomed by the programme bodies.

Project applicants will be invited to explain in their application how their project will comply with and possibly even strengthen equal opportunities and non-discrimination. At the end of the project the partners will be asked to report how their project activities and outputs actually contributed to this horizontal principle. Based on the aggregated contributions reported by projects the ETC Programme GR-BG will be able to monitor and demonstrate how the programme concretely contributed to equal opportunities and non-discrimination. However, no specific selection criteria are foreseen to favour the development of projects dealing with this issue.

8.3 Equality between men and women

Description of the contribution of the cooperation programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at cooperation programme and operation level.

The Programme will strive to promote equality between men and women throughout all stages of programme implementation, including the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operations.

This cross-cutting theme could emerge for instance in projects under the specific objectives 1.1 and 1.2 dedicated to supporting SME development and entrepreneurship and the 4.2 to social enterprises. Under these specific objectives projects could for instance address the issue of promoting female entrepreneurship, support opportunities for women to play a more active role in innovation processes and in the formation of new enterprise. The development of such Projects as part of the wider thematic scope of these specific objectives would be welcomed by the programme bodies.

Project applicants will be invited to explain in their application how their project will comply with and possibly even strengthen gender equality. At the end of the project the partners will be asked to report how their project activities and outputs actually contributed to this horizontal principle. Based on the aggregated contributions reported by projects the ETC Programme GR-BG will be able to monitor and demonstrate how the programme concretely contributed to equality between men and women. However, no specific selection criteria are foreseen to favour the development of projects dealing with this issue.

9. SEPERATE ELEMENTS

9.1 Major projects to be implemented during the programming period

Table 23: List of major projects

Project	Planned notification / submission date (year, quarter)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority axes / Investment priorities
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9.2 Performance framework of the cooperation programme

Table 24: Performance framework (summary table)

Priority axis	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)
1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	0	50.00
1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	F0201	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	2.531.657,51	20,751,291.11
1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	K0201	Selection of enterprises	Number	15	
2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	0	300,000.00
2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	F0202	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	5.191.480,24	42,553,116.71
2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	K0202	Selected projects CO20 (Decision of approval)	Projects	4	
2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	K0205	Selected projects O0202 (Decision of approval)	Projects	5	
2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	O0202	Number of cultural assets rehabilitated/protected	cultural assets	0	8.00
3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	CO14	Roads: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km	0	37.00
3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	F0203	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	4.172.487,96	34,200,721.00
3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	K0203	Projects with at least one signed Contract of technical - construction works sub-projects	number	2	
4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	F0204	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	2.977.862,13	24,408,706.00
4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	K0204	Projects with at least one signed Contract of (technical -	Number	6	

Priority axis	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)
		construction works or other) sub-projects			
4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	O0206	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	Health care institutions	0	12.00

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

Respondents to phase A of public consultation (Questionnaire):

GREEK PARTNERS

Public partners

1. Aristotle University Thessaloniki - Laboratory of Heat Transfer and Environmental Engineering
2. Chemical Process and Energy Resources Institute / Center for Research and Technology Hellas (CPERI / CERTH)
3. Delta Municipality
4. Democritus University of Thrace
5. Doxato Municipality
6. Egnatia Odos S.A
7. Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace
8. Municipality of Iraklia
9. Municipality of Kavala
10. Municipality of Komotini
11. Municipality of Orestiada
12. Municipality of Pilea-Hortiatis
13. Municipality of Thermaikos
14. Municipality of Thessaloniki
15. National School of Public Health, Department of Parasitology Entomology and Tropical Diseases, National Malaria Reference Center, Specialized Laboratory for Molecular Diagnosis of Parasites, Laboratory of Medical Entomology
16. National School of Public Health (NSPH)
17. Region of Central Macedonia
18. Region of East Macedonia and Thrace
19. University of Macedonia (UoM) Department of Economics,
20. University of Macedonia, Business Administration Department

Socio-economic partners

1. Chamber of Small and Medium Sized Industries of Thessaloniki
2. Federation of Evros Craft Industries
3. Federation of Industries of Northern Greece
4. Hellenic Fashion Industry Association (SEPEE)
5. Interregional Cooperation at Scientific Computing in Interdisciplinary Science
6. Support Structure for Organisations of Social Economy and Entrepreneurship

Civil Society partners

1. National Confederation of Disabled People - N.C.D.P
2. The Smile of The Child

BULGARIAN PARTNERS

Public partners

1. Bansko Municipality
2. Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW)
3. Eco Energy Foundation
4. Harmanli municipality
5. Ministry of Environment and Water / European and International Projects Directorate, Water Management Directorate
6. Municipality of Gotse Delchev
7. Municipality of Petrich
8. Municipality of Zlatograd
9. Municipality Satovcha
10. National Police Trade Union of Bulgaria
11. Region with Administrative Center the City of Kardzhali
12. Regional Administration of Smolyan
13. Regional Forestry Directorate - Kardzhali
14. Regional Municipalities Association "Maritza"
15. Road Infrastructure Agency - Bulgaria

