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I. STRATEGY FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SELECTED THEMATIC PRIORITIES AND THE RELEVANT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND COUNTRY STRATEGIC PAPER(S)

1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the selected thematic priorities and the relevant Partnership Agreement and Country Strategic Paper(s)

1.1.1 Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the selected thematic priorities and the relevant Partnership Agreement and Country Strategic Paper(s)

The cross-border area is located in South–Eastern Europe, at the south-eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula and includes the districts (equivalent to NUTS-3) Burgas, Yambol and Haskovo in Republic of Bulgaria and the provinces Edirne and Kırklareli in the Republic of Turkey. The territory has an extent of about 29.000 km² and the common border of both countries stretches along 288 km (including three operating border crossings) and has a total population of 1,5 Million inhabitants (784.480 inhabitants on the Bulgarian eligible programming area and 742.000 inhabitants on the Turkish eligible programming area; cf. National Statistical Institute Bulgaria, 2014h: online; Turkish Statistical Institute, 2014b: online).

The eligible area in Bulgaria represents 14.99 % of the total territory of the country respectively the eligible area in Turkey represents 1.58 % of total country territory. Main cities of the region are Burgas (211.535 inhabitants), Yambol (72.778) and Haskovo (92.788) in Bulgaria and Edirne (148.474) and Kırklareli (61.880) in Turkey (cf. Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, Census 2011; State Institute of Statistics, Republic of Turkey, 2014: online). Generally, the CBC region shows a very low population density of 54,9 inhabitants/km² in Burgas, 45,3 inhabitants/km² in Haskovo and 39,7 inhabitants/km² in Yambol (cf. EUROSTAT, 2011: online). Edirne has a population density of 64,7 inhabitants/km², Kırklareli of 53 inhabitants/km².

Geographical characteristics

The *geographical structure* of the co-operation area alternates from altitude 710m to 1000 m and includes plains, low altitude valleys, plateaus and hilly areas, with some mountain features. In the North-West the area borders to the Eastern Rhodopi Mountains and to the low branches of the Sakar Mountain in Bulgaria, and on the South-west to the Aegean Sea (Saros Gulf) in Turkey. In the North-East the co-operation area borders to the Balkan Range in Bulgaria, and in the South-East to Strandja/Yildiz Mountain and Black Sea littoral presented both in Bulgaria and in Turkey.

The *water reserves* of CBC area comprise both surface and ground waters. Maritsa/Meric River is the biggest river on the Balkan Peninsula. Tundja/Tunca River is another important one in the region. The region of Strandja/Yildiz Mountain is the richest on water resources in the entire Thracian – Strandja/Yildiz area.

Five rivers take their sources from the Strandja/Yildiz Mountain. The largest of them are Ropotamo, Dyavolska and Veleka/Değirmendere. Also the surface waters are presented by several big lakes situated on the Bulgarian side. The ground water resources consist of mineral springs and thermal waters. Joint influence of the Black Sea and Aegean Sea; Strandja, Sakar, Balkan Range and Eastern Rhodopes Mountains as well as Maritsa and Tundja/Tunca Rivers set the patterns of *the climate* over the cooperation area.

The climate varies from transitional-continental to continental-Mediterranean (mild winters, hot summers). The *mountains* are generally forested with deciduous trees and some evergreen. Different types of *mineral resources* are presented in the co-operation area. There are non-metal deposits

(limestone, marble, gabbro, granite, asbestos and argill), metal deposits (polymetallic ore - mainly lead, zinc, and silver) and brown coal deposits on the Bulgarian side. On the Turkish side there are deposits of coal, chrome, iron, copper, bauxite, marble and sulphur. There are considerable sources of sea-salt in the Black Sea coastal areas of the cooperation area.

Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion

Regarding the transformation of labour markets it is noticeable, that especially Turkish regions belong to the most vulnerable regions in Europe, and also part of the Bulgarian regions are classified as vulnerable ones (Haskovo and Yambol). The situation in the field of unemployment is quite similar. Here the Turkish regions of the cross-border area are identified as very vulnerable regions, Haskovo and Yambol regions from Bulgarian side are also classified as vulnerable ones.

Especially the situation for young employees illustrates a threat for the future development of the area, due to the hindrance of the youth employees entering the labour market. These current developments contain the risk of young people losing their *“qualifications attained by not participating in further training and furthermore lacking social security rights, since they have not yet contributed to the social system”* (OIR et al., 2011: 102). Generally, *“the highest rates of youth unemployment [...] can be found on the Balkan Peninsula [...]. The main reason for this is a demographic development with very high reproduction rates, that leads to a decoupling of young people trying to enter the labour market and the real economic and labour market growth”* (OIR et al., 2011: 103).

Unemployment is a major issue for the CBC region, in all participating regions the unemployment rate has rising during the last years. The unemployment rate of Burgas District fell from 4,1% in 2007 to 3,9% in 2009 and rose then to 12,4% in the year 2011. In 2012 the unemployment rate was 11,5% (cf. National Statistics Institute, 2014a: online). In Yambol and Haskovo Districts, the unemployment rates are even higher, rising to 14,9% in 2012. Both districts started from a higher level in the year 2007 (7,2% in Yambol, 9,2% in Haskovo) (cf. National Statistics Institute, 2014b,c: online). The unemployment rate of Edirne of 5,9% in 2011 rose to 7,5% in the year 2012. In Kırklareli the rate of 8,4% in 2011 slightly recovered to 7,9% in the year 2012. In comparison, the general unemployment rate for Turkey was 9,8% in 2011 resp. 9,2% in 2012 (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012a). Taking into account the labour force participation rate in the year 2011 shows for Edirne and Kırklareli that the participation rate ranges around 55% (56,2% in Edirne and 54% in Kırklareli, cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012a).

It becomes visible, that both sides of the border depict a similar socio-economic development in the last few years. In relation to the situation of unemployment, generally the rates for youth unemployment are at a very high level, including the threat of brain drain occurrences in the region (cf. above).

Specific focus: Demographic development

Especially in Bulgaria, the total population shrank strongly between 2005 and 2012. For example the total population of the Bulgarian regions of the programming area has decreased from 830.917 inhabitants in 2005 to 784.480 inhabitants in the year 2012 (cf. Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 10; Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, District Statistics, 2012: online).

Over the period 2001-2011, the population of Haskovo District has decreased by nearly 11%. The decline in population is due to the persistent processes forming the rate of natural increase that is negative, while net emigration became a problem only in the last few years. People leaving the district mostly relocate to Plovdiv, Sofia, and Stara Zagora; emigration abroad is not as common as in other districts. Each year, approximately 2.300-2.400 new babies are born, most of them, as can be expected, in the cities and bigger towns. The birth rate is lower compared to other districts in the region (for example Plovdiv and Sofia), but higher than areas in the North and North Central regions. Over 70% of the population live in urbanised areas, that is relatively high compared to most other districts. In 2011, there was an additional movement of people in the direction of the cities. The age dependency ratio is higher than the country average, with the population aged over 65 being 50% more than the population aged 14 years or younger. The working age population (15-64 years) was nearly three times the population aged over 65 years that is close to the national average.

Over the period 2001 - 2011, the population of the Yambol District has decreased by over 15%, a significant percentage compared to the country average. The district is characterised by high negative levels of both natural increase and net migration. The movement of people is usually in the direction of Sofia and Burgas: only in 2010, more than 1.000 people migrated from Yambol to these districts. In 2011, outward movement to other districts generally subsided, as did migration abroad. Nearly 70% of

the population live in urbanised areas, that is relatively high compared to most other districts. In 2011, there was an additional movement of people in the direction of the cities, that is a tendency characteristic of the entire country. The age dependency ratio ranks above the national average. The population aged over 65 years is 50% more than the population aged below 14. In 2011, the population of working age (15-64) was nearly three times the population aged over 65 years.

The district demography looks better than most other districts of the country. The population of Burgas has decreased only slightly over the past 12 years: 1,8% for the period 2001-2011. It is one of the few districts in the country where the number of people who have relocated from elsewhere is larger than the number of those who left over the last ten years. This process however, falls short of making up for the negative rate of natural increase of the population; Burgas attracts new residents mainly from Sliven and Yambol districts, and, during the last few years, also from Sofia (capital city). Meanwhile the preferred places for permanent relocation of citizens of Burgas are Sofia (capital) or abroad. The Burgas District is among the most highly urbanized areas in the country. The proportion of urban population is 74.8%, and has been increasing very rapidly in the last three years. It could be explained by the economic crisis and the declining employment prospects for the rural population. In 2011, the district had the second lowest age dependency ratio, calculated as the ratio of people over 65 and children under 14 years, after the Sliven District, that is partly due to the ethnic profile of the population. Accordingly, the dependency ratio (population over 65 to the working-age population) is well below the country average.

Taking into account the Turkish part of the CBC programme area shows positive developments; in comparison the total population in Turkey is 76,7 Mio. Inhabitants (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2014: online). Here the population increased between these ten years (+15% to +30%); in both Turkish provinces participating in the CBC Programme the population is expected to slightly increase until 2023 (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013a).

This population developments of the last years become also visible in the accumulated migration between 1998 and 2008. The Bulgarian regions show a negative development, following the national average. For the Turkish regions, the development is positive, although taking into account the national developments in Turkey depicts, that in other Turkish regions, the accumulated migration scores higher than in the regions of the CBC area. In the period of 2011-2012, Edirne and Kırklareli both showed a positive net migration (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013b).

Demographically, the population of the eligible Bulgarian regions also display a higher ageing index than the national average (cf. Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, Census 2011). The mean age of the population on the Bulgarian part of the eligible area shows higher values than for the Turkish part of the programme area. Focussing especially on the provinces of Edirne and Kırklareli shows that especially Edirne displays a quite low median age of 31,8 years for females and 29,7 years for males (data from 2012). Until 2023 the mean age is expected to rise to 33,7 years for females and 31,9 years for males (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013a).

The life expectancy at birth for the whole CBC area is quite high and generally corresponds to the respective national average. The life expectancy in the CBC region is up to 76,6 years. Generally, the region can be classified as a prepared region towards the issue of an ageing population. The region therefore performs better than one of the northern Bulgarian regions (vulnerable regions) but on the Turkish side the area around Istanbul performs better and is therefore classified as a low impact region concerning ageing.

Challenges

- The acceleration of demographic change (including ageing and the decrease of population) constitutes a long-term challenge intensifying further and having major economic, social and territorial implications on the CBC region.
- Increasing levels of poverty, low income and social exclusion illustrate major challenges, which may further focus especially on rural and peripheral areas – which already being characterised by negative transformation processes – due to the increasing concentration of economic activities on main cities and urban hubs.
- Negative Migration – geographically showing clear East-West divides – constitutes a major challenge for those parts of the CBC region, which are already affected by negative population developments (shrinking total population, ageing).
- The needs of regional labour markets are often not met by the available workforce, i.e. missing qualifications, etc.; labour market supply and labour market demand are therefore not

corresponding. This results in an additional increase of the already high level of unemployment.

- The situation of a declining economy and rising unemployment cannot be balanced by growing sectors, like industry and service; on contrary, the situation is further intensified through a limited rate of job creation rate and a partly low labour force participation rate.

Needs

- There exists the regional need to make full use of the existing labour potential and to enhance labour force participation in order to face diverse challenges including ageing, brain drain occurrences and rising global competition.
- The skills of the labour force need to meet the needs of the labour market, including sufficient qualifications such as IT and foreign language skills to improve the general competitiveness of the private sector.
- There exists the urgent need to fight poverty and minimise social exclusion; both challenges are currently further intensified by rising unemployment levels and a generally low adaptability of the labour force to changing conditions, therefore more and better employment opportunities need to be developed and implemented.

Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation & risk prevention and management

Taking a look at different environmental media, such as air, water and soil shows, that the air conditions in the region are quite good, with the *“main reasons for air pollution are emissions of fuel used in industry and for households heating and exhaust gases of vehicles”* (Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 19).

The same situation is visible in the field of surface water, main reason for polluted water is the lack of sewerage systems in the majority of smaller municipalities. For ground water, there is pollution with phosphates or nitrates (cf. Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 19). In Haskovo and Jambol districts nearly 70% of the population live in areas with public sewerage systems, that is close to the national average, whereas in Burgas region almost the total population live in areas with public sewerage systems (cf. Regional Profiles, 2014: online).

In the Turkish provinces Edirne and Kırklareli 100% of the population is served by water supply networks (2010). The rate of population served by drinking water treatment plant amounts 41% in Edirne and 24% in Kırklareli. This is also mirrored in the actual investments in water supply facilities, whereas the province of Kırklareli shows a quite higher expenditure (more than 210.000 TL) than the province of Edirne, which resembles the need for improvement in Kırklareli (about 6.000 TL) (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2010).

In the field of soil, erosion is a main issue for the region, where especially larger areas in Kırklareli are affected (cf. Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 19).

Both countries have a tradition in the preservation and management of nature. The issue of the maintenance of biodiversity is an important topic in the area and a range of regional best-practice examples is already available (Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013: 20). The region also hosts a number of nature parks and protected areas, such as the Strandja Nature Park in Bulgaria and the Gala Lake National Park in Turkey (Edirne). Additionally, the two areas Kasatura Korfezi Nature Reserve (Kırklareli) and Saka Lake Nature Reserve (Kırklareli) are located in the province of Kırklareli (cf. Strandja, 2014: online; Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2014a/b: online).

Taking into account the environmental situation, some differences between the two neighbouring countries may be identified. Especially for the topics of health and heat waves different results for the area become evident. Northern parts of Bulgaria and the Turkish regions being engaged in CBC, are classified as vulnerable regions whereas the eastern eligible Bulgarian regions are categorised as most vulnerable ones. Generally, the whole cross-border area is rated as region with deficits to adapt to climate change. The cluster to which the cross-border area belongs is *“characterized by general below average performances in adaptive capacities, once again reflecting the lag in their national economies compared to the EU average”* (OIR et al., 2011: 71).

One main environmental issue includes the Black Sea, which is one of the main connection factors of the CBC region (Burgas and Kırklareli are connected to the Sea). The Black Sea is habitat for 168 fish types, four different marine mammals and thousand of plants.

Generally, the Black Sea faces numerous problems and threats such as the decrease of biological resources, declining diversity of spaces as well as the reduction of aesthetic values of the sea (cf. Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, 2013: online). Reasons for these developments are pollution, irresponsible fishing in the sea as well as eutrophication. Taking into

account, for example the total amount of loaded and unloaded goods¹ in the NUTS 2 regions Yugoiztochen (BG) and Tekirdag, Edirne, Kırklareli (TR), shows an excessive increase in Turkey between 2010 and 2011 (2010: 4.576 thousand tonnes to 16.093 thousand tonnes). Due to the efforts of the last years, improvements are already visible, although these are *“still in the early stages, [and] are unstable and still far from the strategic target: that is to bring the conditions of the environment back to those that were observed in the 1960s”* (Black Sea Commission, 2013: online). Therefore, the BSEC especially points out, that *“elaborate work needs to be done in this sphere individually and collectively by the Member States and with the support/involvement, when and where needed, of the Third Parties who are also responsible, albeit partly, for the existing pollution. The NGO support and active participation in combating pollution is an effective way and needs to be propagated”* (BSEC, 2014a: online).

Another relevant issue for the CBC region is the issue of natural threats, especially flooding. Maritsa River is the biggest river on the Balkan peninsula with a catchment area more than 53.000 km². Maritsa River basin has been quite densely populated (more than 2 million people on the Bulgarian territory), highly industrialised and with intensive agriculture. The basin area at the upper course of the river has predominantly high-mountain character while the character in the middle and lower river course is plain. The biggest tributaries of Maritsa River are Tunca and Arda Rivers. While Arda River does not belong to the Bulgarian-Turkish border area, the Tunca River crosses the border region and marks the border between the two countries for about 9 km. Tunca River catchments area is about 7884 km² and the length on the Bulgarian territory is 350 km. Arda and Tunca Rivers converge the main stream of Maritsa river on Turkish territory, south of the Bulgarian – Turkish border near the city of Edirne.

The climatic and geographical characteristics of Maritsa and Tunca River Basins lead to specific run-off conditions: flash floods, high inter-annual variability, heavy soil erosion reducing the channel and reservoirs' capacities through sedimentation, etc. The destructive forces of climatic hazards manifesting themselves in the form of rainstorms, severe thunderstorms, intensive snowmelt, floods and droughts. Climate change is a causative element in flood disasters. Despite of the significant number of reservoirs and cascades having total capacity for Maritsa and Tunca about $2.2 \times 10^9 \text{ m}^3$ and for Arda about $1 \times 10^9 \text{ m}^3$ in the Bulgarian territory, their retention possibilities are not sufficient to reduce (control) the floods downstream.

In February 2005 and March 2006, significant flood hazards occurred in Maritsa River Basin. A lot of losses in agriculture occurred, in 2006, along the lower part of Tunca, 2.500 ha agricultural area were heavily affected and downstream at the city of Edirne flooded area was 37.500 ha.

As part of prevention, four telemetric hydrometry stations have been established in Bulgarian part of the Maritsa catchments, one is on the Arda river, cast after Ivaylovgrad dam (close to Greece border), two stations installed on the main channel of Maritsa river, one in Plovdiv city the other one near to Svilengrad town and the forth one established on Tunca River in Elhovo. These stations are recording continuously and supplying real time river data using satellite and GSM communication systems to the both countries.

Starting from PHARE Cross-Border Co-operation Programme (CBC) between Bulgaria and Turkey as well as continuing with Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, several projects have been implemented so to prevent the floods in the CBC region (cf. Plovdiv, 2014: online).

Another environmental threat for the CBC region are fires that occur as a result of climate change so respective measures need to be tackled. During the programming period 2007-2013 there are good examples for cooperation between respective Bulgarian and Turkish equivalent institutions in terms of population prevention of natural and man-made hazards. This is a good ground for continuous cooperation between the partnering countries.

Challenges

- The region is vulnerable towards natural hazards and coastal threats, which negatively corresponds to the intensified effects of climate change manifesting themselves through an increase of the frequency and intensity of natural hazards (flooding, droughts, etc.).
- The region as a low energy efficient area and its high dependency on fossil fuels faces challenges of energy secure in energy supply.

¹

“Goods loaded refers to goods placed on a means of transport and dispatched” (EUROSTAT, 2014: online).

- The increasing pressure on the environment due to urbanisation, intensified agriculture, and transport worsens the existing negative situation of local environmental pollution in different sectors.
- Despite existing initiatives for the protection of the Black Sea, the region faces a number of major challenges including the decrease of biological resources, declining diversity of spaces and the reduction of aesthetic values.

Needs

- Integrated and coordinated territorial approaches as well as more and better measures, including a higher degree of information sharing, are needed for the effective management of natural hazards and climate change risks which will gain in gravity and frequency.
- Existing (economic) pressure on natural resources needs to be reduced, as e.g. economic growth needs to be decoupled from the use of natural resources; labour intensive pollutant sectors like textile, leather and chemistry therefore need to be modified.
- The good environmental conditions of the region need to be kept and developed; natural parks and ecological zones need to be further improved.
- A sustainable management and the protection of natural resources is a necessity for the CBC region to improve the efficiency of use of natural resources in the area.
- A better integration of the protected areas into spatial development is needed.
- Actions and common approaches are needed to improve the environmental state and the conditions of the Black Sea (incl. coastal zones) and to further promote and encourage already existing initiatives in the area.
- In the field of sustainability, all activities need to take the well-being of the natural environment, the society and the economy – as well as their reciprocal influences – into consideration.

Sustainable transport and public infrastructures

The CBC region is served by a number of transport infrastructures, additionally three border crossings are in operation in the area: Kapitan–Andreevo/Kapıkule, Lesovo–Hamzabeyli and Târnovo–Kırklareli. In the field of TEN-T and the core network (aiming at removing bottlenecks, upgrading infrastructure, etc.), the region is part of the Orient/ East-Med corridor (cf. EU COM, 2013b: online). “The Orient/East-Med Corridor connects the maritime interfaces of the North, Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Seas, allowing optimising the use of the ports concerned and the related Motorways of the Sea. Including Elbe as inland waterway, it will improve the multimodal connections between Northern Germany, the Czech Republic, the Pannonian region and Southeast Europe. It extends, across the sea, from Greece to Cyprus²” (EU COM, 2013c: online). Taking into account the vulnerability of the regions towards the mobility of persons and goods shows that the region is endowed with less air and sea transport infrastructure. “This relative weakness, however, implies that there is considerable opportunity for the successful implementation of development strategies based on transportation hub functions in this part of Europe” (OIR et al., 2011: 16). The high vulnerability in the field of accessibility, may be expressed in “a twofold challenge, where a capacity which could possibly offset accessibility disadvantages is not yet available” (OIR et al., 2011: 20; cf. p. 16).

This is also underlined by the fact, that “Turkey and the Mediterranean neighbourhood have distinctly lower road densities, they are also sparsely populated. Rail network densities compared to population, on the other hand, are distinctly higher within Europe than in Neighbourhood states” (OIR et al., 2011: 20).

The region is crossed by the A1 Trakia Motorway from Sofia to Burgas on the Bulgarian side of the border. Furthermore a rather new motorway, the A4 Maritsa Motorway, is crossing the Turkish borderregion and connects the provinces of Haskovo and Edirne. The O-3 Motorway in Turkey furthermore connects the province of Edirne with Istanbul. The state roads D100, D110, D550, D555 are connecting both provinces to each other and to the motorway. The main share of roads in Edirne and Kırklareli includes village roads, in Edirne village roads amount around 1.800 kilometres, in Kırklareli around 1.900 km (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012b). Both provinces hold just a small

²

Cyprus is used as a geographical term to describe the Island of Cyprus.

share of motorways (51 kilometres in Edirne and 70 kilometres in Kırklareli) (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012b).

The railway network in the cross-border area is operated by the Bulgarian State Railways (BDZ) on the Bulgarian side and by the Turkish Republic State Railways (TCDD) on the Turkish side of the CBC region. Regarding railway service, there exists only one cross border connection (for railways) which is located at the border of Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece (Kapitan–Andreevo/Kapıkule). The length of railway kilometres amounts 96 kilometres in Edirne, and 110 kilometres in Kırklareli (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012b).

The biggest airport of the region is located in the district of Burgas. The Burgas Airport served 2,4 Mio. passengers in 2012 and is the second biggest airport in Bulgaria.

The harbour of Burgas is the largest harbour in Bulgaria and within the CBC Region. The provinces of Edirne and Kırklareli do not have a port worth considering.

Generally, public infrastructure in the region is far developed, e.g. *“the public water supply infrastructure serves 99,6% of the population of the Bulgarian side and 92% of the population of the Turkish side of the programme area. It terms of quality of this service there are still some problems with water loss during transport on Bulgarian side of the cooperation area”* (Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 18). Additionally, also energy infrastructure is well developed, whereas especially natural gas has become an alternative for both, households and industries (cf. Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 18).

Challenges

- A clear core-periphery pattern in road and rail, is still visible in the CBC region.
- The region is characterised by its peripheral situation in a European perspective, which is further intensified by a low level of accessibility, including low densities of transport infrastructure.
- There exists partly inefficiency of public infrastructure in different sectors including waste and wastewater treatment.
- Challenging situation in order to safeguard the natural resource fresh water.

Needs

- Inefficiencies in public infrastructure provision need to be reduced, preferable applying a cross-border approach to lessen redundancies (e.g. in the field of water supply utilities and wastewater treatment plants).
- Harmonising with EU technical legislation on increasing levels of treated waste water and disposed waste is necessary for the treatment of waste waters arising from the industry sector.
- The development of new and better forms of public transport is needed.
- Transportation projects aiming at the integration of the Black Sea harbours and the enhancement of the North-South connection of the region are relevant issues.
- The market share of railways needs to be increased, which will have positive effects on the safety level and the travel time; additionally connections to the TEN-T network need to be established.

Tourism and cultural and natural heritage

The tourism and cultural and natural heritage are important mean for the joint development of the area and illustrates a main asset of the co-operation area. In this direction both countries Bulgaria and Turkey have strong relationships over the years – from the very beginning of the CBC cooperation and of course in the current Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013.

The culture and nature in the area are rich, unique as well as diverse and are possible basis for continuation of traditional actions as well as establishment of new joint touristic development actions.

Although the major tourist destinations are at the Bulgarian Black Sea coast; in the recent years some new forms of “all seasons tourist destinations/attractions” have occurred, e.g. SPA tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, alternative tourism, rural tourism, sport tourism, etc. On one hand the cultural heritage of the region is broadening its importance both at national and international level – for example Edirne City was awarded *“2008 European Tourist Destination of Excellence in Intangible Heritage”* (cf. EU COM, 2014: online); Sozopol, Nesebar and South Bulgarian Black sea Coast (from Sozopol to the Turkish border) are involved in the the famous Michelin Guide “Top 1000 worldwide places to visit” (cf. Travel Michelin, 2014: online). On the other hand for the past several years one of the most popular attractions from the “all inclusive tourist packages” of Bulgarian Black sea hotels are

short one or two days visits of the natural, cultural and historical places in the CBC region. Based on the assessment of the CBC Programme 2007-13, the touristic potential of the Turkish regions of the CBC region continues to be unexploited (cf. Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 13), but meanwhile over the years 2011 to 2013 some new four and five stars hotels have been build in Edirne so to further develop the tourism sector of the province.

Considering tourism figures trends for the period 2007 - 2012 shows that there is a general increase of number of total nights spent in the region from 6,5 million in 2007 to 7,7 million in 2012. On one hand there is a decrease of the general number of accommodation establishments in the region from 1.217 in 2007 to 714 in 2012 mainly due to the closure of establishments in Burgas region during the economic crisis in the years 2008-2009. On the other hand for the same period 2007-2012 Haskovo Region, Edirne Province and Kırklareli Province have increased the accommodation establishments with 31 % on average. (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012c) (cf. National Statistical Institute Bulgaria, 2014i,j,k: online).

In the field of tourism there is an excellent ground for cooperation as it is a leading economic sector in all regional and national strategic documents in the field.

Challenges

- Climate change and its variety of negative territorial impacts illustrate major threats for the region's summer tourism, which is especially for the Black Sea region (summer resorts) a main economic factor.
- The touristic exploitation of the region, including mass tourism, illustrates a major danger for the high valued landscapes, natural habitats and ecological corridors of the area; innovative tourism practises should be implemented in order to regulate and better prevent the exploitation of protected areas.

Needs

- There exists the need of a common cooperative management of cultural heritage in a sustainable way, taking into account the environmental needs of the protected areas, as well as coastal zones and nature reservoirs.
- New and better diversified tourist products and services are needed.

Youth, education and skills

As already outlined, youth unemployment has been identified as a major future threat for the cross-border area and especially the Turkish side of the region *"faces out-migration especially of young and educated people and depopulation of the rural areas because of better job opportunities in urban areas"* (Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013, 2011: 9).

Although taking into account the situation of education in the CBC area, shows a quite positive picture: The relative share of the population aged between 25 and 64 years with higher education is constantly on the rise in the Bulgarian districts of the eligible programme area, whereas Yambol District registered with 22,4% of the total population aged between 25 and 64 years the highest share of population with a higher education level. Burgas District registered a value of 18,6% and Haskovo District recorded the value of 18,5% (cf. National Statistics Institute, 2014d,e,f: online). And also in Turkey, the share of the population aged between 25 and 64 years with higher education is constantly on the rise (8,9% in 2008 and 12,9% in 2012 in the district of Kırklareli; 9,7% in 2008 and 13,6% in 2012 in the district of Edirne). In contrary, especially the relative share of the population with primary or lower education is declining mainly in Burgas and Yambol District (36,1% in 2007 decreased to 29% in 2012 in Burgas respectively 22,2% in 2007 decreased to 17,9% in Yambol). For the district of Haskovo, no major improvements are though recognisable (cf. National Statistics Institute, 2014d,e,f: online). In Kırklareli and Edirne the relative share of the population aged between 25 and 64 years with primary or lower education is also decreasing although the share of the population with primary or lower education is on a higher level than in Bulgaria. In the education sector, the Turkish provinces of Edirne and Kırklareli are well equipped with different types of schools, in total there exist around 400 schools in Edirne and 300 schools in Kırklareli. Overall about 48.000 students and 7.600 graduates were involved in vocational training (school) and undergraduate programs of higher education institutions in these regions in 2012 (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2011).

Challenges

- Brain-drain occurrences and increasing out-migration due to missing (employment) possibilities for young employees exist in the region.
- Education and vocational training are not oriented to the demands of the regional labour market.
- There exist partly high levels of early-school leavers and to some extent poor reading competences of the region's population, according to PISA tests results.

Needs

- Joint efforts to reduce brain-drain occurrences and increasing out-migration of young qualified employees are needed.
- The partly low education level needs to be improved - especially poor reading competences and early-school leavers need to be reduced – by improving the general quality of the education at all levels.

Local and regional governance, planning and administrative capacity

For the past decades Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Turkey became partners in many areas. These relations “have made comprehensive progress in every field and contacts at all levels have increased. Framework required for improving bilateral economic and commercial relations has been completed” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2012: online). Today the relations have enhanced, at present Bulgaria and Turkey are two neighbouring and allied countries which have improved “active role in regional cooperation processes and have similar foreign policy orientations” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2012: online).

Nowadays the countries are important trading partners, e.g. increased bilateral trade volume from 2,4 billion Euro in 2010 to 2,83 billion Euro in 2011 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2012: online).

For spatial planning in *Bulgaria*, the local governments are the basic units, and the municipal council is the deliberative body. Municipal councils also hold the competence of preparing master development plans and local land use regulations as basis for spatial planning in Bulgarian municipalities (cf. Tosic et al., 2010: 81f.). Although the districts – which are corresponding to the NUTS-3 units – represent a de-concentrated state administration unit and are responsible “*for implementing the government's policy at regional level. There is no elected district government. The district administrations are part of the State organisation and are financed from the State budget. Its competences are mainly to supervise the legal decisions of the local authorities and to participate in the preparation of regional development plans*” (Tosic et al., 2010: 82).

On the national level, the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD) holds the competence for spatial planning. Relevant planning documents include the national integrated spatial development scheme (whole country), the district development schemes (district, region), the master development plans for the territories of municipalities and towns as well as detailed development plans (municipalities, towns) (cf. Tosic et al., 2010: 84).

On the regional level, the Ministry of Regional Development has elaborated regional R&D plans for the different planning regions in Bulgaria (for the regions participating in the CBC Programme: South East Planning Region and South Central Planning Region), which aim to increase the competitiveness of the regional knowledge-based economy (for the South Central Planning Region) or to support SMEs “for investment in fixed assets, innovative technologies, development of production, energy efficiency and renewable energy” (EU COM, 2012e: online).

In Turkey's planning system, the plans could be classified as follows according to the level of territorial competence: the development plans, strategic spatial plans and regional plans at national and NUTS II level, the territorial arrangement plans covering the map scale from 1:25,000 to 1:100,000 mainly at provincial level corresponding to NUTS III level, and the land development plans covering the map scale less than 1:5,000 at municipal level.

In terms of development plans, the Ministry of Development (MoD) has the legal mandate in the preparation of national and regional development plans. In this respect, MoD prepares the national development plan (NDP) and the national strategy for regional development (NSRD). MoD makes the development agencies prepare the regional development plans at NUTS II level in line with NSRD and NDP. In terms of spatial plans, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (MoEU) has the authority to prepare the spatial strategic plans both at national and regional levels.

In compliance with national and regional planning decisions, the territorial arrangement plans of non-metropolitan provinces are prepared by the MoEU and territorial arrangement plans of metropolitan

provinces are prepared by Metropolitan Municipalities. At municipal level, the land development plans comprising the master plan and the implementation plan are prepared by the municipalities in line with the territorial plans. Land use, physical planning and zoning processes are included in land development plans.

The IPA CBC Programme Bulgaria-Turkey 2007-2013 was based on three priority axes, dealing with sustainable social and economic development, the improvement of the quality of life and technical assistance to promote joint activities (cf. EU COM, 2012: online; Özerdem, 2011: 81). The strategic goal aimed at a sustainable development on the basis of the regional strengths of the area. The specific objectives of sustainable economic development, the improvement of the overall social development and the improvement of the quality of life as well as horizontal themes and principles (e.g. sustainable development, networking, etc.) were expected to generate social as well as economic impacts in the border area.

Besides cross-border cooperation (CBC Programme), Bulgaria and Turkey are both members of the BSEC (Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation), in which Bulgaria currently has the chairmanship (for the period 1 January-30 June 2014). The Members of the BSEC Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and the Ukraine cooperate among others in the areas of Tourism, Trade & Economic Development Environmental Protection and Transport (cf. BSEC, 2014b: online).

Challenge

- There exist differences between the two participating countries in fiscal discipline and commitment challenging EU integration.
- The administrative capacity and possibility of absorbing EU funds for cooperation is partly limited.
- Common management efforts of institutions across borders are needed to face increasing man-made and natural disasters (both in frequency and scale).

Needs

-
- Measures needed to improve public services.
- Improvements for a coherent and better integrated assessment and management of risks (e.g. climate change, critical infrastructure) are needed.

Competitiveness, business environment and SME development, trade and investment

The cross-border region of Bulgaria and Turkey is marked with insufficient economic growth rates, a generally disadvantageous economic situation and a high unemployment rate. Both, Bulgaria as well as Turkey, benefit from the establishment of cooperative networks in cross-border and/or isolated areas.

The industry of the region – except for the harbor area of Burgas – has a mono-structural character and is concentrated in the big cities, whereas in border communes agriculture and forestry (Strandja Mountain) prevail. Just on Black Sea coast is marine tourism developed but beginnings of rural tourism appear in Strandja area (natural and cultural artifacts of Strandja Natural Park). The biggest industrial center in the region is Burgas (shipbuilding, chemical industry, tourism) followed by Yambol and Haskovo.

Agriculture is dominating in border communes with traditional crops as cereals, fruits and vegetables, grapes. Stock breeding is prevailing pasture grounded in the mountain. As a whole agriculture is faced with a number of restrictions: dispersed ownership, reduced irrigated areas, obsolete facilities, shortage of investments and new technologies, deficiencies in the integration with the food industry, etc. Today, both sides of the border show a low level of GDP per capita in purchasing power parities (up to 13.900), additionally the area is very vulnerable towards the distribution of income. Taking a look at the Gini coefficient indicates, that especially in the Bulgarian regions of the CBC area, inequalities of income are visible (coefficient: more than 34). On the Turkish part of the eligible programme area the coefficient ranges between 32,1 and 34.

Generally, the majority of enterprises in the CBC region are small and medium size enterprises (SMEs), the share of SMEs amount 98% on the Bulgarian side and 96% on the Turkish side (cf. Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013: 13; Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, 2014). In the Turkish provinces Edirne and Kırklareli nearly 40.000 companies of different sectors exist.

The largest number of companies is available in the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles branche as well as in the transport and storage sector (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012d). In 2012, the companies based in Edirne imported \$121 million and exported \$47 million. Companies in Kırklareli imported \$138 million and exported \$141 million (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012e).

Challenges

- SMEs, which form the basis as well as the majority of businesses in the CBC region, show a lack of competitiveness compared to global economic activities.
- The existing business structures and the low level of investment in R&D and research diffusion are responsible for lower average growth rates in comparison to the EU's main economic partners.
- Unsatisfactory situation of the business environment and existing disparities between inland and coastal municipalities (mainly in the Bulgarian part).
- The Black Sea region illustrates an expanding market with major development potential, especially for energy and transport flows.

Needs

- There exists the need to improve the access of SME's to the European single market and to increase the recognition of the region's enterprises beyond the border.
- The reduction of interregional economic disparities – especially in rural areas – is needed.
- The improvement of competitiveness and productivity of SMEs is needed.
- Need to create better conditions for sustainable economic development in the regions.

Research, technological development, innovation and ICT

In terms of R&D the CBC region is under developed and is not ranked among the leading R&D regions of Europe. Nevertheless there are four universities³ in the CBC region. The investments in R&D is far from the national levels both for Bulgaria and Turkey, mainly due to the structure of economy.

Taking a look at the Bulgarian districts shows, that in Burgas district, the expenditure on R&D is at comparably higher level than in the other two districts (Burgas: 5.337 thousand Levs, Yambol: 444 thousand Levs, Haskovo: 341 thousand Levs) of the participating area.

For the NUTS-2 region Yuzhentsentralen (district of Haskovo), innovations are mainly visible in the sector of agriculture and food, additional the Commission identified a potential of regional research organisations/universities to become centres of excellence (cf. EU COM, 2012f: online).

In Bulgaria, the relative share of households with internet access is constantly increasing; between 2007 and 2012 the relative share increased strongly up to 50%, whereas especially Burgas region shows a value of 53,5% of the households having access to the internet in 2012 (Haskovo region: 47,5%; Yambol region: 46%) (cf. National Statistical Institute Bulgaria, 2014i,j,k: online).

Regarding ICT Turkey in total shows an increase in the field of households with internet access (starting with 19,7% of the households with internet access in 2007, reaching 47,2% in 2012) and the share of individuals aged 16-74 regularly using the internet (starting with 30,1% in 2007, reaching 47,4% in 2012) (cf. Turkish Statistical Institute, 2014) and has set quite ambitious targets for the year 2023, including:

- *“Reaching 30 million broadband subscribers*
- *Providing internet connection for 14 million houses at a speed of 1,000 Mbps*
- *Increasing the sector's share in GDP from 2.9 percent to 8 percent*
- *Becoming one of the top 10 countries in e-transformation*
- *Having 80 percent of the population computer literate*
- *Increasing the number of companies to 5,500; employees to 65,000; and exports to USD 10 billion in TDZs*
- *Increasing the ICT sector's size to USD 160 billion, with a market growth of around 15 percent each year*

³

Burgas Technological University; Burgas Free University; Trakya University in Edirne; Kırklareli University;

- *Increasing the R&D expenditure to GDP ratio to 3 percent from 0.85 percent*” (Republic of Turkey/Prime Ministry, 2014c: online)

Challenges

- Research and innovation are increasingly internationally interlinked.
- Generally, there exists a low level of investment in R&D and innovation, a low level of employees being active in the sector of science and technology and ICT is just insufficiently used in the area.
- ICT infrastructure is mainly concentrated on major cities and the market for innovative ICT products and services is highly fragmented.

Needs

- It needs to be ensured, that Europe's research and enterprise networks are generally connected to global knowledge networks.
- There exists the need to promote the development of broadband infrastructure and the introduction of online service in different fields (government, business, health, education, research).
- Policies need to be better coordinated and resources need to be better specialised to improve poles of ICT excellence in Europe.
- Framework conditions and access to finance for R&D and innovation need to be improved.

SWOT analysis: Potentials and Barriers for further development

The SWOT analysis is an analytical tool to assess the efficiency of policies and programmes to obtain an overview highlighting positive and negative aspects for different policy and development options. The analysis provides a formal way of identifying strengths and weaknesses of each option and of examining the opportunities and threats that arise from them.

To conduct the analysis both kinds of information for the SWOT analysis – the internal ones as well as the external ones – were identified with the gained information from the desk research.

Additionally, the method shows which potentials may result from combining internal strengths of a region with the possible opportunities, identified from external strategic documents or current trends. Moreover, the analysis reveals, how difficulties (weaknesses) can illustrate a possible regional potential, if combined with current trends and possible opportunities. The combination of these identified internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats finally led to potentials and barriers identified for the region.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Internal strengths

Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion	
1	Partly positive demographic developments (positive net migration), mainly in the Turkish regions of the area
2	High life expectancy and birth rates corresponding to the respective national average
3	Increased employment and activity rates
4	Culture of social solidarity and assistance
Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	
1	Moderately good conditions of different environmental media, including air, water and soil, being appreciated by the local residents
2	Strong tradition of preserving and managing nature, esp. maintenance of biodiversity, and respect for the environment
3	Abundance of natural resources
4	The region hosts a dense network of protected areas and a number of protected areas with well-preserved biodiversity and ecosystems: Strandja Nature Park (BG), Gala Lake National Park (TR), Kasatura Korfezi Nature Reserve (TR) Saka Lake Nature Reserve (TR)
5	Progressive modernisation of the productive system and declining of final energy consumption (possibly induced by the crisis, not efficiency)
Transport and public infrastructures	
1	Sufficient rail network densities, mainly in Turkish regions
2	Major improvements in the road sector, connecting the two countries, including new construction and rehabilitation of roads
3	Far developed regional public infrastructure and on-going improvements in some sectors, i.e. water supply infrastructure, energy infrastructure
4	Three, well-functioning border check points

Tourism and cultural and natural heritage	
1	Cultural heritage as important regional and identity building asset - culture, heritage and traditions are rich, unique and diverse
2	Existing natural, historical and cultural assets of good conditions for tourism activities
Youth, education and skills	
1	Good adult education system
2	Access of population to all levels of education
3	Well equipped education system in the Turkish regions and increase of the number of universities
4	Increasing share of population with a higher level of education (tertiary education)
5	Widespread ICT infrastructure in formal education, mainly in Turkish regions
Local and regional governance, planning and administrative capacity	
1	Partnership and existing experience in CBC cooperation and in implementing common programmes and joint projects
2	Good bilateral relations and traditionally good relations among people as basis of continuing CBC of mutual interest
3	Existing framework for improving bilateral economic and commercial relations
4	On-going decentralisation processes, supporting economic autonomy and their budgets
5	On-going administrative and judicial reforms in Bulgaria, aiming at the introduction of specific tools for policy making and implementation
6	Partly high administration capacity of local governments and high rates of disbursement of EU funds
Competitiveness, business and SME development, trade and investment	
1	SMEs form the majority of businesses in the area
2	Increased economic activity and increased number of employees, production and services of SMEs
3	Access to existing industrial infrastructure and newly developed industrial sites
4	Workforce with comparatively low wage expectations
5	Positive development regarding the GDP per head
Research, technological development, innovation and ICT	
1	Existing hotspots of R&D activities in the field of chemical industries, ICT, energy and agriculture
2	Partly existing regional R&D plans
3	Increasing R&D expenditures
4	Partly high share of households with internet access

Internal weaknesses

Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion	
1	Partly strong negative demographic development (decrease of population, higher ageing index than national average), mainly in the Bulgarian regions of the area and in rural areas
2	High unemployment rate and high vulnerability concerning the transformation of labour markets
3	High rate of unregistered employment and just limited coverage of the social security system, mainly in the Turkish regions of the area
4	High seasonal unemployment, due to instability in the tourism sector (strong focus on summer tourism)
5	Brain drain occurrences, due to high unemployment rates
6	Low level of adaptability and employability of people disadvantaged at the labour market
7	Discrepancy between existing professional qualifications of the labour force and labour market demands and expectations.
8	High risk of poverty and low income levels
9	Low level of labour force participation and employment, particularly for women
Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	
1	Local environmental pollution, including groundwater pollution with phosphates or nitrates
2	Lack of sewerage systems in the majority of small municipalities
3	Bad environmental state of the Black Sea including decrease of biological resources, declining diversity of spaces and reduction of aesthetic values
4	Burden of nature hazards, caused by combinations of several hazards such as droughts, extreme temperatures, forest fires and floods, mainly in highly vulnerable Bulgarian regions
5	Larger areas are effected by erosion, mainly in the province of Kırklareli
6	Vulnerability towards the adaptation to climate change and below average performances in adaptive capacities

7	Inefficient cooperation in management of natural resources and inadequate coordination for environment protection purposes; protected areas are not sufficiently integrated into the spatial development of the region
8	Low energy efficiency and high dependency on fossil fuels
9	Missing management of energy problems
Transport and public infrastructures	
1	Low accessibility in a European context (rail, road, air, water)
3	Imbalance among different modes of transport, generally favouring road transport (harmful effects on the environment, low sustainability)
4	Partly poor quality of the road network
5	Mostly old single-track rail network and lack of high-speed railways between larger cities
6	Insufficient hinterland access, part. In terms of railways, and inadequate connection between regional growth poles
7	Lack of regional public infrastructure and inefficient infrastructure systems in some sectors, i.e. ICT, sewage, wastewater, etc.
8	Waste of drinking water
Tourism and cultural and natural heritage	
1	No major tourist destinations, except the Black Sea summer resorts
2	Seasonal character of tourism and low diversification of tourist products and services
3	Touristic potential of mainly Turkish regions continues to be unexploited (lack of promotion, marketing support,, etc.)
4	Lack of protection and commercialisation of natural and historical heritage
5	Inefficient cooperation in the management of historical and cultural heritage resources
6	Low integration of cultural heritage in the tourist product development
7	Culture has rather local importance
8	Restoration of archaeological sites (e.g. in Edirne) is lacking behind
Youth, education and skills	
1	Bulgaria shows a lower quality of secondary education within the EU (OECD-survey for mathematics, reading and science) and a decreasing number of teachers
2	Low enrolment rate in secondary education (esp. for girls), mainly in Turkish regions
3	Limited career services and career information, mainly in Turkish regions
4	High level of early-school leavers mainly in Turkish regions
5	Turkish universities located in the CBC region show performances below average compared to the national average.
6	High level of youth unemployment
7	Out-migration of young and educated people leading to brain drain occurrences
Local and regional governance, planning and administrative capacity	
1	Limited administrative capacity and utilisation capacity at local level
2	Partially lack of cooperation and coordination among public institutions and organisations
3	Smaller municipalities facing difficulties in the sustainability of their investments in infrastructure projects
4	Existing differences in the pace of the quality of governance among the different countries of the Black Sea region
2	Limited administrative capacity and utilisation capacity at local level
3	Partially lack of cooperation and coordination among public institutions and organisations
4	Smaller municipalities facing difficulties in the sustainability of their investments in infrastructure projects
5	Existing differences in the pace of the quality of governance among the different countries of the Black Sea region
Competitiveness, business and SME development, trade and investment	
1	Lack of general SMEs' competitiveness and low level of productivity
2	Low level of local entrepreneurship initiatives, lack of entrepreneurial and innovative culture, and start-ups
3	Insufficient economic growth rates and generally disadvantageous economic situation (low level of GDP in PPP)

4	Declining investment expenditures, foreign investments concentrating on unproductive sectors failing to create permanent jobs
5	Existing inequalities of income, especially in the Bulgarian regions
6	Segmentation of the local economy, mono-sector and marginal nature
7	Lack of mutual recognition of the market beyond the border and limited business information flow
Research, technological development, innovation and ICT	
1	Not sufficient ICT infrastructure in rural areas
2	Low level of ICT usage, mainly in Turkish regions
3	A low share of the employees is employed in science and technology (HRSTC)
4	Very low values of expenditure on R&D

External opportunities

Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion	
1	Migration as mitigating factors of the effects of ageing on the labour market
2	Bulgaria has explicit constitutional references to regional and social inequalities
3	Increasing demand for qualified work force
4	More and better opportunities for social inclusion of disadvantaged and disabled people to create better conditions for involvement of youths at the labour market
Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	
1	Promotion of sustainable development through fisheries management, research, data collection and stock assessment in the Black Sea region by the EU.
2	Exploration of new ways to ensure sustainable and responsible use of fish resources
3	Richness of renewable and alternative energy resources and high potential for the generation of solar power
4	Cross-border cooperation for sustainable use and management of natural resources of mutual interest
5	Full and effective use of financial instruments of the European Union to address the problems associated with the environment
Transport and public infrastructures	
1	The CBC region is part of the Orient/ East-Med TEN-T corridor thus target area for territorial EU infrastructure support.
2	Opportunities for the successful implementation of development strategies based on transportation hub functions
3	The Black Sea Strategy aims at active supporting of regional transport cooperation with a view to improve the efficiency, safety and security of transport operations
4	Black Sea Synergy cooperation area aims at managing movement and improving security
5	Strategic location within the TEN-T network and between Europe and Asia, as well between Europe and the Middle East (transit transport)
Tourism and cultural and natural heritage	
1	Cultural and historical heritage as important potentials for CBC development from the social, economic and environmental aspect
2	Opportunities for development of economically sustainable cultural products and services based on the demand for new tourist destinations and experience
3	Existing potential for alternative and diversified tourism activities
4	Culture as a potential generator of new products and employment possibilities
5	Abundance of cultural landmarks and natural resources as precondition for the diversification of the currently available tourist products and services
Youth, education and skills	
1	Opportunities for cooperation among the educational institutions, between the educational and training institutions and business companies and cross-border labour market initiatives and exchange of know-how between related institutions
2	EU2020 flagship initiative "Youth on the move" aiming at enhanced performance of the education systems and the facilitation of the entry of young people to the labour market
3	Presence of a relatively well-developed educational system
Local and regional governance, planning and administrative capacity	
1	Regional cooperating enhancing mutual confidence
2	Opportunities for further development of partnerships between the civil society and the public administration

3	Development of mechanisms for cross-border institutional support and sharing of good practices
4	Both countries are members of the BSEC
Competitiveness, business and SME development, trade and investment	
1	Several initiatives to develop free trade areas in the Black Sea
2	EU2020 flagship initiative "an industrial policy for the globalisation era" aiming at an improved business environment, notably for SMEs, and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally
3	The Black Sea Regions illustrates an expanding market with a great development potential, especially for energy and transport flows
4	Increasing importance of SMEs in the economy
Research, technological development, innovation and ICT	
1	Promotion of capacity-building and S&T policy dialogue with the Black Sea countries by EU COM
2	EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, aiming at securing Europe's competitiveness
3	Rapid development and increase in the use of ICTs and innovation

External threats

Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion	
1	Demographic change and the main factors of shrinking population and ageing society
2	Risk of young employees losing their qualification by not participating in further training
3	Increasing unemployment ratio
4	Unemployment driving migration to other regions/abroad
5	Negative effects – incl. ageing, active-passive rate, extensity of unregistered employment, etc. – affect the financial system's sustainability negatively
6	Poor employment opportunities in rural areas leading to the concentration of business activities and employment opportunities in big towns
7	Educational system not corresponding to dynamically changing economy and labour market.
9	Increasing levels of poverty and social exclusion
Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	
1	Increasing frequency of natural hazards (incl. flooding, droughts, fires etc.) as one result of climate change
2	Decreasing summer precipitation (water scarcity) and increasing temperatures
3	Gradually changing climatic conditions
4	Partly polluted rivers, aquifering underground water and are lowering continuously
5	Increasing pressure on the environment due to urbanisation, intensification of agriculture, transport, etc.
6	Overconstruction on the Black Sea coast line
7	Inefficient water resource management and flood protection
8	Water and coastal zone pollution from various sources (e.g. Danube, Sea of Marmara, Mediterranean) are out of control of the regional authorities
9	Inefficient use and management of favourable natural conditions and resources to enhance the development potential
Transport and public infrastructures	
1	Increasing rate of isolation due to missing investments in infrastructure
2	Negative effects of climate change and extreme weather effects influencing transport safety of all modes
3	Clear core-periphery patterns in road and rail transport
4	High dependence on imported fuel resources for transport
Tourism and cultural and natural heritage	
1	Low integration of the cultural heritage in the tourist product development
2	Missing diversification of tourism
3	Climate change and its major negative impact on summer tourism
4	Mass tourism as major danger for landscapes, natural habitats and ecological corridors
5	The lack of restoring archaeological sites prevents an efficient usage of the region's cultural and tourism potential
Youth, education and skills	
1	Educational system not corresponding to the dynamically changing economy and labour market (education system unable to prepare the youth for the labour market)

2	Vocational education not being labour market demands oriented
3	Centralist structure of higher education system
Local and regional governance, planning and administrative capacity	
1	Relatively still low level of absorption of EU funds for cooperation between Local authorities
2	Different laws and regulations in the CBC area, including EU as well as non-EU members (consequences in terms of administration and legal framework)
3	Difficulties in coordinating national and regional levels as well as public and private sectors
5	Differences in fiscal discipline
Competitiveness, business and SME development, trade and investment	
1	Existing differences in the pace of economic reforms and the quality of governance
2	Still insufficient economy growth rates compared to EU average values
3	Low rate of adaptability and high level of competition to the common European market
4	Interregional economic disparities, primarily between urban and rural areas
5	Lack of alternative financing instruments for SMEs
6	Increasing pressure of the global competition
Research, technological development, innovation and ICT	
1	Raising importance of (existing) connections to global knowledge networks
2	High fragmentation of the market for innovative ICT products and services
3	Low investments and slow development of R&D
4	Low technological level of the economy deepening the structural disparity

Potentials and Barriers

Based on the identified SWOT, potential linkages between internal and external factors of analysis were identified, which were the basis for the definition of future barriers and potentials of development. These barriers and potentials help to figure out:

- Which potentials are resulting from the combination of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the cross-border area with the possible opportunities, identified from external strategic documents or current trends?
- Which barriers and difficulties the area is facing by combining the internal strengths and weaknesses with current threats?

The combination of the different internal and external factors (strengths x opportunities, strengths x weaknesses, threats x opportunities, threats x weaknesses) were then merged to thematic clusters and similar links and ties were grouped together. The reason of this clustering within the four quadrants of the SWOT-matrix was the identification of four different groups of potentials and barriers:

- Existing potentials (EP) result from combining the internal strengths of a region with the external opportunities. These potentials can also be termed as “cashcows”. EPs represent positive characteristics of a region with positive trends, which can support the already well performing regional characteristics.
- Possible potentials (PP) result from combining the internal weaknesses of a region with the external opportunities. Possible potentials are also called “rising stars” and illustrate the chance for the cross-border region to overcome the internal weakness by using the existing opportunities.
- Existing barriers (EB) result from combining the internal weaknesses of a region with the external threats. EBs can be termed as so-called “poor dogs”, these barriers are a combination of internal and external factors, which are really tough challenges and hard to overcome.
- Possible barriers (PB) result from combining the internal strengths of a region with the external threats and are also termed “question marks”. These issues show to external trends that can be challenged by using the internal strength of the region. Negative external developments can be turned around by using regional strengths.

The method therefore represents a mixture between clustering of information and a more creative technique of combining issues of certain interest. Additionally it visualises the main output of the analysis and shows possible thematic linkages within different internal and external factors of the cross-border region. This output portrays the possibilities of the SWOT analysis: negative developments in the region can be combined with external opportunities and show therefore an unexpected opportunity for regional development.

The following four sub-chapters describe the findings of the SWOT-analysis which are one of the main elements of the definition of the thematic concentration of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020.

Existing Potentials (EP) – Strengths x Opportunities

1. **Good basis for regional cooperation:** Generally, the region shows a very good basis for regional cooperation, based on the existing culture of social solidarity and assistance and common strong traditions e.g. of preserving and managing nature. This situation depicts a joint basis for further regional cooperating enhancing mutual confidence as well as the development of mechanisms for cross-border institutional support and sharing of good practices in different fields.
2. **Good foundation for improvements in the environmental sector:** The region generally displays very good environmental conditions, hosts a variety of natural resources and a strong tradition of preservation, including a dense network of protected areas, is visible. These positive factors are combined with an on-going promotion of natural resources and a generally existing richness of renewable and alternative energy resources. This goes in line with the internal strength of local universities partly showing a focus in the field of energy. Additionally, the Black Sea Strategy actively supports regional transport cooperation, in order to improve the efficiency of transport options, which has a positive effect on the region's environment.
3. **Constantly improving situation of the youth, research and education:** The education system and research sector are improving, which is depicted in the increasing share of population with a higher level of education and an increase of R&D expenditures over the last years. Additionally, SMEs illustrate important businesses in the area, their economic activity has raised and the general equipment with infrastructures has improved over the years. These positive developments in combination with the increasing demand for qualified work force and the cooperation of educational institutions, education and business companies as well as EU-wide initiatives such as the flagship initiative "Youth on the move" illustrate a major development potential of the cross-border area.
4. **On-going improvements in the fields of transport and economic development:** Positive developments including an increase in the level of employment and activity rates as well as the region's strategic position in the TEN-T network and the existence of well-functioning regional border crossings depict relevant strengths of the area. These strengths are underlined by the Black Sea Strategy actively aiming at cooperation in the field of transport as well as by external improvements in regard to TEN-T and the establishment of transport hub functions. These opportunities provide the potential to improve transport efficiency and safety, based on partnership and existing experiences of former cross-border cooperation.
5. **Further touristic, cultural and environmental developments based on common heritage and traditions:** Cultural and historical heritage have been identified as extremely important potentials for cross-border development from the social, economic and environmental aspect. Based on the existing set of natural resources and protected areas (e.g. Strandja Nature Park (BG), Gala Lake National Park (TR), Kasatura Korfezi Nature Reserve (TR), Saka Lake Nature Reserve (TR)) as well as of cultural heritage as important regional and identity building asset, there exists the opportunity to develop economically sustainable touristic products and services and alternative and diversified tourism activities to enhance the economic situation in the area.
6. **On-going improvements in the field of institutional capacity and cooperation:** Partnerships as well as experiences of cross-border cooperation has well established traditions in the CBC region. The area is characterised by very good bilateral relations and an active framework for improving bilateral economic relations. Additionally, partly on-going reforms and decentralisation processes are constantly strengthening the regional level as such. The continuation of cross-border cooperation and the cooperation in the Black Sea region in general is further strengthening mutual confidence and partnerships.
7. **Further improving research and competitiveness:** The economic situation in the area is improving, which includes increased competitiveness and a raised level of R&D expenditure of regional enterprises. Generally SMEs are forming the majority of businesses in the area, and additional strengths include the progressive modernisation of the productive system, newly developed industrial sites and improved industrial infrastructure as well as existing research hotspots e.g. in the field of energy. Several initiatives and EU flagship initiatives, such as "an

industrial policy for the globalisation era” as well as cooperative initiatives comprise the potential to further improve the already enhanced situation in the cross-border region.

Possible Potentials (PP) – Weaknesses x Opportunities

1. **Jointly combating NATURAL hazards and improving environmental pollution:** Existing initiatives for sustainable development in the Black Sea region by the EU and existing cross-border cooperation initiatives for the sustainable use and management of natural resources of mutual interest bear the potential of improving the current situation of natural hazards. These extreme events, including floods, fires, erosion, have a particularly strong effect on the area, which shows a strong vulnerability towards climate change.
2. **Tourism and regional cultural and natural heritage as opportunities to further improve the employment and tourism situation:** The cultural and natural heritage of the CBC region are important potentials for further development, including economically sustainable cultural products and services and alternative and diversified tourism activities; these potentials are generally based on the abundance of cultural landmarks and natural resources. The heritage of the region therefore provides the potential to restrict the current situation of high unemployment rates and therewith connected negative effects by generating new touristic products and employment possibilities for the regional population. Simultaneously tourism weaknesses, including e.g. the seasonal character of regional tourism and missing major tourist destination (except the Black Sea summer resorts), may be targeted.
3. **Cooperative action improving the transport situation:** Existing initiatives and strategies, including the Black Sea Strategy, the Black Sea Synergy, as well as the EU infrastructure policy provide potentials to improve the low accessibility of the area. Additionally there exists the potential to further increase security of transport and to improve transport facilities in general (i.e. rail network, etc.).
4. **Cooperative action improving administrative and institutional capacity:** The continuation and improvement of cross-border cooperation in the area, including partnerships, support, and sharing of good practice, will improve the administrative capacity at local level.
5. **Promotion of R&D mitigating brain drain occurrences and the regional research basis:** The on-going promotion of capacity-building and S&T policy dialogue with the Black Sea countries by EU COM as well as the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation – Horizon 2020, aiming at securing Europe's competitiveness – are major opportunities for improving the current regional situation of low investments in R&D and a partly low level of ICT usage. Additionally, the out-migration of well-educated young employees might be stemmed through an improved situation in the field of research and development.
6. **Educational cooperation improving the regional employment and education situation:** There exists a diverse set of opportunities regarding cooperations in the field of education, training and business companies in the cross-border context. A specific development potential includes the combination of the education system and the particular needs of private enterprises and the labour market. The EU2020 flagship initiative “Youth on the move”, illustrates a specific opportunity, enhancing the performance of the education system. These opportunities can target the existing weaknesses of the area of high unemployment rates, brain drain occurrences and of partly low enrolment rates of secondary education, limited career services and career information as well as of partly high levels of early-school leavers.

Possible Barriers (PB) – Strengths x Threats

1. **Increased activity rates and improved education situation, weakened by high unemployment:** Generally, the regional situation is characterised by improvements in the education system, the activity rates of employees and the GDP level. Although these positive developments may be hampered by the increasing unemployment ratio, which might lead migration to other regions and in succession to intensified concentrations of employees in urban areas (i.e. deterioration of rural areas). Additionally, the development barrier of the education system not being capable of reacting sufficiently on the dynamically changing economy and the labour market needs to be faced.
2. **Environmental media threatened by increasing pressures:** The moderately good condition of different environmental media, such as air, water and soil are threatened by increasing pressures of land use, including urbanisation, intensification of agriculture and transport. Additionally, the touristic exploitation of the area bears dangers for the region's environment (i.e. overconstruction, mass tourism, etc.).

3. **Strong tradition of protected areas threatened by increasing levels of pollution:** The region is characterised by natural assets and a moderately good condition of different environmental media, which are the basis for the dense network of protected areas. These valuable assets are endangered by external factors, including natural hazards, and pollution from various external sources. Very good cooperation capacity between relevant institutions in the region is already established.
4. **Education system not corresponding to regional needs:** Although the education system has improved (including e.g. vocational training, adult education system, etc.) there exists the danger of the education system not corresponding to the fast and dynamically changing economy and labour market.
5. **Missing infrastructure investments negatively influencing the transport system:** The transport system – which includes e.g. well-functioning border check points and mainly sufficient rail network densities – may be negatively threatened by missing investments in infrastructure and the clear core-periphery pattern which are clearly visible in the area.
6. **Major differences of law as threats for existing partnership:** The existing partnerships, which are based on former cross-border cooperation and good bilateral relations, are threatened by different laws and regulations. This results from the fact of the cooperation of EU- and non-EU-members and therefore difficulties in the coordination of different levels (local, region) and sectors (private, public). These threats depict possible barriers for future cross-border cooperation in the area.
7. **Positive developments limited by global pressure and strong economic disparities:** In the last years the economic activity in the region has improved and the number of employees has increased; SMEs as such form the majority of businesses in the area. Even due to these positive developments, there still exist insufficient economy growth rates compared to the EU average and major interregional economic disparities are visible. Additionally financing instruments for SMEs are missing and the generally low level of R&D expenditure hampers further development.

Existing Barriers (EB) – Weaknesses x Threats

1. **Raising unemployment and negative employment situation leading to out-migration and the loss of qualifications:** The region is characterised by partly strong negative demographic processes, high levels of unemployment, brain drain occurrences and out-migration of mainly young and well-educated people. These weaknesses are further reinforced by unemployment and especially poor employment opportunities in rural areas, leading to the concentration of business activities in urban areas. Additionally, young people, which cannot participate in the labour market, show the risk of losing their qualifications.
2. **Discrepancies between the needs of the labour market and the education sector:** Generally strong discrepancies between the education system and the needs of the labour market – which are constantly changing – are visible. The educational system cannot correspond to the dynamically changing economy and the labour market, therefore the risk of increasing poverty and low income levels gets further reinforced. Additionally, the quality of education in the cross-border area varies, secondary education shows a partly low quality and just limited information and services in the field of careers exist. This further intensifies the situation of the education system not fitting to the economy; growth rates and productivity are therefore lagging behind.
3. **Partly bad environmental quality asking for common approaches:** The regional environmental state is partly in a bad condition. Reasons therefore are environmental pollution, declining diversity of spaces and the decrease of biological resources. This situation is further intensified by increasing pressures on the environment, resulting from urbanisation, the transport sector and the intensification of agriculture. Additionally, water pollution is often out of the control of the regional authorities, due to its transnational character.
4. **Increase of natural hazards in frequency and intensity targeting the economic, social and environmental situation:** Natural hazards, including droughts, extreme temperatures, forest fires and especially floods are important burdens for the area. Additionally, parts of the region are highly affected by erosion. These existing weaknesses are intensified through the increase of natural hazards in frequency as a result of climate change and gradually changing climatic conditions. These environmental effects have major effects on the economic, social and environmental situation of the cross-border area. Especially the touristic use of the area,

which has mainly seasonal character, is endangered, through extreme weather events and the change of climatic conditions.

5. **Increasing isolation of the area due to missing infrastructure investments:** The area generally shows a quite low accessibility in a European context, whereas especially imbalances of the different modes of transport exist; road transport is obviously the favoured mode, the rail network shows partly a quite bad quality. Additionally, major differences between urban and rural areas are visible; the access of the hinterland is mainly insufficient. This situation is intensified by generally missing investments in infrastructure;
6. **Complicated cross-border cooperation based on different laws and regulations:** In some parts of the cross-border region a just insufficient developed level of cooperation is visible. The partly limited administrative capacity hampers cooperation, which is intensified by different laws and regulations in the cross-border area, including EU as well as non-EU members.
7. **Lagging behind in the field of research and productivity:** Low levels of productivity and competitiveness, insufficient economic growth rates and a low level of investments in the field of research and development are further intensified by interregional economic disparities (esp. between urban and rural areas), missing financing instruments for SMEs, and the raising importance of connections to global knowledge networks, which are not a main focus of the area; generally a quite high pressure of global competition on regional enterprises is present.

1.1.2 Justification for the choice of thematic priorities, 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

The selection procedure⁴ of thematic priorities takes into account the relevance of the topic regarding CBC as well as budget constraints. The guiding question of the assessment was: "Which ones of the priorities have cross-border relevance and which ones can develop the highest effects in this particular border setting?" In the assessment it can be assumed, that issues including the employment sector as well as the education sector are of minor importance for cross-border cooperation, due to the fact that different laws and regulations and different (education) systems are exogenous factors for CBC, which may only be mended but not solved. Additionally it can be supposed, that these social issues might be better targeted through interventions funded by the ESF (for Bulgaria). Of main relevance are therefore those priorities, aiming at combating climate change and risk management – where especially flooding is a cross-border and transnational issue – and at the protection of the environment (including natural and cultural heritage and common traditions). Additionally transport and mobility and institutional capacity are defined as areas which might be an issue for cross-border cooperation, due to the fact that interregional transport flows and institutional matters can further support the convergence of regions.

The programme budget is one of the main factors, defining the frame of interventions and their thematic focus. Therefore budget constraints were taken into account, covering the question of financeability of certain projects. In spite of the size of the area to be covered and the budget available, the cross-border programme has limited resources. This calls for a very accurate use of the financial resources, focusing on the value added expected to be created by cross-border cooperation (asking for a limited number of selected priorities).

Generally, the sheer size of the overall available budget reduces the potential to fund substantial infrastructure investments. This comprises research and ICT infrastructure and limits the possibilities to invest in key transport infrastructures (road and rail), although being of relevance in the area.

Regarding the thematic objectives, the following issues can be considered as relevant in relation to the results of the on-line survey, their CBC relevance and the available programme budget.

The following table illustrates an in-depth justification for the selection of the set of thematic priorities.

⁴ A detailed explanation of the selection process of thematic priorities (thematic concentration) is available in the Annex.

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic priorities

Selected thematic priority	Justification for selection
<p>TP2: protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management [...]</p>	<p>The cross-border area shows a high vulnerability towards climate change. The increase of natural hazards in frequency and intensity asks for a management of natural resources and a common approach to effectively manage natural hazards and climate change risks. Climate change adaptations are mainly an issue of geographically limited initiatives, additionally, the effects, which are spreading across national borders, ask for a common approach for the cross-border region. Integrated and coordinated territorial approaches, including a higher degree of information sharing, are needed for the effective management of natural hazards and climate change risks. Additionally, the area's environment is rich of natural and cultural assets, which bear potentials for further exploitation, sustainable use and alternative and diversified usages. On the contrary some environmental media partly are in a bad condition and sustainable management of resources and common approach to improve the environmental state and the condition of e.g. the Black Sea are needed. Similar to climate change adaptations, environmental protection and preservation is an issue for geographically limited areas, which are often spreading across national borders; therefore a sustainable management and the protection of natural resources is a necessity for the CBC region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + TP relates directly to a main priority of EU2020 + TP relates directly to relevant national and regional strategic documents both Bulgarian and Turkish + Both countries have very good traditions in environmental protection in the CBC area established over the years + CSF defines this area as specific relevant for CBC + The Bulgarian National Strategy for Regional Development 2012 -2022 sees joint risk management and environmental protection as key topics for CBC + There exist similar environmental risks in both countries, such as floods and forest fires in the CBC area + Environmental issues do not stop in front of borders and need to be addressed regionally and on cross-border level + The climate change issue is very relevant for both sides and adequate measures are both, EU as well as national priorities + There exists the need to raise awareness and measures on climate changes as it has major impact on economy and life + The existing nature protected areas (parks and others) and the tradition of natural protection is a mean to address joint activities to raise tourism development and the region's better image - Larger interventions (i.e. infrastructure development) require bigger budgets and a long preparatory time because of the need for environmental assessment
<p>TP4: encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage [...]</p>	<p>The cross-border area shows a high potential of natural and cultural heritage, which is depicted by a large amount of protected areas and widespread natural parks and historical places, etc. The natural and cultural heritage serves as a connecting factor between the both countries and resembles a potential factor, to contribute to future cross-border development in the region.</p> <p>The border area is still characterised by vast rural areas with a comparably high share of agriculture. Agricultural produce and regional/ local specialities (e.g. vegetables, wine) may offer touristic potentials while at the same time represent natural/ cultural heritage to be preserved (note also the complementarity to EAFRD – especially LEADER).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + BG National Strategy for Regional Development 2012 -2022 sees development of joint tourism and cultural initiatives as key CBC actions + Turkish Tourism Strategy 2007 – 2023 gives a special focus of the both provinces Edirne and Kırklareli in terms of potential for cultural tourism

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Tourism is thematic part of all regional strategies of the local administrations of the region + There exists a huge interest in the region (on-line survey and RCFs) + There exists a good potential for development (culture, nature, ..) + There's a big interest and good experiences in the ongoing CBC Programme + Well established pre-conditions for development of joint touristic products/services + At the RCFs it was an important priority for regional stakeholders (rank 8) + According to the results of the on-line survey it was an important priority for regional stakeholders (rank 8) + The TP illustrates a good area for people-to-people activities - In some parts of the region (for example Burgas) there are major imbalances in tourism development (Black Sea region vs. inland municipalities) -
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1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

The financial allocation proposed in the following table aims at achieving the envisaged programme results effectively with the limited resources available for the funding period 2014-2020.

The thematic priorities selected and the corresponding specific objectives aim at cooperation in the Bulgaria-Turkey CBC area 1) on the improvement and preservation of the environment to foster sustainability (in all dimensions) and the quality of life as well as 2) on strengthening of the tourism sector by capitalising on the cultural and natural heritage in the BG-TR CBC region.

In the selection process of thematic priorities (as outlined above), especially the relevance of the different topics regarding CBC were assessed. Especially climate change and risk management – where especially flooding and fire are cross-border and transnational issues – and the protection of the environment (including natural and cultural heritage and common traditions) are regarded as relevant for the area in a cross-border perspective.

Based on the major relevance of these two topics regarding cross-border cooperation, 45% of the programme budget will be allocated to each of these priorities; 10% of the budget is foreseen for the technical assistance of the programme.

For the environmental priority e.g. an increase in interventions in the field of risk prevention and management and an improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources through joint initiatives for nature protection are aimed at. In the field of sustainable tourism especially a higher level of valorisation of natural and cultural heritage in the tourism context and an increased number of cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable are intended.

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

The below indicators are indicative and are subject to clarification between partnering countries and EC

Priority axis	Union support (in EUR)	Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme	Thematic priorities	Result indicators corresponding to the thematic priority
1	11.338.407,00	85%	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management → Increased number of joint initiatives in the field of risk prevention and management → Increased number of interventions, addressing improved nature protected sites → Improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area through joint initiatives for nature protection
2	11.338.407,00	85%	Sustainable Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased number of tourists/visitors in the cross-border area → Level of valorisation of natural and cultural heritage in tourism context → Increased number of cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable tourism
3	2.519.646,00	85%	Technical Assistance	·
Total	25.196.460,00			

II. PRIORITY AXES

2.1 Priority axis 1

ID of the priority axis	1
Title of the priority axis	Environment

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will	

be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	n/a

The Priority Axis covers the main challenge of the CBC area → i.e. preserving the environment as one of the most important assets for economic activities (tourism, agriculture) and improving the quality of life for the people living there. On the other hand it meets the challenge and threat of the environmental hazards and disasters – especially related to river basin management (flooding), wild fire events, man-made disasters, earthquakes, and others.

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According to the decision taken by the SG in Ankara on May 13th 2014 this PA should also encompass the **horizontal priorities of competitiveness** → as motor and basis for all regional development in structurally weak areas; and **youth** → as backbone of future development and overarching principle to keep the region alive and prevent brain-drain occurrences. Thus the two Thematic Priorities will be anchored in a thematic context, which allows for the necessary thematic concentration and focussing of the PA.

Therefore **two specific objectives** have been chosen in order to depict the core element of disaster resilience, nature protection as well as the two horizontal priorities of competitiveness and youth.

2.1.1 Fund, calculation basis for Union support and justification of the calculation basis choice

Fund	
Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)	13 339 302,35 EURO
Justification of the calculation basis choice	<i>To be developed</i>

2.1.2 The specific objectives of the thematic priority and expected results

ID	1.1.
Specific objective	<i>To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region</i>
The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support	Floodings and fire events are classical CBC issues: river basin management and protection of fires are cross-border issues that can hardly be only tackled in the absence of cooperation across borders. But mainly they are for the CBC Bulgaria-Turkey because of the CBC region's high vulnerability towards the intensified effects of climate change.

	<p>Therefore the intended change is to reduce the risks of floodings and fires through the establishment of real cooperation across borders (with partners establishing joint initiatives and actions), in order to reach:</p> <p>R-1.1.1: Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters</p> <p>R-1.1.2: Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations</p> <p>By improving of the river basin management the damage from flooding events will be reduced and the river basins across borders can be sustainably managed (river banks restored, zoning and regional/ local planning adapted to the river basin and the flooding areas). Also, risks will be mitigated by implementing comprehensive fire protecting initiatives.</p> <p>A mix of “investment” measures and “soft” measures could be incorporated and might be established through the guiding principles for selection of operations.</p> <p>A set of different measures, including amongst other early warning and disaster management systems, the sanitation and reforestation of river banks or rather soft measures, like training and awareness raising of the civil society, will be set in order to reach the envisaged change.</p>
ID	1.2.
Specific objective	<i>Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area</i>
The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Both countries have good traditions in environmental protection (protected areas, etc.) established over the years, despite the CBC region is increasingly under environmental pressure of different economic activities. For this reason, negative environmental effects have intensified, and consistently contributed to the deterioration of local environmental pollution levels. These negative effects need to be tackled by implementing a set of planned measures.</p> <p>The intended changes includes the following:</p> <p>R-1.2.1.: Improved conditions of nature-protected sites</p> <p>R-1.2.2.: Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area</p> <p>By improving on the one hand the people’s capacity for a sustainable interaction with the environment, including also issues like climate protection and raising people’s awareness towards high energy consumption as well as the usage of fossil fuels, etc. The major effect of climate change on economy and life needs to be highlighted. This goes in line with the European Union’s efforts to make its economy less</p>

	<p>energy consumptive and more climate-friendly (cf. EU COM, 2014b: online⁵). Therefore it's the CBC region's aim to foster its capacity and to increase knowledge transfer across borders aiming at reaching the vision of a low-carbon economy and a high level of environmental protection and management. On the other hand the specific objective targets to improve the condition of natural areas and to improve the partly negative environmental development of the last decades, including amongst others urbanisation, intensified agriculture and transport.</p> <p>Also for this objective a mix of "investment" and "soft" measures could be incorporated and might be established through the guiding principles for selection of operations.</p> <p>In order to reach the envisaged change a set of different measures – including for example investments in the improvement of green infrastructure as well as training and capacity building activities for authorities of different levels – will be implemented.</p>
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2.1.3 Elements of other thematic priorities added to the priority axis

ID	
Contribution to the specific objective of the priority axis	<p>Both specific objectives of the priority axis "Environment" contribute to thematic priority "competitiveness" – therefore elements of thematic priority 7 "enhancing competitiveness, the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investments [...]" have been added as horizontal themes within the indicative list of actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With regard to specific objective 1.1. "To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region", it's expected that a lower vulnerability of the region towards the impacts of climate change will improve the regional economic situation, since negative effects might be lessened. <p>Regarding specific objective 1.2. "Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area", it is assumed that activities in this field might improve the economic situation, following sustainability approaches at the same time.</p>
The results that the partner States seek to achieve with	In correspondence to thematic priority 7, especially the

⁵ EU COM (2014b): Roadmap for moving to a low-carbon economy in 2050. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/roadmap/index_en.htm (May, 2014)

Union support	<p>following results are deemed as relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R-1.1.2: Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations • R-1.2.2.: Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area <p>Both results respond to the improved regional capacity towards natural hazards and natural resources. It is deemed as relevant to strengthen the region's capacity in these fields in order to modify the regional consciousness towards issues including amongst other economic impacts of climate change and sustainable development.</p>
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2.1.4 Actions to be supported under the thematic priority (by thematic priority)

2.1.4.1 *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*

Thematic Priority	Environment
<p>SO 1.1.:</p> <p>Investment measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Development of early warning and disaster management systems → Investments in equipment related to disaster resilience: up-to-date ICT solutions in pre-fire, fire and post-fire activities; supply of specialized fire-fighting equipment; supply of specialized equipment for floods, and for search and rescue interventions; supply of system for air surveillance of the surface and real time transmission of data, etc. → Support of small-scale interventions / investments: sanitation and reforestation of river banks; building flood defence (dikes, canals etc.); forestation of non-permanent vulnerable land; cuttings for emergency situations; → Other appropriate investment activities in relation to flooding and fire protection & early warning systems development and implementation <p>Soft measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Joint trainings and raising awareness of public service actors and population for disaster resilience → Developing joint strategies / common guidelines for risk prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters (for disaster protection and prevention policies and mechanisms, prevention and fire fighting management etc.) → Awareness campaigns in the field of efficient risk prevention and management. → Conducting joint theoretical-tactical exercises and field trainings for emergency situations management → Trainings in the use of ICT technologies, including introduction of innovative methods for learning (e-learning); → Exchange of experience and good practice (study visits, round-tables, conferences, and others); → Joint trainings and awareness raising of public service actors, youths, volunteers and population for disaster resilience. <p>TARGET GROUPS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All levels of Local/Regional authorities; → Associations of Local/Regional authorities and of other organisations; → Regional offices and structures of central government institutions/ administrations; → Euroregions and other joint cross border structures and institutions; → Administrations of protected areas → Groups of population of the CBC region → Affected population of the CBC region → Young people (up to age of 29) 	

POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES:

- All levels of Local/Regional authorities
- Central and regional offices and structures of relevant national and governmental institutions/administrations
- Regional and sector development agencies

SO 1.2.:**Investment measures**

- Small-scale investments for improving accessibility of / to nature protected sites;
- Small-scale investment (green infrastructure, etc.)

Soft measures

- Joint cooperation initiatives targeting the effective management of protected areas
- Joint initiatives addressing nature protection in the Black Sea and coastal zones
- Joint initiatives towards the protection and restoration of ecosystems and endangered/protected species
- Preservation and improvement of the quality of natural resources (air, soil, water)
- Building capacities of local authorities in the environment-related matters
- Cooperation, exchange of experiences and knowledge between institutions;
- Cooperation between authorities, NGOs in the field of safe and sustainable low-carbon economy across borders
- Cooperative measures of education and training institutions in the field of environment and low-carbon economy
- Development and implementation of joint activities including information and awareness campaigns and exchange of know-how in the fields of environmental & nature protection
- Joint initiatives addressing sustainable use of resources, recycling, etc

TARGET GROUPS:

- All levels of Local/Regional authorities;
- Associations of Local/Regional authorities and of other organisations;
- Regional offices and structures of central government institutions/ administrations;
- Euroregions and other joint cross border structures and institutions;
- Educational and training institutions and organizations;
- Business support institutions and organisations - Chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and others
- Administrations of protected areas
- Youth organizations
- Groups of population of the CBC region

POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES TO IMPLEMENT INVESTMENT AND SOFT MEASURES:

- All levels of Local/Regional authorities;
- Associations of Local/Regional authorities and of other organisations;
- Central and regional offices and structures of central government institutions/ administrations;
- Administrations of protected areas
- Euroregions and other joint cross border structures and institutions;

POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES TO IMPLEMENT SOFT MEASURES:

- Educational and training institutions and organizations;
- NGOs
- Business support institutions and organisations - Chambers of commerce, industry and crafts; and others
- Youth organizations

2.1.4.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Thematic Priority	Environment
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According to **article 39 (1), Selection of operations**, of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/214 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), the operations under cross-border cooperation programmes shall be selected by the JMC.

The following general principles will guide the selection of operations:

- a. CBC character
 - Involvement of beneficiaries of the two participating countries
 - Clear identification of cross-border benefit/impact if operation is implemented in a single country
- b. Partnership
 - The involved project partners are eligible corresponding to the programme's rules
 - The involved project partners have the capacity for the project's management
- d. Regional relevance
 - The operations are in correspondence to the identified needs and challenges of the CBC area
 - The operations contribute to economic, territorial and social cohesion (following the EU-2020 Strategy)
- e. Strategic relevance
 - The operations are in line with the priority axis' specific objectives
 - The operations are coherent with strategies and concept at the regional and the national level
- f. Operations' quality
 - The operations/projects are clear and structured (intervention logic)
 - Expenditures of the operations are effective
 - The projects are based on the concept of sustainability
- g. Horizontal principles
 - The operations take the equality between men and women into account
 - The operations consider non-discrimination principles
 - The operations follow the concept of sustainable development

Additional specific principles apply for this priority axis:

Strategic projects

Under this Priority axis strategic projects could be identified outside calls for proposals for the achievement of the programme objectives and priority specific objectives. Strategic projects contribute to achievement of a bigger impact through real and strong cross-border impact and long-term results, in respect of the Programme's objectives.

Strategic Projects must be effective and answer the territory's needs as envisaged by the Programme and result in a significant and long-lasting change or improvement on the whole or large parts of programme area.

The basic principles for the eligibility of a strategic project could be the following

- ➔ To address key specific objectives that can be achieved only through the involvement of large partnerships and /or of key stakeholders on the two sides of the border
- ➔ To be based on a larger financial size than ordinary projects, proportionate to the relevance of the objectives and results.
- ➔ to produce lasting effects and catalyze further actions;

2.1.4.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Thematic Priority	
Planned use of financial instruments Planned use of financial instruments	
Max. Length = '7 000'	Not planned

2.1.5 Common and programme specific indicators

2.1.5.1 Priority axis result indicators (programme specific)

The below indicators are indicative and are subject to clarification between partnering countries and EC

Table 3: Programme specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) ⁶	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI-1.1-1	Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management	%				National (regional) disaster statistics Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
RI-1.1-2	Increased number of joint initiatives in the field of risk prevention and management	%				National (regional) disaster statistics Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
RI-1.2-1	Increased number of interventions, addressing improved nature protected sites	%				Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
RI-1.2-2	Improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources in the	%		2013		Survey Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023

⁶ Please note that the target values for the year 2023 are under establishment.

	CBC area through joint initiatives for nature protection		To be established				
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2.1.5.2 *Priority axis output indicators (common or programme specific)*

The below indicators are indicative and are subject to clarification between partnering countries and EC

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) ⁷	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
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⁷ Please note that the target values for the year 2023 are under establishment.

