

GREECE-BULGARIA
CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
2014-2020
(Programme summary)



The Programme Area

The Greece-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation area for the programming period 2014-2020 is identical to the current ETC programme. It extends to 40.202 km² and has a total population of 2.7 million inhabitants. It covers four territorial units at NUTS II level (Regions), and 11 territorial units at NUTS III level (Districts).

Map of the cross-border region



NUTS I REGIONS	NUTS II REGIONS	NUTS III REGIONS
GREECE	Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace	Prefecture of Evros
		Prefecture of Xanthi
		Prefecture of Rodopi
		Prefecture of Drama
		Prefecture of Kavala
	Region of Central Macedonia	Prefecture of Thessaloniki
BULGARIA	South-Central Region	Prefecture of Serres
		District of Haskovo
		District of Smolyan
	South-West Region	District of Kardjali
		District of Blagoevgrad

Thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective (TO)	Selected investment priority (IP)
TO 3 Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	IP 3a Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
	IP 3d Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
TO 5 Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management ¹	IP 5b Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
TO 6 Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	IP 6c Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
	IP 6d Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures
	IP 6f Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution.
TO 7 Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	IP 7b Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes.
	IP 7c Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
TO 9 Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination	IP 9a Investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services.

¹ Thematic Objective 5 has been combined with Thematic Objective 6 into one Priority Axis in order to address environmental issues in an integrated manner.

Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme

Priority axis	ERDF (in EUR)	%	TO	IP	Specific objectives corresponding to the IPs
PA 1: A competitive and Innovative Cross-Border area	8 819 299	8,00%	3	3a	Improve support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs, focused on cross-border cooperation
	8 819 299	8,00%		3d	Expand cross-border economic activity, innovation and exchanges
PA 2: A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area	12 033 773	10,92%	5	5b	Reduce impacts from disasters
	11 414 538	10,35%	6	6c	Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage
	7 011 342	6,36%		6d	Enhance the protection of CB area ecosystems
	5 710 496	5,18%		6f	Enhance the capacity of the CB area to effectively protect the environment and use resources sustainably
PA 3: A better interconnected Cross-Border area	26 604 637	24,13%	7	7b	Improve accessibility of the CB area
	2 465 976	2,24%		7c	Improve transportation environmental impact
PA 4: A socially inclusive Cross-Border area	13 831 625	12,55%	9	9a	Improve access to high-quality health services in the CB area
	6 915 775	6,27%			Increase the capacity of social enterprises in the CB area
Technical Assistance	6 614 474	6,00%			
Total	110 241 234	100,00%			

Priority axis 1 - “A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area”

<i>Investment priority (3a)</i>	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p>Specific Objective: improve CB capacities to support entrepreneurship with a cross-border dimension</p> <p>Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement/modernization of business-hosting facilities such as business incubators, technology parks, etc and business support facilities such as market places, exhibition halls, outlets, depots and logistics centres, laboratories or other technological installations, etc. • Development of business support services such as ICT systems (e.g. web-platforms), business consulting, etc to support cross-border economic activity. • Development of services fostering productivity such as business-specific training programmes and actions facilitating the introduction of new techniques and technologies into the production process (such as transfer of intellectual property rights, technology transfer, introduction of organizational innovation, etc.) <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for business support; • Business Chambers, NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, CB networks and other business associations dealing established in the CB area; • Universities and research institutes in the CB area. 	

<i>Investment priority (3d)</i>	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
<p>Specific Objective: Expand economic activity in the cross-border area, by encouraging innovation and exchanges.</p> <p>Type of actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of clusters or other types of “networks” (e.g. “value-chains”) for the achievement of cost-savings, common research and product development, common export promotion, etc. • Collaboration schemes between businesses and non-businesses (e.g. museums) for the tourism/culture area - such as accommodation facilities, convention centres, manufacturing businesses, transport facilities, cultural facilities, etc – in order to introduce integrated tourist destinations in the cross-border area, branding of areas, etc. • Development and test control systems for branding of “green”, and “traditional” products respecting and promoting the CB area cultural and natural heritage. • Joint R&D activities to benefit the local production system with a cross-border dimension, such as cross-border collaboration between businesses or business/Research Institutes/Lab schemes, R&D activities for more than one stakeholders, e.g. for a cluster, etc 	

- Support for intellectual property right development (e.g. patents for new products or new technologies developed through joint research undertaken by collaborating CB businesses or business/R&D institution/Lab collaboration schemes)
- Joint or common (horizontal) export support services for CB businesses (e.g. participation to exhibitions and business-promotion events).
- Cross-border business-plans with pilot applications for individual businesses and/or sectors/sub-sectors

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for business support;
- Business Chambers, NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, CB networks and other business associations dealing established in the CB area;
- Universities and research institutes in the CB area;
- Chambers, collective organizations and associations representing businesses and other professionals participating in the tourist value-chain as well as national, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for CB cultural assets and protected natural areas.

Priority axis 2 - “A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area”

<i>Investment priority 5(b)</i>	Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
Specific Objective: Reduce impacts from disasters.	
Type of actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies and action plans • Adaptation/mitigation pilot actions (for specific risks) with positive mitigation effects: e.g. conservation/rehabilitation of peatland, “buffer zones”, innovative methods/technologies, etc. • Capacity-building actions • Risks and disaster management actions 	
Types of beneficiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for spatial planning, natural disaster management, civil protection and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time; • Environmental NGOs, Non-Profit-Organisations, CB networks and other civil society associations dealing with natural disasters and civil protection, and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time; • Universities and research institutes dealing with natural disasters and civil protection, and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time. 	

<i>Investment priority 6(c)</i>	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
Specific Objective: Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage	
Types of Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building actions • Rehabilitation/protection of cultural assets of cross-border significance (all structures rehabilitated under this action will be required to be accessible to people with disabilities); rehabilitation/protection of natural assets of cross-border significance; small infrastructure interventions necessary for ensuring accessibility of sites. • CB area-wide cultural initiatives 	
Types of beneficiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with natural and cultural heritage; • National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with regional development planning; 	

- Protected area management bodies;
- NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations and other civil society associations dealing with natural resources, and cultural issues;
- Institutions specialized in education, training and capacity building.

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

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

- Development of CB eco-innovation partnerships and participation in European Innovation Partnerships in the areas of water management (pollution control and efficient use) and soil management (including contaminated lands);
- Pilot applications or mainstreaming of existing innovative methods/technologies in the areas of water management (pollution control and efficient use) and soil management (including contaminated lands) and joint development of new methods;
- Promoting “green behavior” campaigns in the areas of water and soil management.

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities and their departments in charge of subjects related to water and soil management;
- Universities and research institutes dealing with subjects related to water and soil management.
- Chambers, collective organizations and associations representing businesses and other professionals in areas relevant to water and soil management.

Priority axis 3 - “A better interconnected Cross-Border Area”

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

<i>Investment priority (7c)</i>	Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility.
Specific Objective: Improve transportation environmental impact Types of Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport investments aiming at reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities (including transport services); • Development and introduction of transport monitoring systems (targeting passenger and/or goods mobility, infrastructure state-of-repairs, etc) and intelligent transport systems for goods and passengers; • Development of new technologies/methods for the design and implementation of environment-friendly transport infrastructures and systems. Types of beneficiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National institutions and Specific bodies in charge of transportation planning, construction, monitoring and management issues as well as respective bodies engaged in environmental monitoring/protection; • Universities, research institutes and Specific bodies dealing with subjects related to transportation 	

planning, monitoring and management as well as research institutes engaged in the development of smart transport systems/technologies;

- Local stakeholders engaged in the provision of transport services (such as public bus-service providers, Municipalities which engage in transport, etc)

Priority axis 4 - “A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area”

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

Priority axis 5 - “Technical Assistance”

Specific Objective: To manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently	
Types of Actions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish and manage Joint Secretariat and Infopoints• programme management and steering activities• monitoring, control and reporting activities• project generation and selection activities• support to project partners• communication, dissemination and promotion activities	
Types of beneficiaries:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JTS, MA, NA, infopoints	

Financing plan

Priority axis	Union support	National co-financing	Total funding
	85 %	15 %	100 %
PA 1: A competitive and Innovative Cross-Border area	17 638 598 €	3 112 694 €	20 751 292 €
PA 2: A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area	12 033 773 €	2 123 607 €	14 157 380 €
	24 136 376 €	4 259 360 €	28 395 736 €
PA 3: A better interconnected Cross-Border area	29 070 613 €	5 130 108 €	34 200 721 €
PA 4: A socially inclusive Cross-Border area	20 747 400 €	3 661 306 €	24 408 706 €
PA 5: Technical Assistance	6 614 474 €	1 167 260 €	7 781 734 €
Total	110 241 234 €	19 454 335 €	129 695 569 €

Relevant authorities and bodies

In line with Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 the management structure's bodies of the Programme are as follow:

Managing authority is represented by Ministry of Development and Competitiveness, Hellenic Republic. The Managing Authority is responsible for managing and implementing the Programme in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.

Audit authority is represented by Financial Control Committee (EDEL) at the Ministry of Finance - General Accounting Office of the State, Hellenic Republic. The Audit authority shall ensure that audits are carried out on the proper functioning of the management and control system of the Programme and on an appropriate sample of operations on the basis of the declared expenditure.

Certifying authority is represented by the Paying Authority for the CSF, the Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness, Hellenic Republic. Certifying authority is responsible for receiving funds from the European Commission under the Programme and amongst the other to certify 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.

National Authority is represented by Directorate General "Territorial Cooperation Management" Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria. The competencies and responsibilities of the National Authority are to support the Managing authority in the implementation of the Programme.

Joint Monitoring Committee is composed by representatives of Managing Authority (MA), National Authority (NA), the European Commission, as well as other relevant national/regional/local authorities and stakeholders, including civil society and private sector

organisations. The composition of the JMC is in line with partnership and multi-level governance.

Joint Secretariat

The JS is a common structure, guaranteeing the impartiality of the Programme implementation. The JS will have a two-fold function (according to Article 23(2) ETC Regulation): assisting the MA, NA and the JMC in carrying out their respective functions and providing relevant support and information on the Programme to the potential beneficiaries.

The full text of Greece-Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014 – 2020 is available at Programme website:

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