Socio-economic partners

1. Bulgarian Industrial Association

Civil Society partners

1. Association for Education, Culture and Arts (AECA)

Participants to phase B of public consultation (Workshops):

1st workshop (Komotini)

GREEK PARTNERS

Public partners

1. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
2. Decentralized Administration Macedonia-Thrace
3. Municipality of Drama
4. Inter-Municipal Cooperation of East Macedonia-Thrace
5. Democritus University of Thrace
6. Egnatia Odos S.A
7. Center for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH)

8. Region of East Macedonia and Thrace
9. University of Macedonia
10. Regional Association of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace Municipalities
11. Regional Association of Central Macedonia Municipalities
12. Regional Fund of East Macedonia-Thrace
13. Region of Central Macedonia
14. Technological Educational Institute of East Macedonia-Thrace

Socio-economic partners

1. Greek-Bulgarian Chamber
2. Federation of Industries of Northern Greece
3. Rodopi Chamber of Trades and Crafts
4. Drama Chamber of Trades and Crafts
5. Thessaloniki Chamber of Trades and Crafts
6. Kavala Chamber of Trades and Crafts
7. Economic Chamber of Thrace
8. OMIKRON Ltd

Civil Society partners

1. ARSIS - Association for the Social Support of Youth
2. Inter-Balkan Environment Center
3. OIKOKOINONIA, Citizens' Initiative for the Support of social vulnerable groups
4. Management Body of Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli National Park
5. Management Body of Nestos Delta-Vistonida-Ismarida National Park

BULGARIAN PARTNERS

Public partners

1. Association of Rhodopi Municipalities
2. Regional Administration Haskovo
3. Regional Administration Kardzhali
4. Regional Administration Smolyan
5. Regional Municipalities Association "Maritza"

2nd workshop (Sadanski)

GREEK PARTNERS

Public partners

1. Egnatia Odos S.A
2. Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace

Socio-economic partners

1. GNOSI ANAPTIXIAKI Business Development Consultants

2. Hellenic Fashion Industry Association (SEPEE)

BULGARIAN PARTNERS

Public partners

1. American University
2. BFSA - Blagoevgrad (Regional Dir. For Food Safety)
3. Fire Safety and Civil Protection Directorate
4. Government Administration (Undefined)
5. National Authority
6. Regional Administration of Blagoevgrad
7. Road Infrastructure Agency
8. Sandanski Municipality
9. Smolyan Regional Administration
10. South-west Univ.- "Neofit Rilski"
11. Strumyani Municipality
12. West Aegean Basin Directorate - Blagoevgrad

Socio-economic partners

1. Association Business Information and Consulting Center - Sandanski
2. BIC - Sandanski
3. Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Blagoevgrad

Civil Society partners

1. Press

Respondents to phase C of public consultation (Draft OP):

GREEK PARTNERS

Public partners

1. INAB/ CERTH
2. Municipality of Serres
3. Municipality of Thessaloniki
4. University of Macedonia
5. University of Macedonia

Socio-economic partners

1. Support Structure for Organisations of Social Economy and Entrepreneurship
2. Exhibitions Research Institute

Civil Society partners

1. Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre (EKBY)

2. Institute Mohamed Ali for the Research of Eastern Traditions (I.M.A.R.E.T.)
3. National Confederation of Disabled People - N.C.D.P.
4. OIKOKOINONIA, Citizens' Initiative for the Support of social vulnerable groups

BULGARIAN PARTNERS

Public partners

1. Municipality of Petrich
2. Road Infrastructure Agency

Civil Society partners

1. European Institute for Development

9.4 Applicable programme implementation conditions governing the financial management, programming, monitoring, evaluation and control of the participation of third countries in transnational and interregional programmes through a contribution of ENI and IPA resources

Not applicable

Documents

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Partner State Agreements GR-BG	Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme	19-Sep-2014		Ares(2014)3086080	Partner State Agreement GR-BG_BG Partner State Agreement GR-BG_GR	19-Sep-2014	niakdimi
Report of the ex-ante evaluation	Report of the ex-ante evaluation	19-Sep-2014		Ares(2014)3086080	Report of the ex-ante evaluation1	19-Sep-2014	niakdimi
Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	19-Sep-2014		Ares(2014)3086080	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	19-Sep-2014	niakdimi
Citizens' summary	Citizens' summary	19-Sep-2014		Ares(2014)3086080	Citizens' summary	19-Sep-2014	niakdimi
Map of Eligible Area for ETC Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020"	A map of the area covered by the cooperation programme	19-Sep-2014		Ares(2014)3086080	Map of Eligible Area for ETC Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020"	19-Sep-2014	niakdimi