OI-1.1-1	→ Number of supported interventions / investments related to risk prevention	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.1-2	→ Joint tools/services established or improved for forests fire-fight protection measures	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.1-3	→ Purchased specialised equipment and long term assets related to disaster management	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.1-4	→ Joint strategies / common guidelines for risk prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.1-5	→ Joint trainings and public awareness campaigns	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.2-1	→ Number of improved nature protected sites	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.2-2	→ Protected areas/sites in the border region with management plans	Ha/Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.2-3	→ Awareness raising joint initiatives, in the field of preservation and protection of natural resources and landscape	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.2-4	→ Surface area of habitats in the eligible border area supported	Hectares		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.2-5	→ Trainings of local communities in the field of nature protection and sustainable use of natural resources	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-1.2-6	→ Joint measures for preservation and restoration of ecosystems, endangered flora and fauna species, natural resources	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually

2.1.6 Categories of intervention

Table 5: Categories of intervention - Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Environment	085 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	
	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	

Table 6: Categories of intervention - Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Environment	01 Non-repayable grant	

Table 7: Categories of intervention - Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Environment	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	

Table 8: Categories of intervention - Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Not relevant		

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)

2.1.7 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 for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Priority axis

<p>Max. Length = '2 000'</p>

<p>The objective of this Priority axis is to provide effective and efficient administration and implementation of the CBC Programme. Specific Objective 3.1: Improved overall administration and evaluation of the Programme: 1) Support to Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat for tasks related to preparation of the necessary documents, appraisal and selection of projects, monitoring and evaluation of activities, control and audit of the Programme; 2) Daily allowances, travel accommodation costs covering the expenses for the Bulgarian and Turkish participants (representatives of MA, JTS, CA, AA, JMC, persons who are not directly involved, for example interpreters, drivers etc.) in events concerning the programme; 3) Administrative costs concerning the JTS (Main and antennae) including rent of premises, repair works, furniture and equipment, expenditures for electricity, heating, phones, water, consumables etc; 4) Staff remuneration costs for the JTS (Main and JTS antennae); 5) Support to Joint Monitoring Committee and any other structures involved in supervision of the Programme; 6) Support to the Programme including ad-hoc, mid-term and ex-post evaluations; 7) Elaboration of specific studies and surveys for the Programme; 8) External expertise for development of programme implementation and monitoring procedures, information system for programme administration as well as assessment and first level control of projects; 9) Organisation of capacity building exercises for Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat (Main and JTS antennae) for development of know-how and skills in programme administration. Specific Objective 3.2: Improved Publicity and communication provisions: 1) Preparation, translation and dissemination of the Programme related information and publicity materials including but not limited to the programme website, official Programme documents, procedure manuals, bulletins, brochures, posters, etc.; as well as expenses for consumables as paper, files, folders, cases, diskettes, compact disks, etc.; 2) Organisation of public events as conferences, seminars, workshops, round table discussions, trainings for beneficiaries, networking and awareness-raising events, partner search forums etc. including rent of halls and equipment (audio-, video-, translation-equipment), expenses for interpreters, lecturers, trainers (should not be persons involved in the programme); expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, business dinners and lunches for all participants in the events; 3) Purchase of advertising materials as CDs, USBs, hats, bags, note books, folders etc. As well as expenses for publications in radio, TV and press</p>
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2.2 Priority axis 2

ID of the priority axis	2
Title of the priority axis	Sustainable Tourism

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	n/a

According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) *sustainable tourism* is a tourism envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems⁸.

*“Tourism is an important sector of the European Union’s economy. It supports economic growth and employment. One of our biggest challenges, however, is to reinforce and improve sustainable tourism development in order to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the industry. By managing tourism in a sustainable way we aim to ensure that we recognise the limits and capacity of our tourism resources and encourage tourism development that balances optimising the immediate economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits, whilst also ensuring the long-term future for our European tourism industry. Our priority is that Europe maintains its position as the leading tourism destination in the world. Since 1990, the number of international tourist arrivals to the EU has more than doubled. However, in order to retain its market share, the EU’s tourism industry needs to significantly improve its competitiveness and sustainability, taking into account aspects such as product and service quality, social and environmental responsibility, natural resources, and diversity of cultural heritage and local identities”.*⁹

The Priority Axis covers a main issue for the CBC area: tourism and cultural heritage, as well as the region’s natural heritage, which strongly corresponds to and underlines the main aim of PA 1. Tourism and capitalising the region’s cultural heritage are included in main national development strategies of both countries – the PA therefore follows the overall national objectives of development. The existing regional strengths of cultural heritage are building upon specific strengths of the CBC area; the concentration on the specific sector of tourism takes stock of already well-established strengths and regional areas of focus.

⁸ The European Tourism indicator System - Study on the Feasibility of a European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Management at Destination Level, . ISBN 978-92-79-29339-9, doi:10.2769/47006, February 2013

⁹ Preamble of the above document, Speech of Antonio Tadjani, Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship

Additionally, the horizontal priorities of competitiveness as basis for regional development and youth, as backbone for future developments in the area, are giving specific emphasis of the priority axis. Thus the two Thematic Priorities will be anchored in a thematic context, which allows for the necessary thematic concentration and focussing of the PA.

Therefore **three specific objectives** have been chosen in order to depict the core element of tourism and regional development and the two horizontal priorities of competitiveness and youth.

2.2.1 Fund, calculation basis for Union support and justification of the calculation basis choice

Fund	
Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)	13 339 302,35 Euro
Justification of the calculation basis choice	To be developed

2.2.2 The specific objectives of the thematic priority and expected results

ID	2.1.
Specific objective	<i>Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area through better utilisation of natural and cultural heritage</i>
The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>R-2.1.1: Increased tourist attractiveness of the cross-border region</p> <p>Tourism is a system, which is a function of supply and demand interaction. One of the key focuses in this system is the attractiveness. Tourist attractiveness is widely recognized and determined as a key factor of the destination competitiveness. Global tourism market is becoming a fiercely competitive environment and tourism destinations are under extreme pressure to rejuvenate and to enhance their attractiveness in order to remain competitive. Therefore, tourism destination should be continuously seek new sources of comparative advantages. Those comparative advantages, in the form of tourism resources and through the adequate destination management and marketing strategies, could be transformed into tourism attractions and become competitive advantages which can provide long term sustainable tourism growth and development for the tourism destination and therefore, improve its market positions. On the other hand sustainable tourism is tourism that is open to all and breaks down barriers to access. This criterion addresses the issue of equality of access for people with disabilities. Monitoring accommodation and attractions that are making provisions for people with disabilities helps raise awareness of the need for these facilities. Polling visitor satisfaction with access provides additional depth of information. With the mix of investment and soft measures the results will be achieved by the partner States.</p>
ID	2.2.
Specific objective	<i>Improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC-region</i>
The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support	R-2.2: Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC-region

	The improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC-region are another core result that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support. Through a variety of soft actions such as: 1) Joint researches on potential niche tourism activities and/or on the demand for new tourist destinations and experience; 2) Research activities to identify tourist products with potential for cross-border branding; 3) Development of local brand/s based on natural, historical and cultural heritage of the region; 4) Support for the development of new and innovative products and services to be delivered on sites; 5) Training and consultancy support services for tourism enterprises/establishments to improve skills and performance; and others the mentioned result will be achieved.
ID	2.3.
Specific objective	<i>Networking for sustainable development of tourism potential</i>
The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>R-2.3.: Enhanced cooperation among regional actors related to sustainable tourism</p> <p>The Enhanced cooperation among regional actors related to sustainable tourism is the final core result that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support. Through a variety of soft actions such as: 1) Organisation of events, training courses network possibilities for exchange of good practices in sustainable tourism management, incl. online forums; 2) Organisation of networking events, incl. initiatives for strengthening existing and establishing new partnerships in the area of sustainable tourism; 3) Surveys on domestic and international demand for cross-border tourism experiences; surveys on quality of extant services, projects to monitor sustainable tourism development and related services, etc. 4) Organisation of joint events to promote cross-border natural and cultural heritage, such as one-day festivals, exhibitions, performances, etc.; 5) Promotion and cultivation of the common traditions of the borderland areas; and others the mentioned result will be achieved.</p>

2.2.3 Elements of other thematic priorities added to the priority axis

ID	
Contribution to the specific objective of the priority axis	<i>Max. Length = '500' To be developed</i>
The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support	<i>Max. Length = '3 500' To be developed</i>

2.2.4 Actions to be supported under the thematic priority (by thematic priority)

2.2.4.1 *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

Thematic Priority	
<p>SO 2.1.:</p> <p>Investment measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rehabilitation of access roads to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites → Public utilities upgrade (electricity, water-supply, sewerage, etc.) → Small touristic border crossings and related facilities → ICT facilities developed/upgrade → Restoration and maintenance of sites of historical and cultural importance → Conservation and protection of (both tangible and non-tangible) natural, historical and cultural heritage → Cycling routes → Walking paths → Establishment of info-centres and/or kiosks to guide potential visitors <p>Soft measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Development of joint GIS platforms → Development of joint platforms for online reservations, payment, etc. → Development of touristic transport schemes and related activities in Black Sea coastal zones <p>TARGET GROUPS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All levels of Local/Regional authorities → Administrations of protected areas → Touristic organisations and associations → Residents of the cross-border area and the visitors (tourists) <p>POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All levels of regional/local authorities → Regional and sector development agencies → Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/ administrations → Public cultural institutes (museums, libraries, community centres, etc.) → Registered regional touristic associations → Business support institutions and organisations - Chambers of commerce, industry and crafts; → NGOs → Educational and training institutions and organizations → <p>SO 2.2.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Joint researches on potential niche tourism activities and/or on the demand for new tourist destinations and experience → Research activities to identify tourist products with potential for cross-border branding → Development of local brand/s based on natural, historical and cultural heritage of the region → Support for the development of new products and services → Multi-lingual on-line platforms presenting ready-to-go touristic projects targeted at key investors → Creating knowledge networks for tourism innovations in the border area → Training and consultancy support services for tourism enterprises/establishments to improve skills and performance → Visualisation of local brand/s, incl. 3D visualisation, mobile applications, social networks, tailor-made internet platforms, and other innovative tools → Organisation (and participation in) of fairs and related activities (i.e. exhibitions, conferences, seminars, round tables, presentations, etc.) → Identification and application of best practices in tourism promotion → Development and promotion of alternative forms of tourism, e.g. "gourme", "eco", "SPA", "rural" etc <p>TARGET GROUPS:</p>	

- All levels of Local/Regional authorities
- Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/ administrations
- Administrations of protected areas
- Registered NGOs in the field of tourism
- Business support institutions and organisations - Chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and others
- Tourist boards and associations;
- Youths organizations
- NGOs

POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES:

- All levels of regional / local authorities
- Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/ administrations
- Administrations of protected areas
- Registered NGOs in the field of tourism
- Business support institutions and organisations - Chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and others
- Tourist boards and associations
- Educational and training institutions and organizations
- Public cultural institutes (museums, libraries, community centres, etc.)

SO 2.3.:

Soft measures:

- Organisation of events, training courses network possibilities for exchange of good practices in sustainable tourism management, incl. online forums
- Organisation of networking events, incl. initiatives for strengthening existing and establishing new partnerships in the area of sustainable tourism
- Surveys on domestic and international demand for cross-border tourism experiences; surveys on quality of extant services, projects to monitor sustainable tourism development and related services, etc.
- Organisation of joint events to promote cross-border natural and cultural heritage, such as one-day festivals, exhibitions, performances, etc.
- Promotion and cultivation of the common traditions of the borderland areas
- Awareness raising campaigns on the values of regional cultural and natural heritage, incl. among youth
- Joint actions for regional and local cross-border cooperation and capacity building in the field of tourism – trainings, best practice & networking events, surveys, researches on the legal framework in the field of tourism, on-line forums, conferences, seminars, round tables, presentations and others
- Joint local development initiatives for specific target groups (youth, migrants, and others)
- Joint marketing and networking activities

TARGET GROUPS:

- All levels of Local/Regional authorities
- Associations of Local/Regional authorities and of other organisations;
- Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/ administrations
- Administrations of protected areas
- Registered NGOs in the field of tourism
- Business support institutions and organisations - Chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and others
- Tourist boards and associations;
- Educational and training institutions and organizations;
- Community organisations and institutions involved in development of civil society and/or promotion of education, culture and sports.
- Youths organizations
- Residents of the cross-border area and the visitors (tourists)

POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES:

- All levels of Local/Regional authorities
- Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/ administrations
- Administrations of protected areas

- Registered NGOs
- Business support institutions and organisations - Chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and others
- Tourist boards and associations;
- Educational and training institutions and organizations;
- Community organisations and institutions involved in development of civil society and/or promotion of education, culture and sports.
- Youths organizations

2.2.4.2 *Guiding principles for the selection of operations*

Thematic Priority	
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According to **article 39 (1), Selection of operations**, of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/214 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), the operations under cross-border cooperation programmes shall be selected by the JMC.

The following general principles will guide the selection of operations:

- h. CBC character
 - Involvement of beneficiaries of the two participating countries
 - Clear identification of cross-border benefit/impact if operation is implemented in a single country
- i. Partnership
 - The involved project partners are eligible corresponding to the programme's rules
 - The involved project partners have the capacity for the project's management
- k. Regional relevance
 - The operations are in correspondence to the identified needs and challenges of the CBC area
 - The operations contribute to economic, territorial and social cohesion (following the EU-2020 Strategy)
- l. Strategic relevance
 - The operations are in line with the priority axis' specific objectives
 - The operations are coherent with strategies and concept at the regional and the national level
- m. Operations' quality
 - The operations/projects are clear and structured (intervention logic)
 - Expenditures of the operations are effective
 - The projects are based on the concept of sustainability
- n. Horizontal principles
 - The operations take the equality between men and women into account
 - The operations consider non-discrimination principles
 - The operations follow the concept of sustainable development

Additional specific principles apply for this priority axis:

Strategic projects

Under this Priority axis strategic projects could be identified outside calls for proposals for the achievement of the programme objectives and priority specific objectives. Strategic projects contribute to achievement of a bigger impact through real and strong cross-border impact and long-term results, in respect of the Programme's objectives.

Strategic Projects must be effective and answer the territory's needs as envisaged by the Programme and result in a significant and long-lasting change or improvement on the whole or large parts of programme area.

The basic principles for the eligibility of a strategic project could be the following

- To address key specific objectives that can be achieved only through the involvement of large partnerships and /or of key stakeholders on the two sides of the border
- To be based on a larger financial size than ordinary projects, proportionate to the relevance of the objectives and results.
- to produce lasting effects and catalyze further actions;

2.2.4.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Thematic Priority	
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Planned use of financial instruments	Planned use of financial instruments
<i>Max. Length = 7 000'</i>	Not planned

2.2.5 Common and programme specific indicators

2.2.5.1 Priority axis result indicators (programme specific)

Table 9: Programme specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measure ment unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value ¹⁰ (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI-2.1	Increased number of tourists/ visitors in the cross-border area	%	<i>To be established</i>	2013		Statistical Data; Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
RI-2.2	Level of valorisation of natural and cultural heritage in tourism context	%	<i>To be established</i>	2014		Survey	2018 2023
RI-2.3	Increased number of cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable tourism	%	<i>To be established</i>	2013		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023

2.2.5.2 Priority axis output indicators (common or programme specific)

The below indicators are indicative and are subject to clarification between partnering countries and EC

Table 10: Common and programme specific output indicators

¹⁰ Please note that the target values for the year 2023 are under establishment.

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) ¹¹	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OI-2.1-1	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded access roads to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites	Kilometres		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-2	Total length of newly built, reconstructed or upgraded cycling routes / walking paths	Kilometres		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-3	Total number of newly built / reconstructed facilities in / leading to touristic sites in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-4	Total number of reconstructed / restored cultural and historical touristic objects in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-5	Total number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-6	Visitors using the online touristic platforms created under the Programme	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-7	Total number of touristic attractions created/reconstructed in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.2-1	Total number of newly established touristic products / services	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.2-2	Tools developed and/or implemented for promotion of sustainable touristic potential of the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.2-3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing of tourism products in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually

¹¹ Please note that the target values for the year 2023 are under establishment.

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) ¹¹	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OI-2.2-4	Joint local brand/s / labels developed	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-1	Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-2	Common strategies or policies for valorising (including raising awareness) the cultural and natural heritage through its restoration and promotion for sustainable economic uses	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-3	Trainings implemented on sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-4	Promotional events for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) ¹²	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
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¹² Please note that the target values for the year 2023 are under establishment.

OI-2.1-1	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded access roads to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites	Kilometres		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-2	Total length of newly built, reconstructed or upgraded cycling routes / walking paths	Kilometres		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-3	Total number of newly built / reconstructed facilities in / leading to touristic sites in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-4	Total number of reconstructed / restored cultural and historical touristic objects in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-5	Total number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-6	Visitors using the online touristic platforms created under the Programme	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.1-7	Total number of touristic attractions created/reconstructed in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.2-1	Total number of newly established touristic products / services	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.2-2	Tools developed and/or implemented for promotion of sustainable touristic potential of the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.2-3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing of tourism products in the eligible border area	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.2-4	Joint local brand/s / labels developed	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-1	Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-2	Common strategies or policies for valorising (including raising awareness) the cultural and natural heritage through its restoration and promotion for sustainable economic uses	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-3	Trainings implemented on sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
OI-2.3-4	Promotional events for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services	Number		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually

2.2.6 Categories of intervention

Table 11: Categories of intervention - Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Sustainable Tourism	075 Development and promotion of tourism services in or for SMEs	
	079 Access to public sector information (including open data e-Tourism)	
	090 Cycle tracks and footpaths	
	092 Protection, development and promotion of public tourism assets	
	094 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	
	095 Development and promotion of public cultural and heritage services	

Table 12: Categories of intervention - Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Sustainable Tourism	01 Non-repayable grant	

Table 13: Categories of intervention - Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Sustainable Tourism	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	

Table 14: Categories of intervention - Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)

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2.2.7 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 for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Priority axis	
<p>Max. Length = '2 000'</p> <p>The objective of this Priority axis is to provide effective and efficient administration and implementation of the CBC Programme. Specific Objective 3.1: Improved overall administration and evaluation of the Programme: 1) Support to Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat for tasks related to preparation of the necessary documents, appraisal and selection of projects, monitoring and evaluation of activities, control and audit of the Programme; 2) Daily allowances, travel accommodation costs covering the expenses for the Bulgarian and Turkish participants (representatives of MA, JTS, CA, AA, JMC, persons who are not directly involved, for example interpreters, drivers etc.) in events concerning the programme; 3) Administrative costs concerning the JTS (Main and antennae) including rent of premises, repair works, furniture and equipment, expenditures for electricity, heating, phones, water, consumables etc; 4) Staff remuneration costs for the JTS (Main and JTS antennae); 5) Support to Joint Monitoring Committee and any other structures involved in supervision of the Programme; 6) Support to the Programme including ad-hoc, mid-term and ex-post evaluations; 7) Elaboration of specific studies and surveys for the Programme; 8) External expertise for development of programme implementation and monitoring procedures, information system for programme administration as well as assessment and first level control of projects; 9) Organisation of capacity building exercises for Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat (Main and JTS antennae) for development of know-how and skills in programme administration. Specific Objective 3.2: Improved Publicity and communication provisions: 1) Preparation, translation and dissemination of the Programme related information and publicity materials including but not limited to the programme website, official Programme documents, procedure manuals, bulletins, brochures, posters, etc.; as well as expenses for consumables as paper, files, folders, cases, diskettes, compact disks, etc.; 2) Organisation of public events as conferences, seminars, workshops, round table discussions, trainings for beneficiaries, networking and awareness-raising events, partner search forums etc. including rent of halls and equipment (audio-, video-, translation- equipment), expenses for interpreters, lecturers, trainers (should not be persons involved in the programme); expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, business dinners and lunches for all participants in the events; 3) Purchase of advertising materials as CDs, USBs, hats, bags, note books, folders etc. As well as expenses for publications in radio, TV and press</p>	

2.3 Overview table of indicators per priority axis and thematic priority

Table 15: Table of common and programme specific output and result indicators

Priori ty axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
PA-1:	Environment	<i>To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management Increased number of joint initiatives in the field of risk prevention and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of supported interventions / investments related to risk prevention Joint tools/services established or improved for forests fire-fight protection measures Purchased specialised equipment and long term assets related to disaster management Joint strategies / common guidelines for risk prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters Joint trainings and public awareness campaigns
		<i>Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of interventions, addressing improved nature protected sites Improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area through joint initiatives for nature protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of improved nature protected sites Protected areas/sites in the border region with management plans Awareness raising joint initiatives, in the field of preservation and protection of natural resources and landscape Surface area of habitats in the eligible border area supported Trainings of local communities in the field of nature protection and sustainable use of natural resources Joint measures for preservation and restoration of ecosystems, endangered flora and fauna species, natural resources
PA-2:	Sustainable Tourism	<i>Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of tourists/ visitors in the cross-border area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total length of reconstructed or upgraded access roads to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
		<i>area through better utilisation of natural and cultural heritage</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total length of newly built, reconstructed or upgraded cycling routes / walking paths • Total number of newly built / reconstructed facilities in / leading to touristic sites in the eligible border area • Total number of reconstructed / restored cultural and historical touristic objects in the eligible border area • Total number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites • Visitors using the online touristic platforms created under the Programme • Total number of touristic attractions created/reconstructed in the eligible border area
		<i>Improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC-region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of valorisation of natural and cultural heritage in tourism context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of newly established touristic products / services • Tools developed and/or implemented for promotion of sustainable touristic potential of the eligible border area • Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing of tourism products in the eligible border area • Joint local brand/s / labels developed
		<i>Networking for sustainable development of tourism potential</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources • Common strategies or policies for valorising (including raising awareness) the cultural and natural heritage through its restoration and promotion for sustainable economic uses • Trainings implemented on sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources • Promotional events for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
PA-3:	<i>Technical assistance</i>	.	.	.

III. FINANCING PLAN

3.1 Financial appropriation from the IPA (in EUR)

Table 16: Financial appropriation

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
IPA	1 257 945,86	1 821 205,17	2 609 768,70	4 731 376,14	4 825 253,11	4 919 130,08	5 031 780,94	25 196 460,00

3.1.1 Total financial appropriation from the IPA and national co-financing (in EUR)

Table 17: Financial Plan

Priority axis	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) (1)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
PA-1		11 338 407,00	2 000 895,35	2 000 895,35	0	13 339 302,35	85 %		
PA-2		11 338 407,00	2 000 895,35	2 000 895,35	0	13 339 302,35	85 %		
PA-TA		2 519 646,00	444 643,41	444 643,41	0	2 964 289,41	85 %		
TOTAL		25 196 460,00	4 446 434,12	4 446 434,12	0	29 642 894,12			

(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 Breakdown by priority axis and thematic priority

Table 18: Breakdown by priority axis

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
PA-1	Environment	11 338 407,00	2 000 895,35	13 339 302,35
PA-2	Sustainable Tourism	11 338 407,00	2 000 895,35	13 339 302,35
PA-TA	Technical assistance	2 519 646,00	444 643,41	2 964 289,41
TOTAL		25 196 460,00	4 446 434,12	29 642 894,12

IV. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

Max. Length = 3 500'

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

Max. Length = 7 000'

Not Applicable

4.2 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

Max. Length = 5 000'

Not Applicable

Table 19: Indicative financial allocation to ITI (aggregate amount)

Priority axis	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (EUR)
PA-1	
PA-2	
PA-3	
PA-4	
PA-TA	
TOTAL	

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

Max. Length = 7 000'

Macro-regional strategies as integrated frameworks to address joint challenges contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion. The two existing European macro-regional strategies (European Strategies for the Baltic Sea Region and for the Danube Region) do not directly address the cross-border area, although the region is e.g. influenced by the Danube Region due to its spatial proximity and major environmental influences.

Black Sea coastal regions in Bulgaria Turkey (including Burgas and Kırklareli as NUTS level III regions) are covered by the EU Strategy for Blue Growth and by the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (referred to as "Bucharest Convention").

Additionally, the Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea – although not being an EU macro-regional strategy – is of importance for the area. The action plan focuses especially on issue of eutrophication, marine resources, environmental pollution, biodiversity, etc. The Bucharest Convention is the basic agreement ratified in 1994 by all six legislative assemblies of the Black Sea countries, which encompasses three specific areas, namely: control of land-based sources of pollution; dumping of waste and joint actions in the case of accidents (such as oil spills).

The Blue Growth Strategy was developed within the framework of the European Union's (EU's) Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP). It seeks to provide a more coherent approach to maritime issues by increasing coordination among different policy areas in order to enhance the cooperation between coastal EU Member States and EU candidate and potential candidate countries (including the Republic of Turkey).

In addition, future operations under Priority axis 2 could be considered a specific tool developing the cross-cutting horizontal actions that are necessary to underpin the sustainable and balanced long-term growth of maritime economic activities, and thus to foster the cooperation between the Black Sea Basin countries.

V. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 20: Programme authorities

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	Max. Length = 255' DG "Territorial Cooperation Management" Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria 17-19 Kiril and Metodii Str 1000 Sofia phone: 00359 2 9405 487 / 488 mobile phone: +359 882 492 223 tcm@mrrb.government.bg	Max. Length = 255' Director General of DG "Territorial Cooperation Management" within the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria
Certifying authority, where applicable	Max. Length = 255' National Fund Directorate at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria 102 G.S. Rakovski Str 1040 Sofia, Bulgaria	Max. Length = 255' — Director of National Fund Directorate within the Ministry of Finance of the

	Phone: 00359 2 9859 2782 Fax: 00359 2 9859 2790 natfund@minfin.bg	Republic of Bulgaria
Audit authority	Max. Length = 255' Audit of European Union Funds Executive Agency at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria 4 Slavjanska Str. 1040 Sofia, Bulgaria Phone: 00359 2 9859 5200 Fax: 00359 2 9859 5202 aeuf@minfin.bg	Max. Length = 255' Executive Director of the Audit of the European Union Funds Executive Agency within the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria

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

<input type="checkbox"/> The Managing Authority	DG "Territorial Cooperation Management" at the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Certifying Authority	National Fund Directorate at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria

Table 21: 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	Max. Length = 255' Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria	Max. Length = 255' Minister of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	Max. Length = 255' Audit of European Union Funds Executive Agency at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria 4 Slavjanska Str. 1040 Sofia, Bulgaria Phone: 00359 2 9859 5200 Fax: 00359 2 9859 5202 aeuf@minfin.bg	Max. Length = 255' Executive Director of the Audit of the European Union Funds Executive Agency within the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria

5.2 Joint Monitoring Committee

According to **article 38, Joint monitoring committee**, of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/214 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) the following provisions shall apply:

1. Within three months of the date of notification to the Member State of the decision approving cross-border cooperation programme, the participating countries shall set up a Joint monitoring committee (hereinafter referred to as 'JMC').
2. The JMC shall be composed of representatives of the Commission, the NIPAC and other relevant national authorities and bodies of the IPA II beneficiary], the participating Member State(s) and, where relevant, international financial institutions and other stakeholders, including civil society and private sector organisations.
3. The JMC shall be chaired by a representative of one of the participating countries or of the managing authority.
4. The Commission shall participate in the work of the JMC in an advisory capacity.
5. If the EIB contributes to a programme, it may participate in the work of the JMC in an advisory capacity.

6. The JMC shall review the overall effectiveness, quality and coherence of the implementation of all actions towards meeting the objectives set out in the cross-border programme, the financing agreements and the relevant strategy paper(s). It may make recommendations for corrective actions whenever needed. Articles 49 and 110 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 concerning its functions shall also apply. The JMC and the managing authority shall carry out monitoring by reference to indicators laid down in the relevant cross-border cooperation programme, in accordance with Article 16 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

7. The JMC shall adopt its rules of procedure.

8. The JMC shall meet at least once a year. Additional meetings may also be convened at the initiative of one of the participating countries or of the Commission, in particular on a thematic basis.

Table 22: Indicative list of Joint Monitoring Committee members

Name of authority/body and department or unit	Role in the programme	Contact details of the authority/body
EU Commission	Advisory	European Commission, Directorate Regional and Urban Policy
NIPAC	Decision	
Managing Authority	Decision	Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria
National Authority	Decision	Ministry for EU Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Financial Cooperation Directorate
Audit Authority	Advisory	Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria, Audit of European Union Funds Executive Agency
Certifying Authority	Advisory	Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria, National Fund Directorate
Regional authorities	Decision	
Local authorities	Decision	
Competent Public Central administration Authorities	Decision	
Social and economic partners		
Civil society organisations (environmental, equal opportunities, non-discrimination)		
Academic and scientific society		
EIB	Consultative	
Other (as agreed by the partner countries)		

5.3 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

Max. Length =3 500'

The Managing Authority in cooperation with National Authority establishes a Joint Technical Secretariat. It is placed in Haskovo, Republic of Bulgaria. JTS has an antennae in Edirne, Republic of Turkey. The JTS (including its

antennae as part of the same body) consists of equal number Bulgarian and Turkish experts contracted by the MA or NA.

JS provides daily help to the Managing Authority and the Joint Monitoring Committee of the Programme and assists where appropriate the Certifying Authority and Audit Authority in carrying out their respective duties. The JS also takes part in preparation and implementation of the decisions of Joint Monitoring Committee and carries out usual duties of a secretariat.

The JS is in particular responsible for the following joint tasks:

- Participation in planning and organisation of programme information campaigns and other activities related to raising public awareness on the programme;
- Establishing and managing a joint projects data base and project partners data base;
- Supporting projects generation and development,
- Supporting MA and National Authority for the preparation of all standardised forms for the implementation of Programme such as application package, evaluation, contracting, implementation, monitoring and reporting,
- Preparing the full application package for CfPs and submit to MA and National Authority for approval,
- Advising beneficiaries on the implementation of operations and financial administration;
- Receiving and registering of applications submitted;
- Performing a formal check of project applications in terms of administrative compliance and eligibility;
- Presenting a work plan via the Managing Authority to the Joint Monitoring Committee once a year for approval;
- Organising all meetings and events, draft the minutes, prepare, ensures the administrative management of tasks and services;
- Providing secretariat services for Evaluation Committees and submitting the results of the project technical evaluation sessions to the JMC;
- Monitoring of project implementation, collecting of information from the lead beneficiaries and updating data in the Management Information System; Coordinating the work of the controllers;
- Collecting and checking project reports from the lead partners before submitting to the MA;
- Assisting the MA in preparation of the reports on programme implementation;
- Receiving requests from the lead beneficiaries on any modifications as well as preparation of addendums to projects and submitting them to MA or JMC respectively for approval;
- Cooperation with the programme implementing authorities in Bulgaria and Turkey, and with other territorial cooperation programmes;
- Collaboration with central, regional and local stakeholders involved in the CBC Programme.

5.4 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

Max. Length =35 000'

Managing Authority

According to article 37, **Functions of the programme authorities**, of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) in line with article 125 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and article 23(1), (2), (4) and (5) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 concerning the **functions of the managing authority**, the following provisions shall apply:

Art. 125 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

1. The managing authority shall be responsible for managing the operational programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management.
2. As regards the management of the operational programme, the managing authority shall:
 - (a) support the work of the monitoring committee referred to in Article 47 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 monitoring committee, submit to the Commission annual and final implementation reports referred to in Article 50;
 - (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 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 where required by Annexes I and II of the ESF Regulation.
3. As regards the selection of operations, the managing authority shall:
 - (a) draw up and, once approved, apply appropriate selection procedures and criteria 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 set out in Articles 7 and 8;
 - (b) ensure that a selected operation falls within the scope of the Fund or Funds concerned and can be attributed to a category of intervention or, in the case of the EMFF, a measure identified in the priority or priorities of the operational programme;
 - (c) ensure that the beneficiary is provided with a document setting out the conditions for support for each 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;
 - (d) satisfy itself that the beneficiary has the administrative, financial and operational capacity to fulfil the conditions referred to in point (c) before approval of the operation;
 - (e) 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;
 - (f) ensure that operations selected for support from the Funds or the EMFF 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 following the relocation of a productive activity outside the programme area;
 - (g) determine the categories of intervention or, in the case of the EMFF, the measures to which the expenditure of an operation shall be attributed.
4. As regards the financial management and control of the operational programme, the managing authority shall:
 - (a) verify that the co-financed products and services have been delivered and that expenditure declared by the beneficiaries has been paid and that it complies with applicable law, the operational programme and the conditions for support of the operation;
 - (b) ensure that beneficiaries involved in the implementation of operations 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;

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

By way of derogation from point (a) of the first subparagraph, the ETC Regulation may establish specific rules on verification applicable to cooperation programmes.

5. Verifications pursuant to point (a) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 4 shall include the following procedures:

- (a) administrative verifications in respect of each application for reimbursement by beneficiaries;
- (b) on-the-spot verifications of operations.

The frequency and coverage of the on-the-spot verifications shall be proportionate to the amount of public support to an operation and to the level of risk identified by such verifications and audits by the audit authority for the management and control system as a whole.

6. On-the-spot verifications of individual operations pursuant to point (b) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 5 may be carried out on a sample basis.

7. 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.

8. The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 149, laying down rules specifying the information in relation to the data to be recorded and stored in computerised form within the monitoring system established under point (d) of paragraph 2 of this Article.

The Commission shall adopt implementing acts laying down the technical specifications of the system established under point (d) of paragraph 2 of this Article. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 150(3).

9. The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 149, laying down the detailed minimum requirements for the audit trail referred to in point (d) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 4 of this Article in respect of the accounting records to be maintained and the supporting documents to be held at the level of the certifying authority, managing authority, intermediate bodies and beneficiaries.

10. The Commission shall, in order to ensure uniform conditions on the implementation of this Article, adopt implementing acts concerning the model for the management declaration referred to in point (e) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 4 of this Article. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 150(2).

Article 23(1), (2), (4) and (5) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013

1. Without prejudice to paragraph 4 of this Article, the managing authority of a cooperation programme shall carry out the functions laid down in Article 125 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

2. The managing authority, after consultation with the Member States and any third countries participating in a cooperation programme, shall set up a joint secretariat.

The joint secretariat shall assist the managing authority and the monitoring committee in carrying out their respective functions. The joint secretariat shall also provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under cooperation programmes and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

3. Where the managing authority is an EGTC, verifications under point (a) of Article 125(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 shall be carried out by or under the responsibility of the managing authority at least for those Member States and third countries or territories from which there are members participating in the EGTC.

4. Where the managing authority does not carry out verifications under point (a) of Article 125(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 throughout the whole programme area, or where the verifications are not carried out by or under the responsibility of the managing authority for those Member States and third countries or territories from which there are members participating in the EGTC in accordance with paragraph 3, each Member State or, where it has accepted the invitation to participate in the cooperation programme, each third country or territory shall designate the body or person responsible for carrying out such verifications in relation to beneficiaries on its territory (the 'controller(s)').

The controllers referred to in the first subparagraph may be the same bodies responsible for carrying out such verifications for the operational programmes under the Investment for growth and jobs goal or, in the case of third countries, for carrying out comparable verifications under external policy instruments of the Union.

The managing authority shall satisfy itself that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by a designated controller.

Each Member State shall ensure that the expenditure of a beneficiary can be verified within a period of three months of the submission of the documents by the beneficiary concerned.

Each Member State or, where it has accepted the invitation to participate in the cooperation programme, each third country shall be responsible for verifications carried out on its territory.

5. Where the delivery of co-financed products or services can be verified only in respect of an entire operation, the verification shall be performed by the managing authority or by the controller of the Member State where the lead beneficiary is located.

National authority

The counterpart for the Managing Authority in charge of the coordination role in Turkey is the Ministry for European Union Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, acting as National Authority.

Certifying authority

According to article 37, **Functions of the programme authorities**, of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/214 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) in line with article 126 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 24 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 concerning the **functions of the certifying authority** the below provisions shall apply. The certifying authority shall receive the payments made by the Commission and shall, as a general rule, make payments to the lead beneficiary in accordance with Article 132 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

The certifying authority of an operational programme shall be responsible in particular for:

- (a) 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;
- (b) drawing up the accounts referred to in point (a) of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;
- (c) 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;
- (d) 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;
- (e) 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;
- (f) 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;
- (g) maintaining, in a computerised form, accounting records of expenditure declared to the Commission and of the corresponding public contribution paid to beneficiaries;
- (h) 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 Union prior to the closure of the operational programme by deducting them from the subsequent statement of expenditure.

Audit authority

According to article 37, **Functions of the programme authorities**, of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/214 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) in line with article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 25 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 concerning the **functions of the audit authority** the below provisions shall apply.

Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

1. The audit authority shall ensure that audits are carried out on the proper functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme and on an appropriate sample of operations on the basis of the declared expenditure. 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 judgement 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.

2. Where audits are carried out by a body other than the audit authority, the audit authority shall ensure that any such body has the necessary functional independence.

3. The audit authority shall ensure that audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards.

4. The audit authority shall, within eight months of adoption of an operational programme, prepare an audit strategy for performance of audits. The audit strategy shall set out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on operations and the planning of audits in relation to the current accounting year and the two subsequent accounting years. The audit strategy shall be updated annually from 2016 until and including 2024. Where a common management and control system applies to more than one operational programme, a single audit strategy may be prepared for the operational programmes concerned. The audit authority shall submit the audit strategy to the Commission upon request.

5. The audit authority shall draw up:

(a) an audit opinion in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;

(b) a control report setting out the main findings of the audits carried out in accordance with paragraph 1, including findings with regard to deficiencies found in the management and control systems, and the proposed and implemented corrective actions.

Where a common management and control system applies to more than one operational programme, the information required under point (b) of the first subparagraph may be grouped in a single report.

6. The Commission shall, in order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of this Article, adopt implementing acts laying down models for the audit strategy, the audit opinion and the control report. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 150(2).

7. The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 149, to set out the scope and content of audits of operations and audits of the accounts and the methodology for the selection of the sample of operations referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article.

8. The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 149, laying down detailed rules on the use of data collected during audits carried out by Commission officials or authorised Commission representatives.

Article 25, of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013

1. The Member States and third countries participating in a cooperation programme may authorise the audit authority to carry out directly the functions provided for in Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 in the whole of the territory covered by a cooperation programme. They shall specify when the audit authority is to be accompanied by an auditor of a Member State or a third country.

2. Where the audit authority does not have the authorisation referred to in paragraph 1, it shall be assisted by a group of auditors composed of a representative from each Member State or third country participating in the cooperation programme and carrying out the functions provided for in Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. Each Member State or, where it has accepted the invitation to participate in a cooperation programme, each third country shall be responsible for audits carried out on its territory.

Each representative from each Member State or third country participating 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.

The group of auditors shall be set up within three months of the decision approving the cooperation programme. It shall draw up its own rules of procedure and be chaired by the audit authority for the cooperation programme.

3. The auditors shall be functionally independent of controllers who carry out verifications under Article 23.

4. The Audit Authority shall be assisted by a Group of Auditors, comprising representatives of Bulgaria and Turkey.

5.5 Apportionment of liabilities among partner States in case of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Max. Length =10 500'

In case a cooperation between Member state and IPA country, according to article 46 (6), **Financial management, decommitment, examination and acceptance of accounts, closure and financial corrections**, of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/214 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) the following ESIF rules will apply:

- Articles 85, 122(2) and 143 to 147 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 concerning financial corrections and recoveries
- Article 27(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013

5.6 Use of the Euro (where applicable)

Max. Length =2 000'

In accordance with the ETC Regulation, Article 28, expenditure incurred by project partners located in countries, which are outside of the Euro zone, shall be converted into euro. The conversion is to be made by the beneficiaries using the accounting exchange rate of the EC applied during the month of the incurring of the expenditure.

5.7 Involvement of partners

Max. Length =14 000'

Participation of partners in the preparation of the programme.

The entire programme cycle, embracing the programme preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation alike, has been designed to ensure the active involvement of the relevant partners. As presented above, partners have been involved in the programming process, primarily through:

- Meetings of the Task Force and Joint Working Group;
- Consultation with the partners;
- Consultations with the stakeholders – local and regional authorities, central and regional offices of national institutions, Chambers of commerce and industry, NGOs, etc;
- Internet based consultations.

The entire CBC Programme promotes the concept of a special form of partnership – crossborder partnership. Thus only joint projects of Bulgarian and Turkish partners can be supported. The application of the Lead partner principle also enhances partnership. In addition, the implementation procedures and the structure and composition of the various institutions and bodies have all been designed to ensure balanced partnership of every relevant partner, from both counties, across the whole programme cycle management process.

The consultations for the Situation analysis and SWOT

The participation to all stages of consultation was active. Programme partners and stakeholders were asked to contribute to the areas of cooperation with their vision through an on-line survey based on questionnaires. The survey was performed in February 2014. The respondents expressed their views and opinions by answering the questionnaire provided, and offering a quantitative ranking for their opinion. The respondents to the survey are partners of projects financed by the current programme, and among them were included representatives of NGO, educational and university institutions, local administrations and others. Exactly 123 respondents from local public authorities, national public authorities, and civil society (associations, foundations, etc.), private sector gave their feedback during the survey.

The contribution to the Situation analysis and SWOT by the stakeholders and potential beneficiaries were given during the First round of regional consultations that have been performed in Haskovo (Bulgaria) and Edirne (Turkey) on 19th and 20th of March 2014.

The Situation analysis and SWOT were also consulted with the Task force and Joint working group members. The Situation analysis and SWOT were accepted by the Joint working group members during the joint meeting hold in Ankara on May 13th 2014. During the same meeting the two Thematic Priorities as per IPA II Regulation were approved so to be a base for the Priority axes of the OP IPA CBC BG-TR 2014-2020, e.g. environment and sustainable tourism.

A second round of consultations

Over the period June 18th – 19th 2014 in Edirne (Turkey) and Haskovo (Bulgaria) a second round of regional consultations was performed so to present the First draft of the Intervention logic of OP IPA CBC BG-TR 2014-2020. The stakeholders gave their input in terms of specific objectives, results, target groups, beneficiaries, indicative activities.

Consultations on of the Draft versions of OP IPA CBC BG-TR 2014-2020.

On June 16th 2014 the First draft OP IPA CBC BG-TR 2014-2020 was submitted to Managing and National authorities for working consultation. Over the period 16th – 30th of June 2014 the First draft OP IPA CBC BG-TR 2014-2020 was also consulted with the Task force and Joint working group members. The given feedback during this process was taken into consideration in drafting the Second draft OP IPA CBC BG-TR 2014-2020. The later was submitted to both Managing and National authorities on July 7th 2014 so to be further proceed for consultations with EC services.

The Final Draft OP IPA CBC BG-TR 2014-2020 was submitted to Managing and National authorities on July 31st for finalization of the adoption process between programme partners as well as further approval by the respective EC services.

VI. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

6.1 Sustainable development

Max. Length =5 500'

Bulgaria – Turkey IPA CBC Programme Authorities must ensure that environmental protection requirements, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management are promoted in the preparation and implementation of the programmes. In the case of the Bulgaria – Turkey IPA CBC Programme the biggest challenges are related to environmental and biodiversity protection and sustainable use of natural resources and the addressing of climate change, environmental risks management and emergency preparedness. These challenges relate to the protection of the environment as a sustainable value of the region and as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism.

Generally, all three dimensions of sustainability, including the ecological, the economic as well as the social one, will be taken into consideration within the IPA BG-TR Programme; therefore the programme contributes directly to the Europe 2020 Strategy's components of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Within all axes of the programme strategy, sustainable development is seen as a cross-cutting issue with all three pillars (economic, social and environmental) equally represented in the two Programme priority axes. Especially the Programme's **Priority Axis 1**, which targets cooperation on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth, takes into account environmental protection, resource efficiency, climate change (include both mitigation and adaptation) as well as natural hazards, disaster and risk resilience, prevention and management. In these fields, the Programme mainly contributes to the generation and dissemination of knowledge and capacities on the protection and sustainable use of natural resources and addresses issues of resource management. **Priority Axis 2**, which deals with sustainable tourism, targets cooperation on the creation of sustainable tourist services and tourism attractiveness will capitalise on the existing natural and cultural resources, which shall be managed and preserved in a sustainable way.

Besides actions within the Programme priorities, which may foster sustainable development, a number of activities have been identified which may be implemented in projects submitted under any chosen priority axis.

All projects and interventions of the IPA BG-TR Programme can integrate measures to ease the burden of emissions of their actions, e.g. by:

- actively tackle wider environmental concerns
- actively tackle environmental issues of specific concern, including climate change as well as the maintaining of biodiversity and ecosystems
- carrying out environmental management (structured experience sharing, capacity development, etc.)
- actively tackle sustainability issues, including ecological, economic and social concerns
- adopting measures for the organisation and implementation of conferences and events in a sustainable way

Additionally, all projects funded by the Programme should:

- contribute to the implementation of the reviewed European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development (2009), which shall be proved by each project applicant in a conclusive and transparent way which shall be assessed as project selection criterion.
- consider the principles of the Community Policy regarding the protection and improvement of natural heritage and biodiversity as well as related amendments, such as the Flora-Fauna-Habitat directive and the Birds directive being the *“cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy”* (European Commission, 2013: online¹³).
- consider greater use of renewable energy

¹³ Cf. EU COM (2013): The Habitats Directive.

URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/> (June, 2014)

Appropriate management arrangements of the IPA BG-TR Programme shall support environmentally sustainable development of the cross-border cooperation area. Besides respecting the legally required standards, the programme seeks to avoid all effects that are unsustainable or unfavourable to the environment at all levels of the programme implementation cycle. Negative impacts shall be avoided to the highest degree possible.

The positive effects and potentials for synergies of the IPA BG-TR Programme for the purpose of optimising its contribution to an environmentally sustainable development shall be exploited at best and, wherever possible, be strengthened. Wherever achievable, preference will be given to the planning and realisation of environmentally friendly solutions and projects.

The Programme is implemented via a number of projects. The assessment of the quality of the eligible project proposals should be based on a set of quality criteria which are common to all Priority Axes. The contribution of each project to these principles will be addressed in a qualitative manner in the frame of project selection and programme monitoring and evaluation. The policy aimed at sustainable development will be screened throughout all stages of the programme implementation – both at programme and project level.

6.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Max. Length =5 500'

In general, it's the aim of the European Union to combat "*discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation*" (EU COM, common provisions). With the Green Paper on non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all, the European Commission published a joint strategy for "*the positive and active promotion of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all*" (European Union, 2014: online¹⁴). This goes in line with the UN's universal declaration of Human Rights.

It's the IPA BG-TR Programme strategy's objective to ensure protection against discrimination through the transposition by the MS, to contribute to an inclusive cross-border development and to making the border regions better places to live and work. Non-discrimination transcends gender issues and adopts a wider focus. While anti-discrimination legislation is an acquired aspect of EU legal systems, the practical implementation of non-discrimination practices is lagging behind. Equal access to information, and controls on whether equality and non-discrimination requirements are being met, is also an issue. In the course of Programme preparation, the Programme has observed non-discrimination and addressed relevant issues related to the ethnic and religious composition of the area, the age structure and the ensuing socio-demographic developments in the programme area (mainly related to migration and ageing) in the SWOT analysis. The strategy of the programme puts emphasis in the availability of programme benefits to everyone.

The baseline need is manifested in a number of challenges, being based on the diverse developments in the two Programme countries in the last years, ranging from disparities in the field of accessibility, to diverse economic development and social fields. A clear core-periphery pattern is obvious. The economic development took different paths in recent decades, major economic differences exist between urban, rural, more central and more peripheral regions. Disparities are visible in the social field too: especially rural areas are confronted with negative demographic trends and brain-drain occurrences, being based in the out-migration of well-educated employees.

The principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination are ensured by supporting actions in the fields of e.g. awareness raising, sharing of experience, training, dissemination of information, etc., which have also been mentioned by the EU's Green Paper on equality and non-discrimination (cf. COM(2004)379 final).

For the programming period 2014-2020, the main focus of the Programme has been aligned to improve the living conditions within the border regions. **Priority Axis 1** targets cooperation on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth and aims at an increased life quality in functional urban areas and reduced disparities within the programming area through strengthened capacities and the development and implementation of integrated strategies and tools. It is one main objective of **Priority**

¹⁴ Cf. EU COM (2014): A framework strategy for non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all. URL: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/human_rights/fundamental_rights_within_european_union/c10313_en.htm (June, 2014).

Axis 2 to reduce existing disparities in economic development especially in peripheral areas, which are facing a low quality of public infrastructure and therefore to contribute to the creation of equality between peripheral and central areas.

Besides actions within the priorities, which explicitly address the reduction of disparities, a number of activities have been identified which may be implemented in projects submitted under any chosen priority axis.

All interventions, being implemented through the IPA BG-TR Programme can integrate measures to consider the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, e.g. by:

- actively tackle concerns of demographic change
- actively tackle concerns of peripherality

Additionally, all projects funded by the Programme should contribute to/consider:

- ensure that the activities implemented do not generate discrimination of any kind

The consideration of the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination will be ensured throughout all stages of the programme implementation. Additionally it will be guaranteed during the realisation of the financial support and its impact evaluation. In the elaboration of this programme non-discrimination will be dealt with as a cross cutting issue.

6.3 Equality between men and women

Max. Length =5 500'

Same as for sustainable development, the promotion of equality between men and women is one of the general principles of the CSF Funds (cf. EU COM, common provisions) and one of the EU's founding principles. In the Union treaty it has been mentioned, that the Union *“shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child”* (EU COM: Lisbon Treaty, Art. 3). The Union therefore follows the *“Strategy for equality between women and men”* for the period 2010-2015, following thematic priorities, including equal economic independencies, equal pay for work of equal value, equality in decision-making, dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence, promoting gender equality beyond the Union and horizontal issues (gender roles, legislation, etc.) (cf. European Union, 2010: 4-10¹⁵).

Still the programming area faces challenges in the field of brain-drain, especially in rural, mostly peripheral areas. Due to missing job opportunities, mainly well-educated young women and men leave their rural home and migrate to more urban areas. Additionally, the risk of poverty for different groups, such as women, has been identified as a main weakness of the central Europe area; all these challenges are related to gender inequalities in the programming area.

The IPA BG-TR Programme contributes to the Europe 2020 goals of an inclusive economy and therefore to a higher level of equality between men and women. The Programme therefore contributes to the identified weaknesses in border regions, such as high numbers of out-migration, brain-drain occurrences and the risk of poverty for different groups (e.g. women, migrants). For the programming period 2014-2020, the main focus of the Programme has been aligned to improve living conditions in the area.

For the period 2014-2020, the main focus of the Programme has been set up to improve the living conditions within border regions. Especially the Programme's Priority Axis 2 targets the field of sustainable tourism and socio-economic development. Through economic development opportunities for equality between men and women will arise, as sustainable tourism activities foster equal employment chances for men and women.

Besides specific actions within the Programme priority a number of activities have been identified which may be implemented in projects submitted under any chosen priority axis.

All projects and interventions of the Programme can integrate measures such as:

- Actively tackle wider equality concerns

¹⁵ Cf. EU COM (2010): Flexible working time arrangements and gender equality – A comparative review of 30 European countries. URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en> (June, 2014)

- Integrate equal participation of women and men
- Contribute to a better and more diversified labour market for women

Additionally, all projects funded by the Programme should contribute to/consider:

- Contribute to the principles of the *“Strategy for equality between women and men”*

Also the implementation of the measures according to the specific needs of women and men will be based on the national regulations aiming at equal opportunities as well. In the framework of the CBC Programme an equal status of men and women will be observed and persons regarding to sex, race and origin will not be discriminated. The observance of the principle of equality between men and women will be ensured during all stages of the programme implementation as well as the realization of the financial support from the funds. The principle will be also observed in the phase of defining the selection criteria of projects. The policy aimed at promotion of gender equality and prevention of discrimination will be screened throughout all stages of the programme implementation – both at programme and project level.

VII.ANNEXES

- 7.1 Draft report of the ex-ante evaluation (including an executive summary of the report)**
- 7.2 Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme (Reference: Article 8(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**
- 7.3 A map of the area covered by the cooperation programme**
- 7.4 A "citizens summary" of the cooperation programme**
- 7.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment**