

Republic of Bulgaria

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2015

Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme
CCI No. 2007CB16IPO008



MAY 2016

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
AA	Audit Authority
AEUFEA	Executive Agency of Audit of European Union Funds
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross-border Cooperation
EU	European Union
EC	European commission
FLC	First level control
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPA II	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2014-2020
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MIS	Management information system
MRDPW	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
NA	National Authority
PA	Priority Axis
TA	Technical Assistance



1. Identification

The Annual Implementation Report (AIR) is drawn up in accordance with the provisions under Article 112 of the Commission Regulation № 718/2007.

This is the seventh AIR for the IPA Cross-border Programme Bulgaria - Turkey 2007-2013, covering the period 1 January 2015 - 31 December 2015.

The Managing Authority (MA) for the Programme is the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) of Bulgaria having as counterpart the Ministry for European Union Affairs of Turkey, acting as the Programme's National Authority (NA).

Community Instrument	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Component II “Cross-Border Cooperation”	
Area of intervention	On the Bulgarian side -Burgas district (13 municipalities) -Yambol district (5 municipalities) -Haskovo district (11 municipalities)	On the Turkish side -province Edirne and -province Kırklareli
Denomination of the Programme	Bulgaria – Turkey IPA Cross-Border Programme	
Number CCI	2007CB16IPO008	
Period of Programming:	2007 – 2013	
Reporting year	01/01/2015 – 31/12/2015	

Date of endorsement by the Head of MA:	... May 2016
Date of approval of the Annual report by the JMC:	... May 2016



2. Overview of the implementation of the Programme

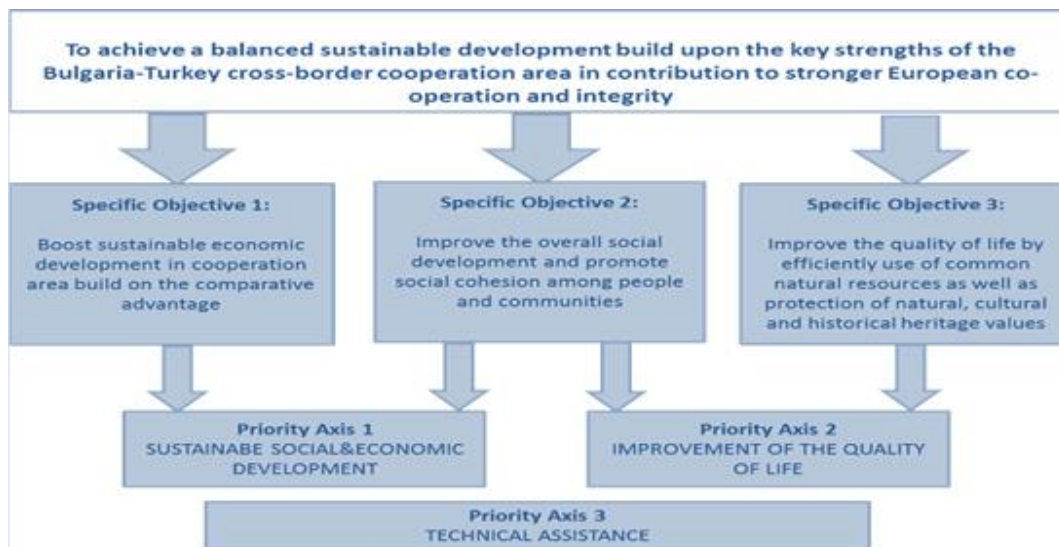
The Bulgaria - Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme (2007-2013) was approved by the European Commission with Decision C (2007) 6477 on 20 December 2007.

The description of management and control systems was approved in 2011 by the Commission with letter ref. No DG REGIO E1 D (2010).

The overall budget of the Programme for the programming period 2007-2013 is EUR 29 504 775. Within the period until December 2015 three Calls for proposals were launched under the Programme which attracted over 370 applications and in total 143 subsidy contracts were signed.

The financed projects covered variety of thematic issues including improving small-scale public infrastructure, protecting the environment, investing in education and knowledge sharing, strengthening research and innovation, enhancing cultural exchange, promoting local and regional governance, etc. The projects under the Programme were often relatively small in budget but created valuable cross-border partnership, influenced territorial cohesion, contributed for sharing the European values and in that way facilitated integration. The benefit which the Programme created for the cross-border region development is the established and strengthened cooperation between the partnering countries.

The objectives and Priority axes (PA) of the Programme are presented in the figure below:



2.1. Achievement and analysis of the progress

2.1.1. Information on the physical progress of the Programme:

1. Status of the projects as of 2015

The year 2015 features continuous acceleration of the contracting and verification processes. The number of joint projects supported under the Programme as of 31 December 2015 is 143 respectively 48 projects under the first Call for proposals, 47 under the second Call for proposals and 48 under the third Call for proposals.

The first and second Calls for proposals were open for all areas of intervention under PA1 and PA2 of the Programme, as for the third Call for proposals was opened for all measures under both PAs except for measure 2.2 “Capacity building for sustainable use of natural resources, cultural and historical heritage” for which the targets of the output indicators were already achieved.

The Programme budget was entirely covered by these Calls. Additionally, the accumulated savings from projects already completed were used for financing the qualitative worthwhile projects from the reserve list.

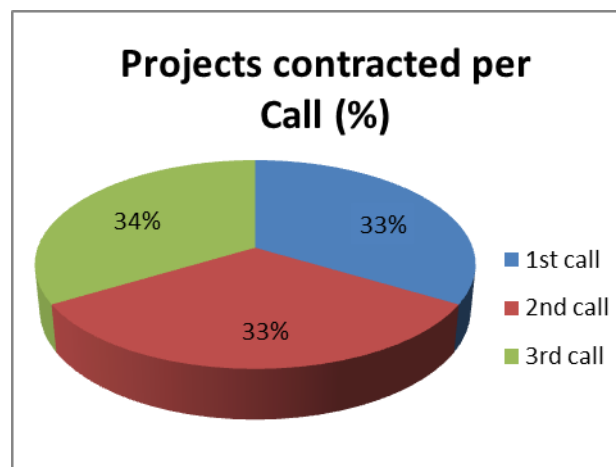
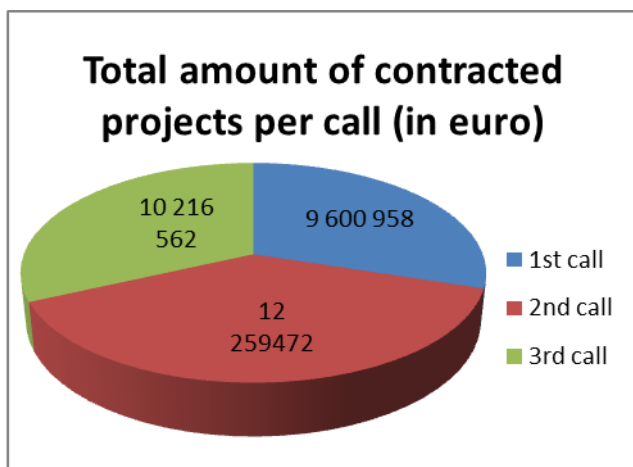
As of 31 December 2015, there were 119 projects completed and 24 projects under the third Call for Proposals remain on the implementation schedule for 2016.

First Call for proposals		No. 2007CB16IPO008-2009-1
	Launched on 28th September 2009	Budget: EUR 10 633 072 (with approved reallocation for year 2009)
	111 project proposals received within the deadline	
	Assessment and contracting	July 2010 – October 2011
	48 projects contracted.	Total amount EUR 9 600 958
	45 projects were successfully finalized and 3 subsidy contracts were terminated due to withdrawal of project partners	
Second Call for proposals		No. 2007CB16IPO008-2011-2
	Launched on 8th September 2011	Budget: EUR 14 000 642 (with approved reallocation for year 2012 and savings from



		projects under the first Call, after de-commitment)
	141 project proposals received within the deadline	
	Assessment and contracting	February 2012 – December 2012
	47 projects contracted	Total amount EUR 12 259 472
	45 projects were successfully finalized and 2 subsidy contracts were terminated due to withdrawal of project partners	
Third Call for Proposals		No. 2007CB16IPO008-2013-3
	Launched on 11th February 2013	Budget: EUR 4 697 172 (with approved reallocation for year 2012 and savings from projects under the first Call, after de-commitment – EUR 6 927 799)
	122 project proposals received within the deadline	
	Assessment and contracting	January 2014 – October 2015
	48 applications approved	Total amount EUR 10 216 562
	24 projects completed until December 2015 and 24 projects are still under implementation	

The figures below show that the number of the contracted projects under all three Calls for proposals is balanced and the available budget for each Call was allocated in an appropriate manner.



Modifications of the subsidy contracts

During the project lifecycle the Lead partners could request justified modifications of the Subsidy contracts related to changes in partnership, project content, project management team, budget reallocations and extension of project's implementation period. The detailed procedures for Subsidy contracts' modifications are additionally described in Programme Manual and Project Implementation Manual.

Substantial modifications of the subsidy contracts such as changes in the partnership, changes in the projects' outputs and results (and relevant indicators), and extension of the projects' implementation period are exceptions rather than a common practice and in any case need prior approval by the JMC and signing of addenda.

No substantial modifications of subsidy contracts were made during 2015 as currently the programme is on the final stage of its implementation.

2.1.2. Indicators

The Programme result indicators are vital to the efficient and effective implementation of the Programme, and they serve to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the Programme has achieved its objectives. The achievements were measured in compliance with the elaborated Methodology of Programme output and result indicators assessment in order to ensure their reliable and plausible interpretation.

The table below presents the result indicators which are used to monitor the progress at programme level. The table contains baseline values and quantities of result indicators, which were achieved during 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. In addition, a forecast on the expected indicators values for 2016 is provided. The data for the achievement in 2016 is based on the projects approved but not finalised yet under the third Call for proposals.

The indicators used to monitor the progress at Programme level are shown in the table below:

Programme Result Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 expected	Total
Increased number of social and cohesion links	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	296	15	11	13	17	352
	Target 2016	4 %										



Programme Result Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 expected	Total
	Baseline*	201										
Improved environment for development of relationships across the border	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	18	7	11	13	10	59
	Target 2016	4 %										
	Baseline*	50										
Number of Joint information services established	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	35	28	12	10	4	89
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	10										
Increased cross-border movement of people and exchange of goods and services in the region	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	11	3	3	4	4	25
	Target 2016	2.5 %										
	Baseline*	9										
Increased common cultural capital	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	12	12	9	11	7	51
	Target 2016	3 %										
	Baseline*	9										
Improved small-scale infrastructure	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	3	10	11	38
	Target 2016	3 %										
	Baseline*	17										
Projects actually applied	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	8	7	25
	Target 2016	3 %										
	Baseline	9										
Decreased pollution in the region	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	6	4	15
	Target 2016	2 %										
	Baseline*	5										
Increased attractiveness of the region based on preservation of natural resources and historical/cultural heritage	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	5	9	5	15	4	38
	Target 2016	2 %										
	Baseline*	20										
Increased sustainable utilisation of natural and historical/cultural resources	Achievement	0	0	0	0	6,25	10	4	4	0	0	18
	Target 2016	2 %										
	Baseline*	16										

From the data in the table it is apparent that all of the result indicators have reached achievement above 100% by the end of 2015 after finalization of the projects from the first and second Calls for proposals and most of those from the third Call.



2.1.3. Financial information

The total value of the IPA CBC Programme Bulgaria – Turkey the period 2007 - 2013 is EUR 29 504 775 out of which EUR 25 079 059 are European funding and EUR 4 425 716 national co-financing from state budgets of both partnering countries. The division of financial support between priorities 2007-2013 is shown in the table below:

Breakdown of priority axes by source of funding (EUR):

Priority Axes:	Community Funding	National Public funding	Total funding	Co-financing rate (%)
	(a)	(b)	c=a+b	a/c*100;b/c*100
Priority axis 1: Sustainable social & economic development:	11 740 305	2 071 819	13 812 124	85 : 15
Priority axis 2: Improvement the quality of life:	10 830 848	1 911 326	12 742 174	85 : 15
Priority axis 3: Technical assistance	2 507 906	442 571	2 950 477	85 : 15
Total	25 079 059	4 425 716	29 504 775	85 : 15

Achievement of Programme payment targets

All the measures taken by the MA for speeding up the verification process such as possibility for additional verifications of expenditures, training for beneficiaries, individual consultations, etc. resulted in a higher level of absorption of the funds by the project partners during 2015 over the target. The spending targets of the Programme were met, while the programme funds to be certified in 2015 amounted to EUR 4 349 234 (IPA co-financing). The total amount of certified IPA funds in 2015 had exceeded the target and therefore there was no decommitment for year 2015.

The accomplishment status of Programme payment targets achieved by 31 December 2015

Programme Payment targets*	EC advance payments 2007-2009	EC reimbursements 2007-2015*	Total advance + reimbursements	Amounts to be included in application for payment in order to avoid n+3/decommitment Risk



2011	2012	2013	2014	2015				2016
922 793	4 098 380	4 180 348	4 263 954	4 349 234	5 021 173	17 625 003	22 646 176	9 457 391

* Accumulated amounts 2007-2015, for the years 2009 and 2010 the value is 0.

Data from quality check performed by the Certifying Authority

Within 2015 three certification reports were submitted to Certifying Authority (CA) in 2015 amounting at EUR 6 230 222 (IPA funding). The “National Fund” Directorate at the Ministry of Finance of Republic of Bulgaria, acting as CA for the Programme conducted regular checks before certification. Based on the results from on-the spot checks, desk-based checks of the submitted MA’s reports on certification, as well as on assessment of other available information by the CA, EUR 71 222 (IPA funding) were excluded from the total amount proposed for certification to the EC by the CA. The total amount of certifying expenditures for 2015 is EUR 6 159 000 (IPA funding).

2.1.4. Information about the breakdown of use of the Funds

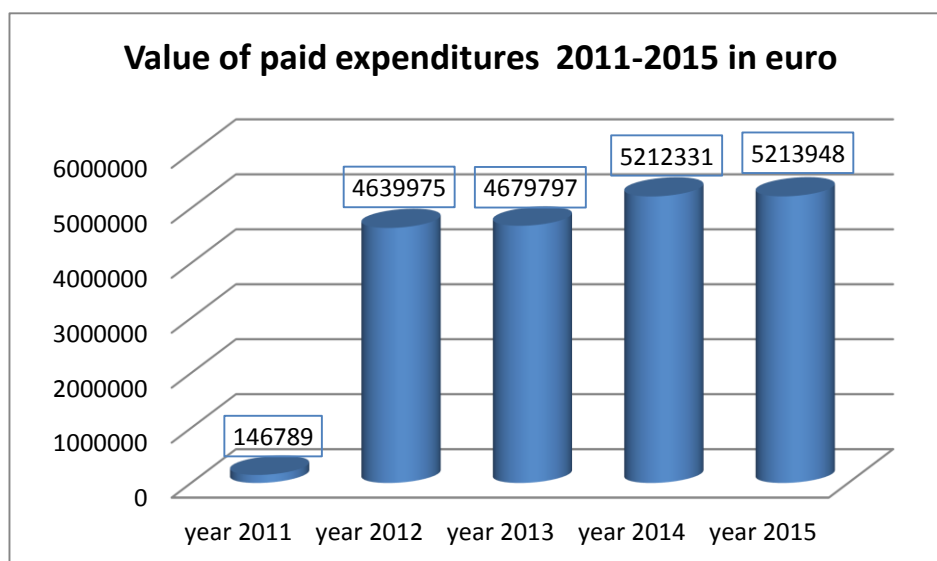
The table below presents actual financial data for year 2015. As it is evident from the presented information for year 2015 the project beneficiaries submitted to the MA requests for interim and final payments for EUR 6 513 399 (without these for Priority Axis 3 “Technical Assistance”).

Priority axes by source of funding (EUR)

	Expenditures paid out by the beneficiaries included in payment claims sent to the MA	Corresponding Community and Public contribution (IPA and national co-financing)	Private expenditures	Expenditures paid by the body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries (IPA and national co-financing)	Total certified amount by CA
PRIORITY AXIS 1	2 770 594	2 800 536	29 942	2 495 426	3 531 633
PRIORITY AXIS 2	3 742 805	3 767 646	24 841	2 899 410	3 520 768
PRIORITY AXIS 3	425 203	425 203	0	483 087	236 450
TOTAL	6 938 602	6 993 385	54 783	5 877 923	7 288 851

The financial figure below is reflecting the expenditure paid out by the beneficiaries included in payment claims (interim and final payments) and sent to the MA during 2015.





As it is visible from the graphic above, during 2015 the positive trend was kept and the value of expenditures paid in year 2015 exceeds those from the previous years.

The breakdown of use of the funds in EUR (IPA and national co-financing) by Calls for proposals is presented in the table below:

Financial implementation of projects under priority axes 1 and 2 as of 31 December 2015

Calls for proposals	Contracts	Total contracting amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments	Financial implementation
first Call	45	9 304 378	1 860 236	5 470 938	7 331 174	79%
second Call	45	12 018 685	2 393 351	7 157 795	9 551 146	79%
third Call	48	10 216 562	1 917 138	3 790 112	5 707 250	56%
TOTAL	138	31 539 625	6 170 725	16 418 845	22 589 570	72%

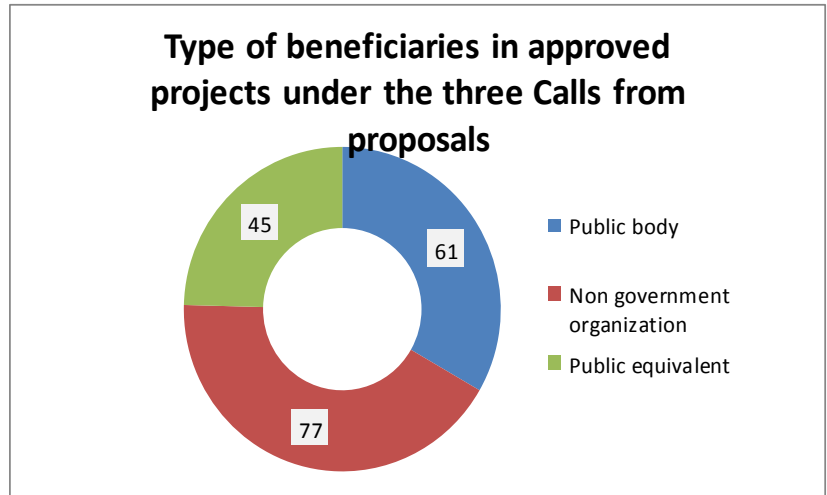
2.1.5. Assistance by target groups

Wide range of target groups are involved in implementation of subsidy contracts funded within the Programme. Varieties of regional entities (municipalities, district administrations, NGO's, cultural



and educational institutions, associations and business support organizations, etc.), being project partners benefited from Programme implementation. Indirectly, the residents in the cross-border area profited from the results of the operations financed by the Programme through awareness raising initiatives and another public events.

The graphic below is presenting the distribution of entities implementing projects under the Programme, classified by target groups (state of play as of 2015). The majority of participating organizations were non-government organizations (42% of all participating entities), followed by the public bodies (33%) and public equivalents (25%).



2.1.6. Assistance repaid or re-used

Not applicable.

2.1.7. Qualitative analysis

In 2015 the Programme has entered in its final stage of implementation when the efforts of the Programme bodies were concentrated mainly on ensuring successful completion of all on-going projects. In total 143 cooperation projects between the institutions and organizations of the two countries were contracted under the three Calls for proposals on the amount of EUR 32 076 992 which could be estimated at approximately 109% of the available Programme budget. Based on the decision concerning over-contracting programme budget and transfer of funds from Priority Axis 2 to Priority Axis 1, 13 new subsidy contracts under PA1 were signed in 2015. It allows better utilization of Programme budget and increasement of Programme impact on sustainable social and economic development.

During the reporting period no significant problems were encountered and no risks events were identified concerning the Programme performance. The total certified amount to subsidy contracts of



the IPA funds exceeded the Programme's payment targets, thus till the end of 2015, the overall amount certified was EUR 17 625 003 or nearly 70% of the Programme budget (IPA funding) for the programming period 2007-2013. The increased rate of verified/certified expenditures contributed to the smooth programme implementation including timely payments and no fund were de-committed according to the n+3 rule. System audit findings show the management and implementation system operated properly in both countries.

System audit findings show the management and implementation system has been operating properly in both countries.

The indicators of the Programme display a good degree of achievement of the target values and the main results achieved until the end of December 2015 include numerous successful projects that contributed to:

- Increased number of social and cohesion links through establishment of new partnerships and relations between counterparts across the border and through implementation of joint cooperation projects in different thematic fields as a result of awareness-raising campaigns organized, training places created and joint cultural events carried out.
- Better preserved natural resources and biodiversity as well as decreased level of pollution in the region as a result of networks for environment protection, reasonable utilisation of resources set up and joint environmental management plans developed.
- Enhanced sustainable economic development of the border region and increased competitiveness of SME's by establishing joint information services and encouraging contacts across the border as a result of business and educational linkages created, improved access to and usage of new technology, SMEs involved/addressed in cross-border projects and new jobs created.
- Increased attractiveness of the region based on preservation of historical and cultural heritage as result of tourist destinations developed, tourist services created, surrounding areas of cultural spots improved and joint eco-itineraries created.
- Developed early warning and risk management systems with as a result of new partnerships for cases of natural disasters established.



The achieved results clearly show that the dynamics of the bilateral collaboration lead to intensity of cooperation among the local stakeholders and to increased interest in implementing common cross-border initiatives for sustainable development of the regions.

The cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and non-discrimination principles were also taken into consideration under the financed projects although they were not directly targeting through the Programme priorities.

The Programme had an added value for the residents in the cross-border region through the direct Programme investments in nature protection, employment, economic development, education, risk prevention, etc. In addition the programme (through IPA) supported the Republic of Turkey in capacity building for adopting and implementing institutional and administrative policies and practices in order to comply with the European Union values in view of forthcoming EU membership.

2.2. Information about compliance with Community law

The amendments brought to the legislation in 2015 did not influence the Programme implementation.

2.3. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems for the programme implementation were encountered during 2015.

2.4. Changes in the context of the Programme implementation (if relevant)

During the reporting period the Programme financial plan was amended by Decision C (2015) 3184 on 11 May 2015. The modification was justified by the following arguments: After applying the overcontracting procedure, it was found that the amount of EUR 1 735 819 remain unused under Priority axis 2 due to the fact that all projects in the reserved list were already contracted. Therefore it was proposed these funds to be transferred to Priority Axis 1 „Sustainable Social & Economic Development”, where enough good quality projects were approved in the reserve list.

2.5. Complementarity with other instruments

A clear demarcation and complementarity of Bulgaria – Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme 2007-2013 is ensured with: 1) other European territorial co-operation / IPA strands – in particular, the relevant cross-border and transnational co-operation programmes; 2) other EU co-financed programmes or funds implemented at national level such as Environment, Regional Development,



Development of the Competitiveness of Bulgarian Economy, Human Resources Development operational programmes and Rural Development Programme for Bulgaria, as well as IPA component III, IV and V programmes in Turkey; 3) other programmes / projects with national / regional and other funding of each of the partnering countries.

Complementarity and co-ordination with the other financial instruments is maintained during each stage of Programme Cycle Management through the existing national/regional co-ordination structures and mechanisms in both participating countries. The representatives from the national institutions, which manage the mainstream/sectoral Programmes take part in JMC sessions and thus ensure the coordination between the instruments and the avoidance of possible overlapping of funding.

Taking into account that part of the programme area include Black Sea coastal regions (Burgas and Kırklareli regions) the financed projects contribute to the objectives of the EU Strategy for Blue Growth, Black Sea Synergy and the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (referred to as "Bucharest Convention").

In addition being part of EU Green Belt Initiative (Initiative), both countries have a solid ground for cooperation in the field of nature protection and sustainable use common natural resources. The analysis of the progress of the current Programme shows that some of the joint cooperation projects, implemented on the territory of Burgas (Bulgaria) and Kırklareli (Turkey) include coastal and marine economic activities, as well as activities to promote the environmental protection of the Black sea coastal areas. Their implementation has had an added value for indirectly supporting the sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sector.

2.6. Monitoring arrangements

Monitoring of the Programme is focused on ensuring quality of implementation and compliance with applicable rules and procedures.

Implementation manuals and Management information system

During the reporting period a review of the Programme implementation manual was carried out in January 2015. In addition, modification of the chapter related to financial management and control was made in May 2015 in order to reflect changes in instructions provided by the CA: changes in



process of payment and introduction of the recommendation of the CA concerning a procedure for financial corrections of the certified expenditures.

No amendments in the Project implementation manual were made during the year 2015.

The web-based MIS is fully operational to store data of both physical and financial implementation of the Programme.

Monitoring measures and risk assessment procedure

➤ **Programme level**

The JMC observes the monitoring of the Programme implementation and ensures the achievement of the Programme objectives through a rational use of the allocated resources.

For the period under review one Joint monitoring committee (JMC) meeting was carried out. It took place on 23.06.2015 in Sozopol, Republic of Bulgaria. At the meeting, the JMC members approved the 2014 AIR of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme and the job description of the new open positions for investment monitoring experts in the JTS main and antenna offices. During the JMC session the members visited the successfully finalised investment project - “The cultural heritage of two neighbor nations – open door through the millenniums” implemented by the Sozopol foundation (Bulgaria), with lead partner Trakya development association (Turkey).

Additionally, fifteen JMC written procedures were carried out for discussion of issues related to the smooth implementation of the Programme: the Annual technical assistance plan, Technical assistance budget for 2015 and Eligibility of technical assistance expenditures; requested modifications under projects funded from the second and third Call for proposals and negotiation reports of performed negotiations with project proposals from the third Call.

A number of technical meetings between MA, NA and JTS have been carried out in 2015 for discussing issues related to smooth programme implementation and the prospects of the new programming period.

➤ **Project level**

The overall monitoring at the Project level was carried out by the JTS for Bulgaria–Turkey IPA Cross border Programme with main office located in Haskovo, Bulgaria. JTS implements the main monitoring tools – on the spot checks and checks of PPR, verifying the proper implementation of the



projects in conformity with the provisions of the subsidy contract, objectives of the application form and programme rules.

On the basis of the approved Annual working plan for monitoring visits, 39 final monitoring visits of the projects under second and third Calls for proposals were performed to verify the actual state of the project results as compared to the activities approved within the subsidy contract. Any delays and problems encountered during implementation were overcome through the active measures evoked by JTS and the respective project teams.

➤ **Risk assessment**

Based on the information provided in the quarterly projects progress reports, the Risk management group has conducted 4 risk assessment sessions, which resulted with risk response plan undated for the reporting period. Following the risk assessment analysis 35 ad-hoc monitoring visits of the projects under second and third Calls for proposals were performed by JTS experts.

First level control system

Republic of Bulgaria has adopted a decentralized FLC system with a pool of freelance controllers selected by the Directorate General “Territorial Cooperation Management” (DG TCM) within the MRDPW in accordance with respective national rules. The MA carries out administrative control of all FLC reports and quarterly quality check (on the sample basis) over the work performed by the controllers.

The same approach has been adopted in the Republic of Turkey. The National Authority designates external controllers selected through regular calls and included in a list of Controllers for this Programme. The experts are recruited through a procedure carried out in line with the respective national legislation.

In 2015 the number of requests for FLC and respectively FLC checks decreased due to completion of the projects.

Audits under the Programme

➤ **System audit**

In year 2015, the AA has started performed the fifth system audit under the Programme. The main objective was to obtain reasonable assurance about the effective functioning of the management and



control system under the Programme in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) 718/2007 and Regulation (EC) 1828/2006. The audit is carried out by Executive agency of Audit of European Union funds (AEUFEA), Ministry of finance, Republic of Bulgaria and Audit body - Board of treasury controllers - for the checks on the territory of Republic of Turkey. The audit mission continues in 2016.

➤ **Audit of operations**

Within the 2015 the AEUFEA has conducted audit of operations for assurance that the certified expenditures are correct and the underlying transactions are legal and regular. During the audit mission expenditures certified in the period 01.01.2014 - 31.12.2014 were checked. The AA has found one finding with financial impact, amounted to EUR 2 404,06 for which the relevant corrective measures were undertaken by the MA.

Evaluations under the Programme

Multi-annual evaluation plan for Bulgaria – Turkey IPA Cross-Border Programme 2007 - 2013 was elaborated and approved by JMC on 23 March 2011. The Evaluation plan defines and explains the overall coordination arrangements for the on-going evaluation process under the Programme. Following the evaluation plan, the Programme is subject to three evaluations aiming to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance and the strategy and implementation of the Programme, taking due attention to sustainable development issues and horizontal objectives.

The first Programme evaluation - *Evaluation of the Communication plan*, was performed in 2011 and aimed at examination of the level of achievement of the objectives set out in the Communication plan for the period of 2007 - 2010. Detailed information about the findings and recommendation from the internal analysis was presented in AIR for 2011.

An internal *Examination of the Programme output and results indicators* was performed by the MA, several measures were implemented in view of improving Programme performance on the basis of the internal analysis. More detailed information could be found in the AIR 2012.

The on-going *Evaluation of the Programme* was carried out by external consultants in year 2013 with aim to assess the Programme's performance (interim results) and the level of achievements of the output and results indicators; to measure the effectiveness of the FLC system and to provide independent conclusions and recommendations for management and control system's improvements



in way to ensure successful completion of the Programme and to ensure bases for the programming of the new interventions for programming period 2014-2020. The main findings and recommendations were presented in the AIR 2013.

The executive summaries and the final reports on the on-going evaluation of Bulgaria – Turkey IPA Cross-Border Programme 2007 - 2013 was uploaded to the programme website and to the web-portal of the Interact Programme in the appropriate “Good Expertise Gained” Section.

2.7. National performance reserve *(where applicable and only for the annual implementation report submitted for 2010)*

Not applicable.

3. Implementation by priority

3.1. Priority Axis 1 “Sustainable Social & Economic Development”

Objective	To increase the overall competitiveness of the cross-border economy and to improve social development and social cohesion
Measure 1.1 “Improvement of the social development and social cohesion links”	
Measure 1.2 “Economy competitiveness increasing”	
Measure 1.3 “Infrastructural support for the improvement of the economic potential of the co-operation area”	

3.1.1. Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

Information on the physical and financial progress of the priority

The initial Programme budget for the period 2007-2013 available for the PA1 amounted to EUR 13 812 124 (incl. EUR 11 740 305 Community funding and EUR 2 071 819 national funding). Following the modification of the Programme financial plan the total amount under PA1 was increased with EUR 1 735 819 due to transferring of funds from PA2 to PA1.

The projects under PA1 were selected through three open Calls for proposals, to which public bodies and non-profit organisations from the border region had applied. In addition, an over-contracting procedure was carried out under that PA1 covering the accumulated savings.



In total 81 projects were financed, out of which 27 projects under the first Call, 23 projects under the second Call and 31 under the third Call. Until 31 December 2015, 62 PA1 projects were finalised (all projects under the first and second Call for proposals and 12 under the third Call). During the reporting year 19 PA 1 projects funded under the third Call for proposals were on-going. Seven of them are under Measure 1.1. “Improvement of the social development and social cohesion links”, four of them are under Measure 1.2. “Economy competitiveness increasing” and eight are under Measure 1.3 “Infrastructural support for the improvement of the economic potential of the co-operation area”. The total contracted amount of these projects is EUR 4 135 363.02.

Financial progress of projects under Priority Axis 1, as of 31st of December 2015 (EUR):

Call for Proposals	Contracts	Total contracts amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
		(IPA + national co-financing)	(IPA + national co-financing)	(IPA + national co-financing)	(IPA + national co-financing)
first Call for proposals	27	4 382 689	876 538	2 620 018	3 496 556
second Call for proposals	23	5 677 643	1 135 149	3 612 071	4 747 220
third Call for proposals	31	5 981 064	1 120 063	1 523 699	2 643 762
TOTAL	81	16 041 396	3 131 750	7 755 788	10 887 538

Measure 1.1 “Improvement of the social development and social cohesion links”:

The output indicators which are used to measure the progress under this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below. The information in the table is provided on the ground of successfully finalised projects. The data are based on finalised projects and the indicators’ values are presented as total number.

The expected indicators’ values for 2016 are provided based on ongoing projects.



In compliance with the recommendations of DG REGIO, EC (Letter ARES (2015) 424874), the values of the output indicators for the years 2011 – 2014 were recalculated on the based data from the finalized projects.

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 expected	Total
Joint cooperation projects on development of skills and knowledge	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	13	3	6	8	9	39
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	7										
Training places created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	9	3	4	10	8	34
	Target 2016	4										
	Baseline	1										
People participating in training	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	721	194	251	420	401	1987
	Target 2016	500										
	Baseline	905										
People with enhanced skills	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	495	200	251	420	294	1660
	Target 2016	300										
	Baseline	30										
Management and job-related training courses	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	13	1	4	19	8	45
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	4										
Networking structures created/developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	10	2	5	9	10	36
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	8										
People from vulnerable groups trained	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	38	14	143	29	71	295
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	20										
Number of people to people collaboration projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	3	106	9	128
	Target 2016	35										
	Baseline	35										
Number of institutions	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	149	150	165	255	182	901



reached	Target 2016	250										
	Baseline	644										
Number of people involved	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2456	480	1493	3240	1361	9030
	Target 2016	700										
	Baseline	2148										

* The table above represents data on the grounds of successfully finalized projects

Measure 1.2 “Economy competitiveness increasing”:

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 expected	Total
Business and educational linkages created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	74	79	10	25	18	206
	Target 2016	20										
	Baseline	9										
Communities & institutions participating in knowledge economy	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	39	11	25	7	5	87
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	0										
Access to and usage of new technology	Achievement	100	0	0	0	0	16	27	66	20	1	130
	Target 2016	150										
	Baseline	100										
SMEs involved/ addressed in CBC projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	345	186	151	70	106	752
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	106										
New jobs created	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	58	9	7	0	8	82
	Target 2016	60										
	Baseline	0										
Number of projects concerning common cultural heritage	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	10	12	9	12	7	50
	Target 2016	30										
	Baseline	9										
Tourist destinations	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	2	18	45



created/ developed	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	0										
Tourist services created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	11	4	2	8	93	118
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	5										
Surrounding area of cultural spots improved	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	0	2	12
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	0										
Joint cultural events carried out	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	12	24	15	0	4	55
	Target 2016	30										
	Baseline	21										
Institutions / bodies reached by Programme activities	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	439	33	280	23	39	814
	Target 2016	500										
	Baseline	250										
Awareness campaigns	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	46	9	29	8	3	95
	Target 2016	25										
	Baseline	19										

Measure 1.3 “Infrastructural support for the improvement of the economic potential of the co-operation area”:

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 expected	Total
Number of small-scale infrastructural projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	4	10	13	33
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	5										
Feasibility studies prepared	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	4	13
	Target 2016	5										
	+Baseline	1										
Preliminary and detailed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	8	15	31



design works	Target 2016	10											
	Baseline	6											
Project environmental assessments	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	10	17	
	Target 2016	2											
	Baseline	0											

* The table above represents data on the grounds of contracted projects level and successfully finalized activities

Qualitative analysis

Based on the achievement of targets and the analysis made under PA 1 “Sustainable social & economic development”, it could be concluded that the majority of projects were structured on balanced and adequate partnerships and demonstrated clear link between activities and results. Irrespective of their delayed start, majority of the projects were successfully implemented and the planned outputs were delivered.

Measures under PA 1 support activities in the field of sustainable social and economic development. The priority was attracted by 227 applicants, from which 54 projects were financed on the total amount of EUR 11 759 734. The output indicators show a good degree of achievements. As per the data available for the reporting period (on the basis of final monitoring visits), the following conclusions for the achievement of Programme indicators could be made, namely:

Concerning PA1 output indicators:

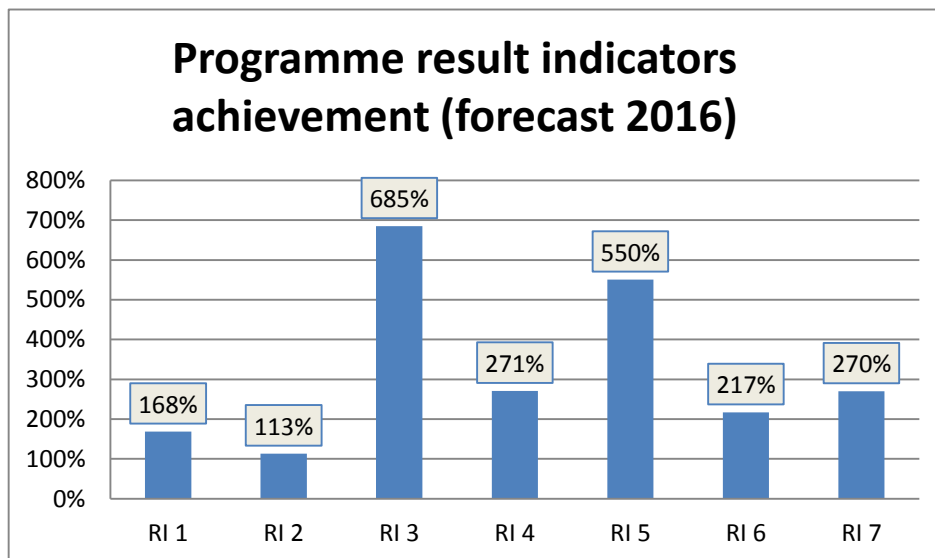
- All 26 indicators under PA1 are overachieved until the end of 2015
- 4 out of 26 indicators will have significant overachievement until the end of 2015 (app. 15% of all output indicators under PA1)

Concerning the result indicators related to PA1:

- All 7 result indicators are overachieved until the end of 2015
- 2 out of 7 indicators will have significant overachievement until the end of 2015 (app. 29% of all result indicators).

In addition, the foreseen values of the Programme result indicators for 2016 show that after finalisation of the second and third Call projects, all targets are going to be met/overachieved (see graphics below).





The most significant increase of the target values for 2016 could be observed in OI 7 - People from vulnerable groups trained, OI 12 - Communities & institutions participating in knowledge economy, OI 13 - Access to and usage of new technology, OI 26 - Project environmental assessments and respectively in RI 3 - Number of Joint information services established, RI 5 - Increased common cultural capital.

All details related to the successfully achieved projects could be found on the Programme web-site (<http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/>).

3.1.2. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems could be encountered in implementing the priority.

3.2. Priority Axis 2 “Improvement of the quality of life”

Objective

To stipulate cooperation for protection of nature and specific fields of environment, protection of historical and cultural heritage as well as provision of assistance in emergency cases.

Measures 2.1 “Protection of environment, nature and historical and cultural heritage”

Measure 2.2 “Capacity building for sustainable use of natural resources, cultural and historical heritage”



3.2.1. Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

Information on the physical and financial progress of the priority

Following the financial plan for the period 2007-2013 the funds available for the PA 2 amounted to EUR 12 742 174 (incl. EUR 10 830 848 Community funding and EUR 1 911 326 national funding).

The projects under the PA 2 were also selected by two open Calls for proposals, to which public bodies and non-government organisations from the border region can apply. The third Call for proposals was opened only for measure 2.1 “Protection of environment, nature and historical and cultural heritage” due to the early achieving of the indicators value under measure 2.2 “Capacity building for sustainable use of natural resources, cultural and historical heritage”.

In total 57 projects were financed, out of which 18 projects under the first Call, 22 projects under the second Call and 17 under the third Call. Until 31 December 2015, 48 PA 2 projects were finalised (all projects under the first, 18 under the second Call for proposals and 12 under the third Call). During the reporting year 23 PA 2 projects were on-going – 4 under the second Call and 5 under the third Call.

Financial progress of projects under Priority Axis 2, as of 31 December 2015 (EUR):

Call for Proposals	Contracts	Total contracts amount	Advance payments	Interim and final payments	Total payments
		(IPA + national co-financing)	(IPA + national co-financing)	(IPA + national co-financing)	(IPA + national co-financing)
first Call for proposals	18	4 921 689	983 698	2 850 920	3 834 618
second Call for proposals	22	6 341 042	1 258 202	3 545 724	4 803 926
third Call for proposals	17	4 235 498	797 075	2 266 413	3 063 488
TOTAL	57	15 498 229	3 038 975	8 663 057	11 702 032

The indicators which are used to measure the progress of this sphere of intervention are shown in the table below and represent data on the grounds of successfully finished projects and additional data of expected indicators values based on projects under implementation (but not finished) during 2015 (in accordance with the recommendations in letter ARES(2015)424874 from the DG RUP at the EC).

Programme Output Indicators	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 expected	Total



Number of joint environmental friendly projects	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	9	6	7	11	3	36
	Target 2016	30										
	Baseline	3										
Joint Eco-itineraries created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	7	5	1	20
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	5										
Partnerships for cases of natural disasters established	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	0	8
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	1										
Environmental management plans	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	5	0	28
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	2										
Networks for environmental and cultural/historical heritage protection and reasonable utilization of resources	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	5	9	6	14	6	40
	Target 2016	6										
	Baseline	12										
Number of small-scale infrastructural projects concerning environmental and cultural heritage protection	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	4	18	8	41
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	3										
Feasibility studies prepared	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	8	3	5	22
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	8										
Preliminary and detailed design works	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	1	10	3	32
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	1										
Project environmental assessments	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	4	11
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	1										

Measure 2.2 "Capacity building for sustainable use of natural resources, cultural and historical heritage"



Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Number of awareness campaigns carried	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	26	13	39	0	0	78
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	13										
Number of institutions involved in joint activities and exchange of know-how;	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	74	65	49	0	0	188
	Target 2016	30										
	Baseline	13										
Number of people reached by joint information and awareness campaigns	Achievement	0	0	0	0	0	2586	1327	4351	0	0	8264
	Target 2016	500										
	Baseline	952										

All projects under this measure were implemented and finalized in 2014, so therefore the target value of the Programme indicators is 0 for 2015 and 2016.

Qualitative analysis

Based on the achievement of targets and the analysis made under PA 2 “Improvement of the quality of life”, it could be deduced that the majority of projects implemented were also based on balanced and adequate partnerships and demonstrated clear link between activities and results.

The analysis of the outputs shows similar results to the ones from the analysis of PA 1. As a whole the Programme is reaching the output objectives for PA 2. All target values of the output indicators were reached and the forecast for 2016 shows that all targets will be reached and overachieved.

Concerning PA2 output indicators:

- All 12 indicators under PA2 are overachieved until the end of 2015
- 2 out of 12 indicators will have significant overachievement until the end of 2015 (app. 17% of all output indicators under PA2)

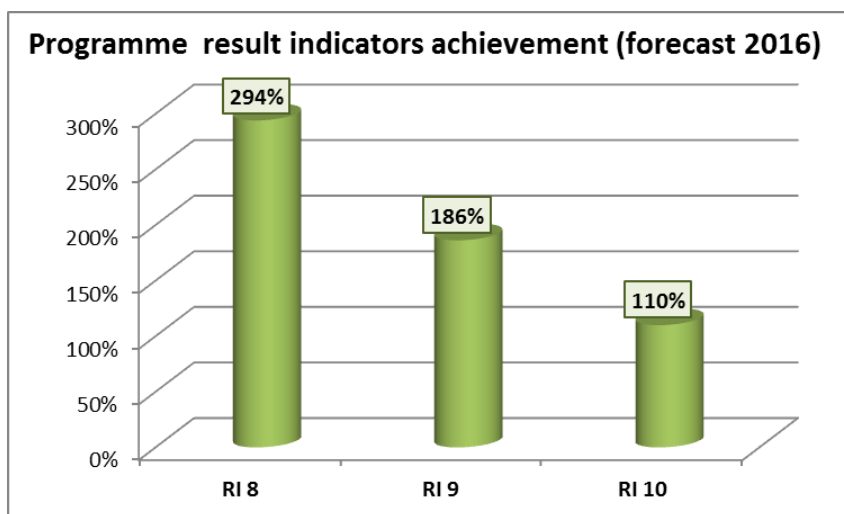
Concerning the result indicators related to PA2:

- All 3 result indicators under PA2 are overachieved until the end of 2015 (100% of result indicators under PA2)
- 1 out of 3 indicators will have significant overachievement until the end of 2015 (app. 33% of all result indicators).



The total achievement of the output and result indicators will be measured after the finalization of the on-going projects.

The foreseen values of the Programme result indicators for 2016 show that after successful finalisation of the projects the third Call for proposals, all targets are going to be reached and overachieved (see graphics below).



The most significant increase of the target values for 2016 could be observed in OI 30 - Environmental management plans, OI 38 - Number of people reached by joint information and awareness campaigns and respectively in RI 8 - Increased sustainable utilisation of natural and historical/cultural resources.

Information related to the successfully achieved projects could be found on the Programme web-site (<http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/>).

3.2.2. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems could be encountered in implementing the priority.

4. Major projects

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



5. Technical assistance

The PA “Technical Assistance” (TA) finances the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Programme as well as activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for implementing the Programme, promotion of the Programme, awareness raising, pro-active project generation, etc. For the period 2007-2013 amount of EUR 2 507 906 Community funding is available for PA TA.

Total budget forecast for 2015 is amounted to EUR 1 067 790. The detailed indicative breakdown of budget for 2015 was approved by JMC on 13.01.2015.

Sphere of intervention 3.1 “Overall administration and evaluation of the Programme”

The objective is to provide support to the MA and NA for their tasks related to programme management. It encompasses administrative expenditures, travel and accommodation expenditures, meetings, trainings, external expertise, supply, maintenance of equipment and other expenditures. The main activities carried out under PA TA within 2015 are as follows:

✓ Trainings for the Programme staff

During 2015, MA, NA and JTS staff attended to various thematic seminars and training events organized by INTERACT in order to acquire practical knowledge and information, to share their experience with colleagues from other ETC Programmes in the field of management techniques, financial issues, European regulations, communication, strategic orientation, policy development, project reporting and monitoring, facilitation skills, project management specificities in the ETC context, etc.

✓ Trainings for controllers

One training for the controllers took place in Sofia, Bulgaria on 5 May 2015 in the premises of the MRDPW. Training sessions encompassed two main modules related to omissions / errors in the procurement identified in audits by the AEUFEA and discussion and questions on practical cases.

✓ Regarding expenditures for external expertise

Part of the technical assistance budget was used for remuneration of controllers appointed to perform checks of expenditures made by the beneficiaries. Additional external expertise was used for information and publicity activities under the Programme and for organisation of public events, in



particular and for elaborating methodological guidelines for defining baseline and target values of quality result indicators under the new bilateral programme.

In year 2015, tender procedures for supply of IT equipment needed for JTS main office and MA was carried out. Contract was signed with the successful tenderer, and the respective equipment was delivered and put into operation.

During the reporting year, the capacity of the JTS was strengthened by appointing the new investment monitoring expert in the JTS (main office) while the similar position for the antenna office is not occupied yet. However, there are still some challenges that affect the proper JTS functioning, namely: the frequent vacancy of the communication officer position in the main office. The MA and NA took measures to make the position more attractive for the Turkish citizens taking into account the different remuneration rates for similar positions in the Bulgarian and Turkish border regions.

Sphere of intervention 3.2 “Publicity and communication”

It encompasses expenditures for preparation, translation and dissemination of documents of the Programme related information and publicity and for organisation of public events as conferences, seminars, workshops, round table discussions, trainings for beneficiaries, networking and awareness-raising events, Info days, partner search forums etc.

The public events, conferences, seminars, workshops carried out under this sphere of interventions in 2015 were as follows:

- ✓ Joint Happening for celebrating the European Cooperation Day, 18 September, 2015 – Sozopol, Bulgaria;
- ✓ International Conference “European Territorial Cooperation in the Republic of Bulgaria – Achievements bringing new perspectives”, 13 October 2015, Sofia, Bulgaria

6. Information and publicity

The focus of the information and publicity strategy is centred on increasing the awareness and promoting the positive work of the Programme. For the purposes of implementation of the information and publicity strategy, a detailed Communication plan is elaborated and approved



simultaneously with programme approval. The aim of the Communication plan is to ensure broad dissemination of the information about the programme, to guarantee the transparency of the programme's implementation and to increase the awareness of the local stakeholders about the programme's possibilities. The implementation of the Communication plan is responsibility of the MA, NA and JTS.

During 2015 various tools for information and publicity were used to reach the wide audience:

➤ **Programme website**



The Programme website www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu is functioning as of August 2009 and it was the most useful and economic tool for promoting the Programme and to disseminate information to the beneficiaries (active and potential) and the public in general. The website includes comprehensive information on the Programme and its PAs, accompanied by all documents concerning Programme implementation. The website has been regularly updated with relevant information on the Programme (events, news, documentation etc.). The website also includes a tool for partners search with project



partner database, therefore facilitating the integration among actors and promoting joint activities and ideas. The website was improved with new functions added over the previous years.

During 2015 the official website of the Programme was one of the main publicity tools used to promote the Programme and disseminate the relevant information. The unique website visits for 2015 are 29 791, compared to the 25 034 for 2014. Higher number of visitors in 2015 was due to the first Call for proposals under the CBC programme "Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey" for the years 2014-2020 under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance launched in November with 4836 unique website visitors, while during 2014 there were no Calls for proposals opened. The interest in the programme website was high during September, October and December of 2015 with number of unique visitors ranging between 2500 and 2928 (2587, 2928, 2809 respectively). This is particularly due to the Information events under the first Call for proposals.

Дни Седмичи **Месеци** Година

Посещения по Месеци
показва основни данни по месеци

Месец	Посещения	Унивалгии	Изпратени	PPV	Max Онлайн
Настоящ месец (Feb)	1,320	1,212	4,685	3.87	6
Януари / 2016	1,961	1,825	6,799	3.73	12
Декември / 2015	2,809	2,579	9,442	3.66	16
Ноември / 2015	5,450	4,836	17,564	3.63	49
Октомври / 2015	2,928	2,598	9,150	3.52	20
Септември / 2015	2,587	2,303	8,183	3.55	12
Август / 2015	2,194	1,967	7,028	3.57	19
Юли / 2015	2,112	1,925	7,569	3.93	17
Юни / 2015	1,900	1,768	5,878	3.32	11
Май / 2015	1,939	1,781	5,700	3.20	15
Април / 2015	1,956	1,734	5,817	3.35	10
Март / 2015	2,128	1,887	6,807	3.50	14
Февруари / 2015	2,053	1,840	6,114	3.32	12
Януари / 2015	1,735	1,609	4,910	3.05	16

As in the previous years, also in 2015 the targeted values for website activities were exceeded. This goes especially for the number of unique visits 40 times, the number of e-mails received through website contact details – more than 15 times and the number of requests for partnership in the website - nearly 15 times.



In order to ensure broad publicity, information on the Programme was also disseminated through regional and national websites as well as on the websites at the European level:

- www.mrrb.government.bg - MRDPW of the Republic of Bulgaria
- www.ab.gov.tr - Ministry for EU Affairs of the Republic of Turkey
- www.eufunds.bg – EU Structural Funds website

➤ **Promotional materials**

During the reporting period of year 2015 no promotional materials were prepared. Previously produced promotional materials were distributed to the potential applicants and beneficiaries via information days and via consultations provided to the partners.

As it was stated above the lack of promotional materials was compensated on the behalf of materials left from the previous 2014 tender and purchase of materials for each separate event organised under the Programme. Nevertheless the lack of promotional materials did not lead to lower quality of the introduced communication activities.

➤ **Information seminars**

No information seminar was held in 2015 as the third Call for proposals was the last one foreseen under the 2007-2013 programming period. However, the Programme and the projects were actively promoted during the events related to the CBC programme "Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey" for the years 2014-2020 under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance.

➤ **Publicity campaign**

In addition to the promotion through the Programme website and the websites of the official institutions directly related to the Programme, both the Programme and the projects funded were popularized through specific Programme press-releases (in all the three languages), online publications (other than on the Programme website), radio advertisements, video and television clips, publicities in local and national newspapers.

Planned activities and the indicators of the publicity campaign were fulfilled and most of its planned values were overachieved.

➤ **Active Training**



Several meetings with all risky projects under the second and third Call for proposals were conducted by JTS experts, consulting the beneficiaries for resolving of detected problems on smoothly project implementation.

During 2015, variety of activities included in the Communication plan were organized and performed accordingly: various types of promotional materials were disseminated to the target audience, the Programme web site was redesigned and maintained. Visibility measures and the participation in different events greatly contributed to the successful promotion of Programme and the Calls for proposals. The Programme's visual identity and graphics standards were maintained and widely disseminated to all the Programme's stakeholders.

More information about the communication and information activities during 2015 could be found in the official web site of the Programme..



Indicators for communication and publicity measures

	Activity	Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total		
Programme Website	General awareness of the public about the Programme	▪ No. of unique web-site visits	0	0	6300	7071	27300	38190	36956	22145	29791		167753		
		Target 2016	1000 per year												
		Baseline	0												
		▪ No. of e-newspapers published/distributed	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	2	0			9	
		Target 2016	2 per year												
		Baseline	0												
	Partners' search facility	Contact details	▪ No. of e-newspapers' recipients	0	0	0	0	100	0	.....	0	0		100
			Target 2016	200 per year											
			Baseline	0											
			▪ No. of request for partnerships in web-site	0	0	53	0	139	118	0	5			315
			Target 2016	10											
			Baseline	0											
	Information for mass media	Information for mass media	▪ No. of e-mails received through web-site contact form	0	0	0	0	15	17	20	18	14		84	
			Target 2016	2 per year											
			Baseline	0											
			▪ No. of e-mails received through web-site contract details	0	0	0	0	1050	1028	1020	980			4078
			Target 2016	100 per year											
			Baseline	0											
	Information for mass media	Information for mass media	▪ No. of news/information for mass media	0	0	0	0	6	3	8	10	6		33	
			Target 2016	2 per year											
			Baseline	0											
▪ No. of press packs distributed			0	0	0	0	6	5	.....	5	6			22
Target 2016			10												
Baseline			0												
Information for mass media	Information for mass media	▪ No. of press reports published	0	0	0	0	6	3	.....	0	5		14	
		Target 2016	5												
		Baseline	0												

	Activity	Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	
Promotional Materials	Leaflets	▪ Number of leaflets produced	0	0	0	0	0	1000	0	0	0		1000	
		Target 2016	500 per Call											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ No. of leaflets distributed	0	0	0	0	250	600	100	50	0			1000
		Target 2016	500 per Call											
		Baseline	0											
	Brochures	▪ Number of brochures produced	0	0	750	0	0	1000	0	450	0			2200
		Target 2016	500 per Call											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ Number of brochures distributed	0	0	300	150	300	850	150	250	200			2200
		Target 2016	500 per Call											
		Baseline	0											
	Posters & banners	▪ Number of posters	0	0	2	0	0	1000	0	0	50			1052
		Target 2016	100											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ Number of banners	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0			4
		Target 2016	2											
		Baseline	0											
Other promotional materials (gadgets)	▪ Number of materials prepared	0	0	2350	0	0	6000	0	4730	60			13140	
	Target 2016	100 of each kind												
	Baseline	0												
	▪ Number of materials distributed	0	0	1000	500	813	5000	500	1500	60			9373	
	Target 2016	100 of each kind												
	Baseline	0												
Seminars	Info-days	▪ No. of info-days conducted	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0		8	
		Target 2016	2											
		Baseline	0											
	▪ No. of organizations/bodies invited	0	0	200	0	150	0	180	0	0			530	
		Target 2016	40 per info day											
		Baseline	0											
▪ Number of organizations/bodies attending	0	0	126	150	215	0	220	0	0			711		
	Target 2016	20 per info day												

	Activity	Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
		Baseline	0										
		▪ No. of journalists invited	0	0	0	0	48	0	50	0	0		98
		Target 2016	10 per info day										
		Baseline	0										
		▪ No. of journalists attended	0	0	0	0	12	0	15	0	0		27
		Target 2016	5 per info day										
		Baseline	0										
		▪ Percentage of participants that subsequently submit applications	0	0	0	0	37	0	29	0	0		66
		Target 2016	10% per Call										
		Baseline	0										
Publicity campaign	Print media campaign	▪ Number of newspapers publishing issue(s) concerning the Programme	0	0	5	0	55	55	20	20		155
		Target 2016	4 per campaign										
		Baseline	0										
	Press conferences	▪ No. of press conferences	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	2	2		11
		Target 2016	2 per year										
		Baseline	0										
		▪ No. of journalists invited	0	0	0	0	0	20	30	15	15		80
		Target 2016	10 per event										
		Baseline	0										
	Press releases	▪ No. of journalists attended	0	0	0	0	0	11	15	10	8		44
		Target 2016	5 per event										
		Baseline	0										
		▪ No. of press releases prepared	0	0	0	0	6	3	8	2	6		25
		Target 2016	2 per year										
		Baseline	0										
	Press releases	▪ No. of press releases distributed	0	0	0	0	6	3	8	2	6		25
		Target 2016	2 per event										
		Baseline	0										
▪ No. of press releases published		0	0	0	0	6	3	8	2	6		25	
Target 2016		2 per event											
Baseline		0											
Press Advertisements	▪ No. of Advertisements published	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	3		13	
	Target 2016	2 per event											
		Baseline	0										

	Activity	Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	
		Target 2016	1 per Call											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ Percentage of recipients that subsequently Call the JTS	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0			10
		Target 2016	5% per Call											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ Percentage of recipients that subsequently submit applications	0	0	0	0	5	0	...	0	0			5
	TV or Radio Campaign	Target 2016	2% per Call											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ No. of TV or Radio campaign	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3		3
		Target 2016	1 per year											
		Baseline	0											
Active Training	For Potential Applicants concerns preparation of the good quality applications	▪ No. of the trainings organized	0	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	0			12
		Target 2016	1 before subm.											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ No. of people invited	0	0	100	0	382	0	450	0	0			932
		Target 2016	40 per training											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ No. of participants	0	0	150	0	349	0	424	0	0			923
		Target 2016	30 per training											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ No. of speakers	0	0	6	0	12	0	9	0	0			27
		Target 2016	2 per training											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ No. of topics covered	0	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	0			12
		Target 2016	2 per training											
		Baseline	0											
		▪ No. of documents distributed	0	0	150	0	349	0	424	0	0			923
		Target 2016	30 per training											
		Baseline	0											
▪ No. of completed questionnaires	0	0	0	0	61	0	121	0	0			182		
Target 2016	30 per training													
Baseline	0													
▪ Percentage of participant that subsequently submit	0	0	30	0	35	0	29	0	0			94		



Activity	Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
	applications											
	Target 2016	10% of the participant from training										
	Baseline	0										
	▪ Percentage of good quality applications	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	0	0		90
	Target 2016	5% per training										
	Baseline	0										
For Beneficiaries concerns project implementation issues	▪ No. of the trainings organized	0	0	2	0	4	1	2	3	0		12
	Target 2016	2 within a Call										
	Baseline	0										
	▪ No. of people invited	0	0	0	0	172	46	150	350	0		718
	Target 2016	40 per training										
	Baseline	0										
	▪ No. of participants	0	0	0	0	175	51	105	227	0		558
	Target 2016	30 per training										
	Baseline	0										
	▪ No. of speakers	0	0	0	0	15	3	10	22	0		50
	Target 2016	2 per training										
	Baseline	0										
	▪ No. of topics covered	0	0	0	0	4	6	7	7	0		24
	Target 2016	2 per training										
	Baseline	0										
	▪ No. of documents distributed	0	0	0	0	175	51	128	250 (sets)	0		604
	Target 2016	30 per training										
	Baseline	0										
	▪ No. of completed questionnaires	0	0	0	0	26	33	39	45	0		143
	Target 2016	30 per training										
Baseline	0											

ANNEX

Comprehensive list on communication and information activities in 2015



Comprehensive list on communication and information activities in 2015

Promotional materials 2015

During the reporting period no promotional materials were prepared. Previously produced promotional materials were distributed during various occasions in both Turkey and Bulgaria (JMC meetings, technical meetings etc.) to stakeholders, potential applicants, beneficiaries and the general public.

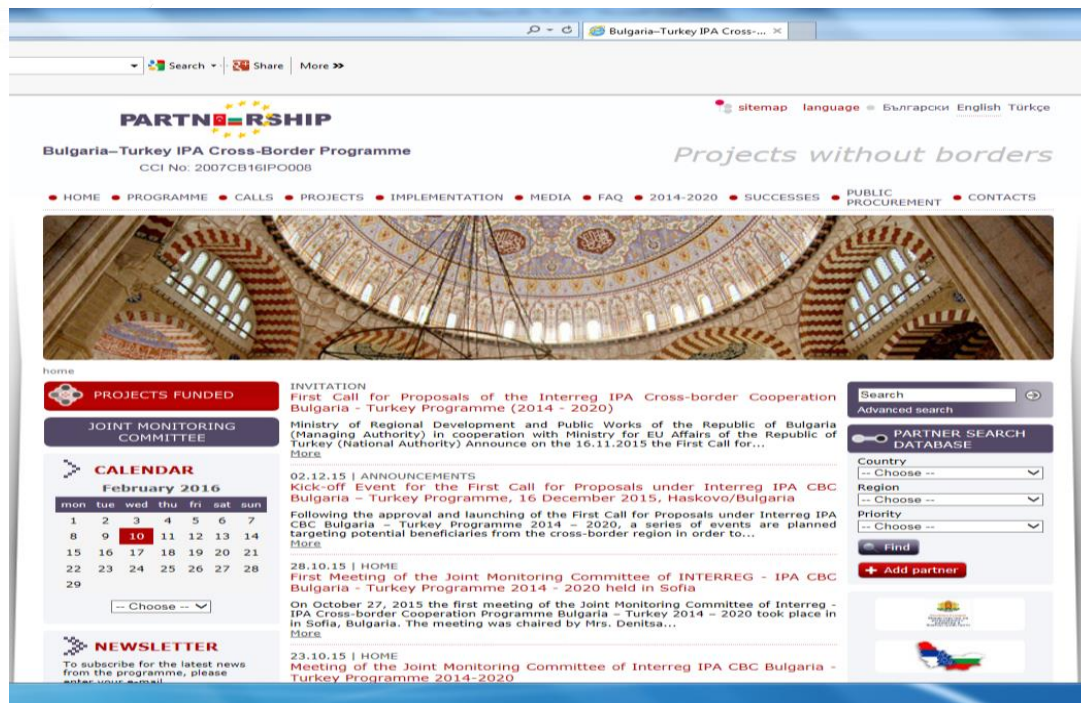
Programme website – 2015

The official Programme website was effectively released in the end of August 2009 with address:

<http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/>

The website includes comprehensive information on the Programme and its Priority axes, accompanied by all documents concerning Programme implementation. The website is regularly updated with relevant Programme information (events, news, documentation etc.) The website also includes a tool for partners search with project partner database and thus facilitates the integration among the actors and promoting joint activities and ideas.

During 2015 the website was one of the main publicity tools used to promote the Programme and disseminate the relevant information was published in Bulgarian, English and Turkish language.



During 2015 the Programme website was constantly updated with news, announcements and relevant documentation. In order to ensure broad publicity, information on the Programme was also disseminated through regional and national websites as well as on the websites at the European level:

www.mrrb.government.bg - Bulgarian MRDPW (Managing authority),

www.eufunds.bg – EU Structural funds website,

www.ab.gov.tr – Ministry for european union affairs, Republic of Turkey (National authority).

The unique website visits for 2015 are 29 791, compared to the 25 034 for 2014. Higher number of visitors in 2015 was due to the first Call for proposals under the CBC programme "Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey" for the years 2014-2020 under the Instrument for



Pre-accession Assistance launched in November with 4836 unique website visitors, while during 2014 there were no Calls for proposals opened. As it can be seen from the table below, during the years in which a Call for proposals was opened (2012, 2013) the website attracted over 36 000 visitors.

Number of visits to the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme website on yearly basis:

Year	Total Visits	Unique visits
2015	29 791	26 827
2014	25 034	22 145
2013	43 049	36 956
2012	45 387	38 190
2011	17 278	13 726
2010	7 071	6 096
2009	6 330	5 053

Number of visits to the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme website on monthly basis from the launching of the web-site until the end of 2015:

Month	Year 2009	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015
January	0	527	747	6 817	3 217	2 384	1 735
February	0	470	627	4 096	5 695	2 579	2 053
March	0	589	1 144	4 426	7 610	2 422	2 128
April	0	506	1 289	3 589	5 747	2 093	1 956



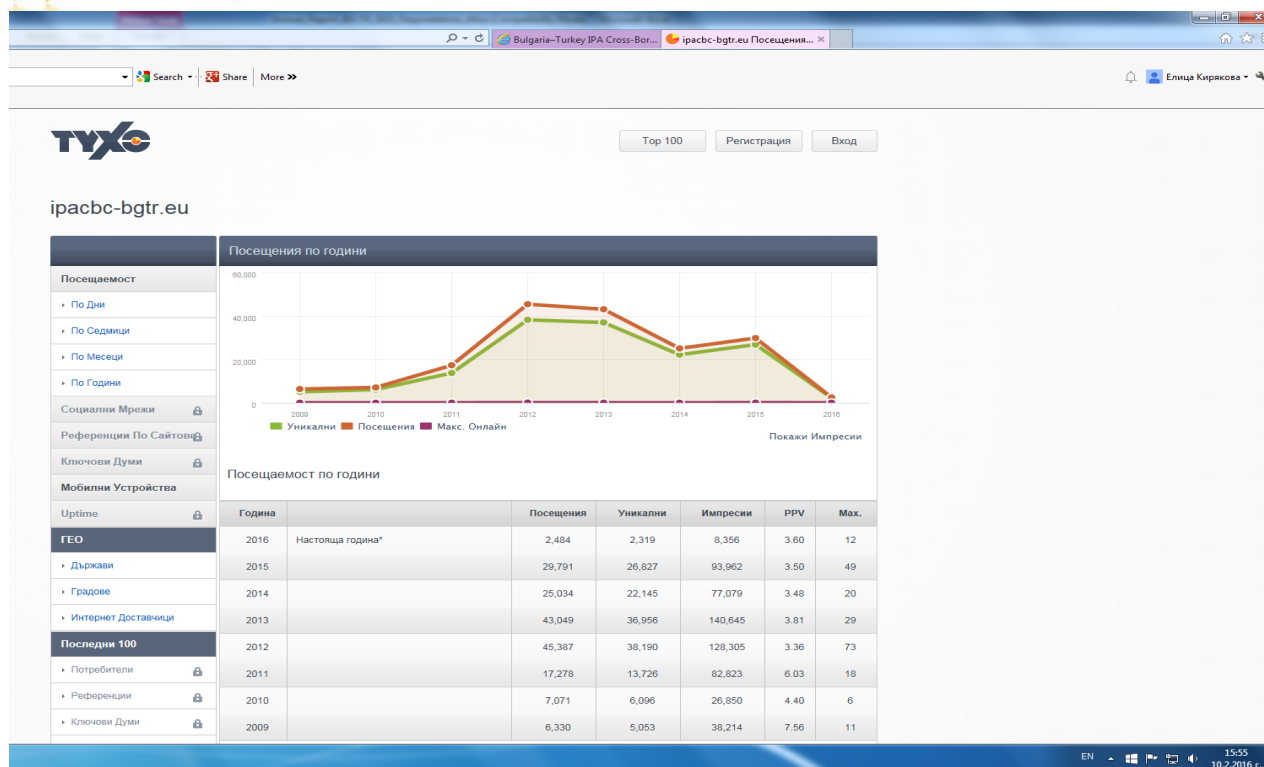
May	0	420	1 323	4 457	3 244	2 136	1 939
June	0	485	1 564	3 076	2 502	2 058	1 900
July	0	611	2 487	4 938	2 329	2 137	2 112
August	0	586	2 229	3 578	2 250	1 857	2 194
September	200	575	4 173	3 195	2 641	1 981	2 587
October	1 797	788	4 210	2 407	3 257	1 923	2 928
November	2 332	723	7 761	2 112	2 825	1 910	5 450
December	2 001	791	5 892	2 696	1 732	1 554	2 809

The number of visits during 2014 and 2015 to the Programme website is stable and showing that the promotion of the Programme has a tangible effect and still attracts public attention. The high number of visits to the website during 2013 can be partially explained by the fact that the third Call for proposals was open in the beginning of February 2013 and all the relevant information concerning the information events, the evaluation was regularly published on the website in three languages and Programme's website address was advised to be visited for relevant stakeholders in every information and training activity.

The interest in the programme website was high during September, October and December of 2015 with number of unique visitors ranging between 2500 and 2928 (2587, 2928, 2809 respectively).

The increase in the number of visits to the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme website during the period 2009 – 2015 is presented in the following caption:





Detailed statistics concerning the number of visits to the Programme website can be found here: <http://www.tyxo.bg/d/85129/daily>

JMC meetings

JMC Meeting

The JTS in cooperation with MA and NA organized a JMC meeting. It was held on 23 June 2015 in Sozopol, Bulgaria.

Before the start of the meeting, a contract award ceremony was held for the 6 projects that have newly been approved. Both Bulgarian and Turkish beneficiaries of these projects received their contracts from the Programme representatives during this ceremony.





The JMC members discussed the following subjects: 2014 AIR, the financial implementation of the Programme, new communication identity of the Programme, job description of investment monitoring expert in the JTS (main and antenna office) and other issues concerning the implementation of the Programme.





Photos: JMC Meeting

Visiting the project “The cultural heritage of two neighbor nations – open door through the millenniums” on the part of the members of the JMC, 23 June 2015, Municipality of Sozopol

During the JMC session the members visited the successfully finalised investment project - “The cultural heritage of two neighbor nations – open door through the millenniums” implemented by the Sozopol foundation, with lead partner Trakya development association.



Visual Identity Guidelines

Visual identity guidelines (VIG) was issued by the JTS in 2011 and kept being a very useful tool for the beneficiaries in terms of obeying the visualisation rules of the Programme and easing the process of preparing their promotional materials. During 2015 beneficiaries continued to use the VIG in preparation of their visibility materials.

Participation in other forums

European Cooperation Day – 2015

The European territorial cooperation day (ETC day) initiative was coordinated by INTERACT II Programme and the goal of the campaign was to highlight the role of the cooperation across borders in the EU and its neighbours. ETC day, under slogan „Sharing borders, growing closer” was celebrated through over 280 local events, organized and coordinated by 72 programmes in almost 40 countries, including the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme.

The JTS of the Bulgaria - Turkey IPA CBC Programme organised a celebration event involving folklore dances from cross – border region for the ETC day in Sozopol, Bulgaria on 18 September 2015.

The celebration was under the motto “**Dance with me across the border!**” and took place in Amphitheatre of Sozopol, a town located in the cbc area. Alongside the local public of Sozopol representatives of MA, NA, JTS, central and local government, diplomats, beneficiaries of projects financed under the Programme, journalists attended the event as well as Bulgarian and foreign tourist visitors.

The joint initiative started with welcome speech made by the mayor of Sozopol as host of the event. He stressed the importance of cross border cooperation projects and their contribution to the town of Sozopol via five projects funded by the EU under the Bulgaria – Turkey IPA CBC Programme and put special emphasis on the projects within which the ancient city walls and community centre in



Sozopol were renovated with the financing provided by the Programme. After that the vice council of Republic of Turkey in Burgas expressed the importance of cooperation and synergy between the two neighbour countries.

The first part of the celebration involved ensembles from cross border region performing their own dances. It started with traditional Bulgarian dance performed by ensemble from Burgas and continued with Turkish local dance from Kırklareli province performed by dance ensemble from Büyükkarıştıran. Both of the ensembles demonstrated local dances from cross-border region with skill. Before proceeding to second part, games quizzes were played and team building activities were conducted with younger participants in mixed Bulgarian and Turkish teams. The second part of the celebration involved the people presenting projects financed under Bulgaria – Turkey IPA CBC Programme. Bulgarian and Turkish partners showed to the public what they learned from different projects. Traditional dances were performed by the participants as dancers from both sides made performances of each other's national dances which were applauded strongly by the audience and this marked the closing of the event. The impressions shared by the young participants and the general public were very positive. The ETC Day organised by Bulgaria – Turkey IPA CBC Programme was hugely successful which helped to be raised the awareness of European citizens about the importance of cooperation and the support provided by the EU to bring the people across the borders closer.

ETC Day celebrations provide a great opportunity for promotion of the Programme to the general public







Photos: European Cooperation Day 2015, 18 of September, Sozopol-Bulgaria



**Conference “European Territorial Cooperation in the Republic of Bulgaria
- Achievements Bringing New Perspectives”**

MRDPW organized an Annual Conference “European territorial cooperation - achievements bringing new perspectives”. The conference was officially opened by the Minister of MRDPW and took place in Sofia on the 13th of October 2015.

The general topics of the conference were to present the most important results achieved under the Programmes for ETC 2007-2013 as well as to present the plans for the following programming period, 2014-2020.

The best project practices (totally 15 projects) under the ETC programmes during 2007-2013 were awarded by the Deputy Minister of MRDPW and the Director General of DG TCM at the MRDPW as examples for cross-border territorial projects with multiple and successful results for the region.

Within the conference an exhibition „*History through photos of the Programmes for ETC in the Republic of Bulgaria during the 2007-2013 programming period*“ was opened. The photographs displayed some of the most impressive results in the sphere of ETC.

*Photos: Conference “European Territorial Cooperation in the Republic of Bulgaria - Achievements Bringing New Perspectives”,
13 of October, Sofia-Bulgaria*



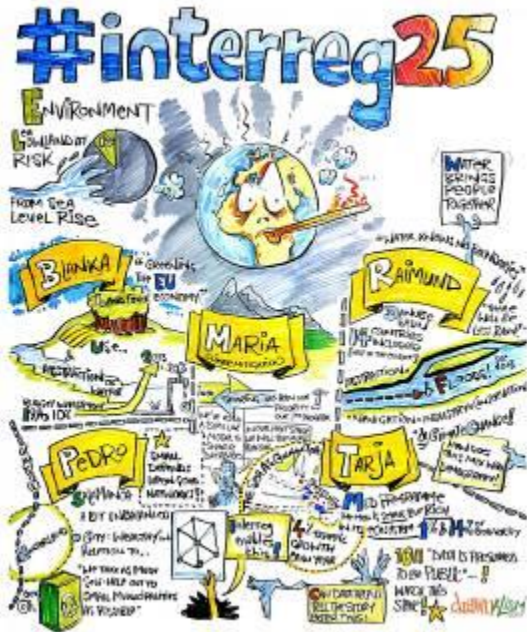
Interreg 25 year anniversary celebrations in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg



Over the course of the year 2015, the EU's programmes for territorial cooperation were celebrating the 25th anniversary of Interreg, headlined at a number of events to discover the current achievements and find inspiration for future work.

The celebration initiative was headed by an international conference organised within the Luxembourg presidency on 15-16 September 2015 with the support of the European Commission and INTERACT. The conference was held under the patronage of Ms Corina Crețu, the European Commissioner for Regional and Urban Policy and Mr. François Bausch, Minister for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

The event offered an opportunity to look back on the history of Interreg, explore some of the themes where Interreg made a difference, take a global view on territorial cooperation, and discuss visions for European regions as well as the role of Interreg itself.



The Role of Interreg in Environment - panel discussion

The Head of the Managing Authority joined the discussions as a speaker within the Panel Session “*The Role of Interreg – Environment*”, providing the audience with an overview about the role which IPA CBC Programmes managed by Bulgaria has played in the field of environment protection and reducing climate change risks in the cross-border areas.

The main outcomes of this session together with the other one concerning Labour market and demographic changes have been taken into account in shaping the discussions during the final session “*Building on 25 years*” contributing to the development of common vision and common ground for European territories beyond 2020.

“Building on 25 years” – panel discussion

Ms. Iskra Mihaylova, Bulgarian member of the European Parliament and Head of Regi Committee, took part within the final session and put a special emphasis on the role of the IPA cross-border programmes in the context of the EU vision for the regions in the perspective and the challenges beyond 2040.

A clear message was outlined to the crucial role of Interreg as an EU integration tool and platform for information and solutions exchange. It was concluded that the territorial cooperation programmes should keep their focus on strengthening partnerships in the cross-border regions thus encouraging EU cohesion policy. Harmonisation of the programme rules and procedures was considered as an essential instrument for better cooperation within the interreg framework.





The Programme, together with the other two IPA CBC Programmes managed by Bulgaria, participated in an exhibition of posters with its own designed one. A Programme presentation was included in the European Project Slam initiative along with 13 applications from all over the Interreg world.

During the conference, the celebration of the European Cooperation Day 2015 was officially launched through awarding ceremony of the slogan contest for Interreg. The winner was selected among a huge number of contestants – a representative of a Bulgarian non-governmental organisation with a long standing experience in cross-border projects development and implementation.



Award winning slogan contest for Interreg



Publicity/Media campaign

JTS's experts continuously supported the beneficiaries under the second and third Call for proposals in the efforts to implement and promote their respective projects. The Programme promotional and visibility activities during 2015 can be best analysed by looking at the following specific categories: "Media", "Events", and "News". All the recordings of the audio and video materials collected as well as the original newspaper publications are available at the JTS main office premises.

Media

Internet

In addition to the promotion through the Programme website and the websites of the official institutions directly related to the Programme, both the Programme and the projects funded received a good deal of online media attention. In order to reach even broader audience, the JTS encourages the Programme beneficiaries to promote the Programme and the respective projects by using the web sites and social media pages of the project partners. Some of the beneficiaries have created project specific web sites which are of great use to the general public for learning more about the Programme and project results.

Newspapers

Programme related coverage in the printed media during 2015 is primarily focused on individual projects. The printed media participating in the Programme press conferences have been publishing positive press releases on their web sites but there is no information on how many of such press releases were published in the printed format. As for the coverage related to individual projects, most of the press releases were published in the local newspapers in the cross-border region, but as they are not a direct result of the implementation of the Communication and Information plan of the JTS for the year 2015 and they will not be listed.

Screen captions from news published:

