



**GREECE - BULGARIA**  
**CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME**  
**2014-2020**

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***Final Programme Draft***

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**AUGUST 2014**

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## **SECTION 1 STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION**

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

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

##### **INTRODUCTION**

###### **The Programme Area**

The Greece-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation area for the programming period 2014-2020 is identical to the current ETC programme. It extends to 40.202 km<sup>2</sup> and has a total population of 2.7 million inhabitants. It covers four territorial units at NUTS II level (Regions), and 11 territorial units at NUTS III level (Districts). The eligible area extends across the entire Greek-Bulgarian border and is neighbouring with Turkey (east) and FYROM (west), both countries aspiring to access to the EU. It is part of the most south-eastern non-insular area of EU, and it is situated between three seas: the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Ionian-Adriatic Sea. Finally, it sits at the crossroad of strategic fossil fuel pipelines supplying the EU market and TEN transport axes.

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

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

##### **STRATEGIC PROCESS FOLLOWED TO IDENTIFY COOPERATION PRIORITIES**

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

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

1. Cross-border character: it evaluates the degree to which cooperation is necessary to resolve important policy issues of cross-border nature (i.e. not able to be resolved unilaterally) and relevant for the CB area or the degree to which cooperation adds significant value.
2. Continuity: it evaluates whether the thematic objective and its identified intervention areas capitalize on results achieved by previous programming periods.
3. Complementarity: it evaluates the existence of synergies and complementarities with mainstream programmes to be implemented during 2014-2020 in the CB area.
4. Relevance: it reflects the prioritization of needs and challenges in the cross-border area as portrayed in the analysis of the existing situation.
5. Demand: it reflects demand for specific interventions, as evidenced by the consultation process followed for the drafting of the programme.
6. Institutional capacity: it evaluates the existence of established institutional capacity in

the border region to implement actions within the thematic objective, as evidenced by the consultation process followed for the drafting of the programme, data from the implementation of the current programme, specific evaluations, etc.

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

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

### **KEY CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THE PRESENT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME**

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

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

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

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

### **PROGRAMME GOALS AND CONTRIBUTION TO E2020 STRATEGY**

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

With respect to the “smart growth” objective by:

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

With respect to the “sustainable growth” objective:

- by increasing the ability of the CB area to adapt to climate change,
- by reducing CB natural and man-made risks and enhancing the response capabilities of local stakeholders,
- by preserving cultural and natural heritage,

- by protecting and restoring biodiversity and the health of eco-systems, and
- by reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities in the CB area.

With respect to the “inclusive growth” objective:

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

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

### **General Level of Development**

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

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

### **Economy**

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

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

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

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

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

**Total labour productivity in the CB area is significantly lower than the EU27 avg.** (ap-

prox. 1/5) and exhibits high differentials between the Greek (32800€/employee) and Bulgarian (5800€/employee) parts. CB area productivity is also below the respective national averages for both parts:

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

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

### **Innovation**

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

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

### **Climate change**

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Faculties of Law and History, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Economics, Pedagogy, Philology, Philosophy, Arts, Public Health and Sports and a Technical College

across borders and their effective management is of cross-border importance. Finally the areas with the highest risk of landslides are located in the basin of Maritsa East and in the coal development area in the South-west region.

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

### **Environment**

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

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

### **Accessibility**

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

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

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

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

The area is deficient in terms of railway and multi-modal infrastructure. Both Greece and Bulgaria have been recently investing in the CB area railway network but it requires considerable investment which is outside the financial limitations of the present programme.

### **Labour Market, Poverty and Social Inclusion**

While in 2007 unemployment rates for the CB districts were on the average near or below the national rates and below the EU27 average rate, unemployment started to rapidly increase – especially in Greece - soon after the wake of the economic crisis in 2008 reaching record high levels in 2013. The Bulgarian districts succeeded to keep unemployment rates

near or lower than the EU27 average. Currently, the high disparities among the CB districts have not dissipated. The latest data - available only for the Greek districts - exhibit the following **unemployment rates (2013): Xanthi 37,5%, Drama 36,8%, Thessaloniki 32,1%, Serres 22,9%, Kavala 22,8%, Evros 22%, and Rodopi 16,8%.**

In addition, long term unemployment rates have increased sharply - especially for the Greek regions - after 2009, indicating a **risk of large structural unemployment** which in turn implies the existence of inefficient labour markets and a mismatch between labour market demand and the available skills and locations of the workers seeking employment. According to the ESPON DEMIFER project the CB area shows significantly higher values of long-term unemployed persons compared to the EU27. Youth unemployment rates display similar trends and are attributed to the lackluster economic growth, the rigid labour market, and the mismatch between potential employee skills and employers' needs in Greece and Bulgaria. In addition, the CB area exhibits **considerably higher than EU27 percentages of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion** (3-4 times higher). The main reason for the large divergence is the comparatively higher long term unemployment rates, and the higher share of people living in areas with low work intensity and low income levels. With respect to the latter, the share of people living in areas with low work intensity has been rising since 2010 in Bulgarian and Greek territories alike.

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

The rising incidence of poverty has many social consequences, one of which is the **deteriorating public health conditions**. Even though the CB area enjoys the availability of basic health care resources (e.g. hospitals and doctors) at levels near, or even better in several cases, than the EU27 average, the average life expectancy is lower than EU27 levels and many epidemiological indicators record higher values. Overall, Greek districts have exhibited higher life expectancy than Bulgarian districts in the past, but since poverty forces more people to resort to hospital care (more than a 20% increase has been documented in Greece after 2010), it appears that Greek districts may be more at risk of deteriorating health care conditions in the near future, thereby lowering overall public health levels in the CB area.

## **LESSONS LEARNT AND CAPITALIZATION OF PRIOR PROGRAMME EXPERIENCE**

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

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

However, the rate of capitalization of prior experiences in the current programme has been very low (reported by only 1.5% of beneficiaries) due to the lack of joint projects in previous programming periods (i.e. 2000-2006). Hence, capitalization on project results from the

2007-2013 period becomes of foremost importance. This conclusion was reinforced by a programme beneficiary survey, which demonstrated that the “knowledge gained” from the projects implemented and the “contacts established” are valuable results beneficiaries intend to use in the future.

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

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

A decisive variable in this respect is the capacity of local stakeholders to implement the types of cooperative projects necessary. Public sector stakeholders exhibit a high exposure and experience due to their increased participation in current programme interventions as well as their involvement in other programmes. Greek beneficiaries seem to be more experienced than their Bulgarian counterparts, even though this result has not been corroborated. However, socio-economic stakeholders and the private sector seem to have an advantage of being in a position to attract staff with higher education and skills levels. Overall, approximately half of CB area stakeholders are assessed as satisfactorily/highly competent to implement CB interventions which implies that CB area stakeholders are in a position to implement large, complex projects. This conclusion is reinforced by the good absorption rates of the current programme.

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

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

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

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

### **Entrepreneurship, competition and innovation**

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

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

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

### **Social conditions and unemployment.**

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

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

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

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

### **Environment**

The current programme devoted a large part of its resources to environmental protection but

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<sup>3</sup> With Thessaloniki as the only exception.

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

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

Future programmes will need to devote larger portions of resources for the environment as overall resources for environmental protection will become scarcer due to fiscal adaptation policies on the Greek side. Risk management and energy efficiency are important issues for the development of all economic activities in the area and need to be continued. Past experience shows that resources for biodiversity protection need to be earmarked in order to increase the share of programme actions targeted in the area. Last, but not least, the new programme needs to:

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

- 1.1.2. A justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities having regard to the Partnership Agreement, based on an identification of regional and, where appropriate, national needs including the need to address the challenges identified in relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and the relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, taking into account the ex ante evaluation.

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

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators	The cross-border area despite its scientific and socio-economic potential has had very poor results in innovative entrepreneurship. The links between the research community and businesses have overall been very weak. Existing entrepreneurship support centres are mainly concentrated in the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki while in other areas are virtually non-existent or very weak to have a broader impact.
	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes	Businesses in the cross-border area have been rather slow in expanding their activity to the other side of the border. The borderline remains a barrier and business activity remains vastly local. Significant opportunities for innovation remain unexploited because of the limited geographical scope of the economic activity that deprives businesses of the necessary market size to support substantial innovation.
Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management <sup>4</sup>	Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems	The CB area is susceptible to severe flooding and extensive forest wildfire risks. Additional risks affecting the area include: erosion (especially for the coastal area) and landslides in some areas.
Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage	The CB area is characterized by a richness of cultural and natural heritages, which can be used in order to address common challenges caused by external driving forces such as demographic change, economic pressures due to globalization, etc. Development of joint strategies and concepts to capitalize on opportunities can produce a CB added value. In the past, the competitive advantages provided by the rich natural and cultural resources have only been partially addressed (i.e. in relation to the promotion of localized eco-tourist activity).
	Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures	CB area biodiversity and ecological connectivity (e.g. migration patterns) require cross-border approaches. Also, the importance of some of CB area ecological resources (such as bird sanctuaries) imply a particular responsibility for their preservation within Europe. CB co-operation potential for this investment priority has not been fully exploited in previous programming periods.
	Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution.	This investment priority presents significant opportunities for the programme to capitalize on previous results. Resource efficiency (especially with regards to water resources) and the use of innovative technologies aiming at protecting the environment has been identified as a long-standing strategic priority for the CB area. Its significance becomes even more important in view of the high vulnerability of the CB area to the effects of climatic change (which will in-

<sup>4</sup> Thematic Objective 5 has been combined with Thematic Objective 6 into one Priority Axis in order to address environmental issues in an integrated manner.

		crease pressures on water resources and on the natural environment).
Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes.	The CB area – despite the significant improvements achieved in the recent years through the construction of motorways – still lacks sufficient north-to-south interconnections. The secondary network connections to the area motorways is particularly insufficient and in a bad state of repair. Multimodality is almost nonexistent.
	Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility	Environment is one of the most valuable CB area resources and environmental protection is of the highest priorities at all levels, including transport. Reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities is hence of the utmost importance.
Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination	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.	CB area health status indicators have not been satisfactory for a long time despite the satisfactory levels (in terms of quantity) of healthcare infrastructure in the area, indicating a lack of effectiveness of such resources. The rise of poverty in the CB area now places more pressure on health care systems. Improving their effectiveness is hence of paramount importance. At the same time, economic recession and disinvestment prevent many CB area inhabitants from gaining access to healthcare services (lack of health-care insurance coverage). Also, the promotion of social inclusion through social entrepreneurship has not been sufficiently developed in the CB area.

## 1.2. Justification for the financial allocation

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

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

Environment and climate change (TO 6 and TO 5) – which represent the highest priorities for the CB area as documented both by the analysis of the existing situation and the partnership process during programme development – receive almost 1/3 of programme resources. More specifically, TO 6 receives almost 22% and TO 5 close to 11%.

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

Social inclusion (TO 9) and entrepreneurship (TO 3) – which represent the second and third highest priorities for the CB area respectively – receive close to 19% and 16% of programme resources respectively. Social inclusion and especially the combat against poverty is also expected to benefit from entrepreneurship interventions as well, hence rising the total impact of programme resources.

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

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

**Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme**

Priority axis	ERDF support (in EUR)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme			Thematic objective	Investment priorities	Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority	Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)				
PA 1: A competitive and Innovative Cross-Border area	9.172.070 €	8,32%			3	3a	Improve support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs, focused on cross-border cooperation	Entrepreneurial business climate
	8.466.528 €	7,68%				3d	Expand cross-border economic activity, innovation and exchanges	Awareness of business opportunities beyond local markets
PA 2: A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area	12.033.773 €	10,92%			5	5b	Reduce impacts from disasters	Areas protected (% surface) against flooding
	11.414.538 €	10,35%			6	6c	Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural heritage
	7.011.342 €	6,36%				6d	Enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities	% of Natura areas (surface) participating in biodiversity preservation strategies and pilot actions
	5.710.496 €	5,18%				6f	Enhance water and soil management	% of total renewable CB area water resources under improved management systems
PA 3: A better interconnected Cross-Border area	26.604.637 €	24,13%			7	7b	Improve accessibility of the CB area	Traffic capacity levels
	2.465.976 €	2,24%				7c	Improve transportation environmental impact	Number of inhabitants benefiting from intelligent transport systems interventions
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	Population covered by improved health services
	6.915.775 €	6,27%					Increase the capacity of social enterprises in the CB area	Disadvantaged participants employed by social enterprises
PA 5: Technical Assistance	6.614.474 €	6,00%					Manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>110.241.234 €</b>	<b>100,00%</b>						

## SECTION 2 PRIORITY AXES

(Reference: points (b) and (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

### 2.A.a A description of the priority axes other than technical assistance

(Reference: point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

#### 2.A.1.a Priority axis 1 “A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area”

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

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

#### 2.A.2.a Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or Fund (where applicable)

(Reference: Article 8(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

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

(Repeated for each combination under a priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<i>ERDF</i>
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<i>20,751,292 €</i>

**2.A.4.a.i Investment priority**

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

<i>Investment priority</i> (3a)	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
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**2.A.5.a.i Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

**2.A.4.a.ii Investment priority**

<i>Investment priority</i> (3d)	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
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**2.A.5.a.ii Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

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

**Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators** (by specific objective)  
(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Baseline value</i>	<i>Baseline year</i>	<i>Target value<sup>5</sup> (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
	<i>Entrepreneurial business climate</i>	<i>entrepreneurship climate barometer</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>Survey to a representative sample of target SMEs</i>	<i>1st survey 2015, 2nd 2018, 3rd 2023</i>
	<i>Awareness of business opportunities beyond local markets</i>	<i>awareness scale</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>Survey to a representative sample of target SMEs</i>	<i>1st survey 2015, 2nd 2018, 3rd 2023</i>

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<sup>5</sup> target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

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

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<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><b>Specific Objective: Improve support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs, focused on cross-border cooperation</b></p> <p><u>Types of Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Development of business support services such as ICT systems (e.g. web-platforms), business consulting, etc to support cross-border economic activity.</li> <li>• 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.)</li> <li>• Productive priority areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agro-food industry</li> <li>○ Waste management for recycling or energy production</li> <li>○ Renewable energy and energy saving and efficiency</li> <li>○ Sustainable tourism</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Main target groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• businesses, people intending to exercise entrepreneurial activity in the area</li> </ul> <p><u>Types of beneficiaries:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for business support;</li> <li>• Business Chambers, NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, CB networks and other business associations dealing established in the CB area;</li> <li>• Universities and research institutes in the CB area.</li> </ul>	
<i>Investment priority (3d)</i>	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes

**Specific Objective: Expand economic activity in the cross-border area, by encouraging innovation and exchanges.**

Type of actions:

- Creation of clusters or other types of “networks” (e.g. “value-chains”) for the achievement of cost-savings, common research and product development, common export promotion, etc.
- Collaboration schemes between businesses and non-businesses (e.g. museums) for the tourism/culture area - such as accommodation facilities, convention centres, manufacturing businesses, transport facilities, cultural facilities, etc – in order to introduce integrated tourist destinations in the cross-border area, branding of areas, etc.
- Development and test control systems for branding of “green”, and “traditional” products respecting and promoting the CB area cultural and natural heritage.
- Joint R&D activities to benefit the local production system with a cross-border dimension, such as cross-border collaboration between businesses or business/Research Institutes/Lab schemes, R&D activities for more than one stakeholders, e.g. for a cluster, etc., study visits to other cross- border areas to gain familiarity with successful practices and capitalize on innovative know-how, etc.
- Support for intellectual property right development (e.g. patents for new products or new technologies developed through joint research undertaken by collaborating CB businesses or business/R&D institution/Lab collaboration schemes)
- Joint or common (horizontal) export support services for CB businesses (e.g. participation to exhibitions and business-promotion events).
- Cross-border business-plans with pilot applications for individual businesses and/or sectors/sub-sectors in the areas of:
  - Cross-border trade
  - Establishment of new cross-border “business organization models” (e.g. contract farming, “modular production networks”, etc)
- Productive priority areas include:
  - Agro-food industry
  - Waste management for recycling or energy production
  - Renewable energy and energy saving and efficiency
  - Sustainable tourism

Main target groups:

- Local SMEs and individual entrepreneurs; people intending to exercise entrepreneurial activity in the area

Specific territories targeted:

- N/A

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.

**2.A.6.2.a Guiding principles for selection of operations**

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

<i>Investment Priority</i> (3d)	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
Priority will be given to projects that further the integration of R&D and technological transfer to SMEs, in order to lead to new production methods, to update and standardize the quality of the products and to introduce innovative technologies and product ideas, especially in the RIS3 priority sectors and in the sectors with high export potential. The following conditions will also be observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Projects must demonstrate a cross-border added value and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Active engagement of project partners in joint activities will be required (simple parallel actions will not be allowed).</li><li>• Projects that rely solely on analysing the current situation and/or making plans for fu-</li></ul>	

ture action will not be approved.

- Projects should have a lasting impact.
- Projects addressing tourism can involve both partners from the business and the non-business sectors.

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No financial Instruments will be used

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No major projects will be implemented

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

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators**

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Target value (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
CO01	Number of enterprises receiving support	enterprises	100	Programme MIS	Annually
	Number of clusters and other collaborative schemes	collaborative schemes	3	Programme MIS	Annually
CO28	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	enterprises	20	Programme MIS	Annually

## 2.A.7.a Performance framework

(Reference: point (b)(v) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

**Table 5: Performance Framework of the Priority Axis**

Priority Axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
1	Output		CO01 Number of enterprises receiving support	Number		100	MIS	
1	Key implementation step		Selection of enterprises	Number	30		MIS	selected – approved enterprises, related to the above CO01, to participate
1	Financial		Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	4.786.258,82 €	20.751.291,11 €	MIS	(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework (optional)

## 2.A.8.a Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

### Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	62	2.822.176
	63	5.644.352
	67	9.172.070

Table 7: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	01	17.638.598

Table 8: Dimension 3 – Territory type		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	07	17.638.598

Table 9: Dimension 4 – Territorial delivery mechanisms		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	07	17.638.598

## 2.A.9 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

### 2.A.1.b Priority axis 2 “A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area”

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

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

### 2.A.2.b Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or Fund (where applicable) (Reference: Article 8(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

### 2.A.3.b Fund and calculation basis for Union support (Repeated for each combination under a priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<i>ERDF</i>
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<i>42,553,116 €</i>

**2.A.4.b.i Investment priority**

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

<i>Investment priority (5b)</i>	Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
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**2.A.5.b.i Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

**2.A.4.b.ii Investment priority**

<i>Investment priority (6c)</i>	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
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**2.A.5.b.ii Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

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

**2.A.4.b.iii Investment priority**

<i>Investment priority (6d)</i>	Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures
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**2.A.5.b.iii Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

<i>ID</i>	5
<i>Specific objective</i>	<i>Enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities</i>
<i>The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<i>Mainstreaming successful approaches in biodiversity protection</i> <i>New methods and technologies for biodiversity monitor-</i>

	<i>ing and management</i>
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#### **2.A.4.b.iv Investment priority**

<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.
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#### **2.A.5.b.iv Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

<i>ID</i>	6
<i>Specific objective</i>	<i>Enhance water and soil management</i>
<i>The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<i>Improved surface and groundwater management capacity</i> <i>Prevention of soil erosion and desertification</i> <i>Rehabilitation of contaminated lands</i>

**Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators** (by specific objective)  
(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Baseline value</i>	<i>Baseline year</i>	<i>Target value<sup>6</sup> (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
	<i>Areas protected against flooding with new-upgraded plans/actions.</i>	<i>% of hectares</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>Authorities for civil protection / Programme MIS</i>	<i>2018, 2023</i>
<i>CO11</i>	<i>Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural heritage</i>	<i>% of visits</i>	<i>452,000</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>Official statistics for museums, archaeological sites, etc. / Annual survey for all other supported sites / Programme MIS</i>	<i>2018, 2023</i>
	<i>% of Natura areas participating in biodiversity preservation strategies and pilot actions</i>	<i>% of hectares</i>	<i>2,717,888</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>Official Country Registers of Natura sites / Programme MIS</i>	<i>2018, 2023</i>
	<i>% of total renewable CB area water resources under improved management systems</i>	<i>% of hm<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>23,500</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>Water Basin Management Plans / Programme MIS</i>	<i>2018, 2023</i>

<sup>6</sup> target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

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

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

Specific territories targeted:

- the most vulnerable territories to the above-mentioned risks.

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for spatial planning, natural disaster management, civil protection and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time;
- Environmental NGOs, Non-Profit-Organisations, social enterprises, CB networks and other civil society associations dealing with natural disasters and civil protection, and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time;
- Universities and research institutes dealing with natural disasters and civil protection, and other fields relevant to the specific risks addressed each time.

*Investment priority*  
6(c)

Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

**Specific Objective: Valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage**

Types of Actions:

- Capacity-building actions such as:
  - knowledge transfer and exchange of good practices in the area of preservation of natural and cultural heritage;
  - joint development and pilot testing of innovative techniques in the area of cultural heritage preservation, including training;
- Rehabilitation/protection of cultural assets of cross-border significance (all structures rehabilitated under this action will be required to be accessible to people with disabilities); rehabilitation/protection of natural assets of cross-border significance; small infrastructure interventions necessary for ensuring accessibility of sites.
- CB area-wide cultural initiatives such as:
  - joint events/actions promoting cultural identity (including traditional agricultural products specific to the CB area) and enhancing the awareness of CB area cultural heritage;
  - youth cross-border exchanges;
  - cross-border exchanges of cultural events (including art and archaeological exhibitions).
  - actions to re-invent/preserve traditional jobs.

Main target groups:

- visitors, tourists, area businesses

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with natural and

<p>cultural heritage;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with regional development planning;</li> <li>• Protected area management bodies;</li> <li>• NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, social enterprises, and other civil society associations dealing with natural resources, and cultural issues;</li> <li>• Institutions specialized in education, training and capacity building.</li> </ul>
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<i>Investment priority (6d)</i>	Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures
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**Specific Objective: Enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities**

Types of Actions:

- 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;

Main target groups:

- protected natural areas

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for environmental protection, biodiversity protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning;
- Protected area management bodies;
- Environmental NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, social enterprises, CB networks and other civil society associations dealing with biodiversity, nature protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning;
- Universities and research institutes dealing with biodiversity, nature protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning.

<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.
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**Specific Objective: Enhance water and soil management**

## Types of Actions:

- 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, including e.g. the use of forests and other areas with woody vegetation for ensuring water quality and quantity;
- Promoting “green behavior” campaigns in the areas of water and soil management.

## Main target groups:

- water management bodies and utilities (as end users), farmers, industrial zone management bodies, residents and businesses in intervention areas

## 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, and social enterprises in areas relevant to water and soil management.

**2.A.6.2.b Guiding principles for selection of operations**

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<i>Investment Priority (5b)</i>	Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
<p>Funds will be channelled on a priority basis to projects listed in or implied by the National and Regional Flood Risk Management Plans. Also, projects addressing risks and disaster management at an adequate bio-geographical scale (e.g. at river basin level, or a mountainous zone etc) will receive priority over other actions.</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects must demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner.</li> <li>• Active engagement of project partners in joint activities will be required (no parallel actions will be allowed).</li> <li>• Projects that rely solely on analysing the current situation and/or making plans for future action will not be approved. It is instead expected that projects validate conclu-</li> </ul>	

<p>sions with testing and pilots which provide a sound basis for other regions and/or organisations to build on these results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects should have a lasting impact.</li> <li>• Projects should be in line with mandatory 'risk assessments' (Council requirement: Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism) as well as flood risk plans (Flood Directive: Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks) or national 'civil protection / risk management' strategies or plans of Member State.</li> <li>• Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities.</li> </ul>	
<i>Investment Priority (6c)</i>	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
<p>Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to projects adopting an integrated territorial approach which stresses or exploits the common features on both sides of the border. Also, projects with broad area impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter, it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area (transferability).</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects have to demonstrate an added value resulting from cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Projects must define the precise need(s) addressed by the project, how this affects each partner, and the specific benefits expected from the cooperation.</li> <li>• Projects will be required to observe the principles of sustainable and inclusive growth. Especially as far as cultural facilities are concerned, they will all be required to be disabled-accessible, as well as every cultural initiative (events, exhibitions, services provided etc).</li> </ul>	

<i>Investment Priority (6d)</i>	Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures
<p>Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to projects in compliance with the National Priority Action Plans for biodiversity, and on projects which focus on prevention methods (pro-active).</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All projects need to address specific protected areas, or species within these areas. Projects addressing the preservation of endangered species or protected natural areas of international importance will receive priority over other actions.</li> <li>• Projects must demonstrate a need or an increased added value resulting from cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner.</li> </ul>	

- Active engagement of project partners in joint activities will be required (no parallel actions will be allowed).
- Projects that rely solely on analysing the current situation and/or making plans for future action will not be approved. It is instead expected that projects validate conclusions with testing and pilot applications which provide a sound basis for other regions and/or organisations to build on these results. Projects should have a lasting impact.

<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.
<p>Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to technology development projects with high transferability potential. Technologies developed under the approved projects should have the potential to be adopted into standard working practices in the respective field. Also, the transfer of existing state-of-the-art environmental technologies and their adoption into standard practice by CB stakeholders will be targeted.</p> <p>The following conditions will also be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects have to demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner.</li> <li>• Projects with broad area potential impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter, it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area.</li> </ul>	

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No financial Instruments will be used

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No major projects will be implemented

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

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators**

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Target value (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
CO22	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	persons	650,000	Authorities for civil protection / Programme MIS	Annually

	Number of cultural assets rehabilitated/protected	cultural assets	18	Programme MIS	Annually
	Number of biodiversity preservation projects	projects	20	Programme MIS	Annually
	Number of joint projects dealing with common water management issues	projects	5	Programme MIS	Annually

## 2.A.7.b Performance framework

(Reference: point (b)(v) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

**Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis**

Priority Axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
2	Output		CO22 Population benefiting from flood protection measures	persons		650.000	MIS, Ministries of Environment	
2	OUTPUT		Number of cultural assets rehabilitated/protected"	number		18	MIS	
2	Key implementation step:		Selected projects CO22 (Decision of approval)		4		MIS	Selected projects as action plans, construction works, special tools and equipment, training of specific groups etc. that contribute to the above output indicator CO20
2	Financial:		Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	9.814.822,09 €	42.553.116,71 €	MIS	(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework (optional)

## 2.A.8.b Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

**Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention**

Table 6: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	21	5.710.496
	85	7.011.342
	87	12.033.773
	91	3.804.846
	94	7.609.692

Table 7: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	01	36.170.149

Table 8: Dimension 3 – Territory type		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	07	36.170.149

Table 9: Dimension 4 – Territorial delivery mechanisms		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	07	36.170.149

## 2.A.9 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

**2.A.1.c. Priority axis 3 “A better interconnected Cross-Border Area”**

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

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

**2.A.2.c Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or Fund (where applicable)**

(Reference: Article 8(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

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

(Repeated for each combination under a priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<i>ERDF</i>
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<i>34,200,721 €</i>

**2.A.4.c.i Investment priority**

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

<i>Investment priority (7b)</i>	Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes.
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**2.A.5.c.i Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<i>ID</i>	7
<i>Specific objective</i>	<i>Improve accessibility of the CB area</i>
<i>The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<i>Reduced travel times for people and goods Better connectivity for the “less accessible” areas Improved traffic security</i>

**2.A.4.c.ii Investment priority**

<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.
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**2.A.5.c.ii Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

<i>ID</i>	8
<i>Specific objective</i>	<i>Improve transportation environmental impact</i>
<i>The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<i>Reduced transportation environmental footprint Better integration with urban and rural development</i>

**Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators** (by specific objective)  
 (Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Baseline value</i>	<i>Baseline year</i>	<i>Target value<sup>7</sup> (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
	<i>Traffic capacity levels</i>	<i>% increase in number of vehicles</i>	-	2014	+15%	<i>Official statistics</i>	<i>2018, 2023</i>
	<i>Number of inhabitants benefiting from intelligent transport system interventions</i>	<i>inhabitants</i>	0	2014	810.000	<i>Official statistics</i>	<i>2018, 2023</i>

<sup>7</sup> target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

**2.A.3.5 Actions to be supported under the investment priority** (by investment priority)

**2.A.3.5.1** *Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries*

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

<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.
<p><b>Specific Objective: Improve transportation environmental impact</b></p> <p>Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport investments aiming at reducing the environmental footprint of transport activities (including transport services);</li> <li>• 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;</li> </ul>	

- Development of new technologies/methods for the design and implementation of environment-friendly transport infrastructures and systems.

Main target groups:

- visitors, residents and businesses in intervention areas, transport service providers.

Types of beneficiaries:

- National institutions and Specific bodies in charge of transportation planning, construction, monitoring and management issues as well as respective bodies engaged in environmental monitoring/protection;
- Universities, research institutes and Specific bodies dealing with subjects related to transportation planning, monitoring and management as well as research institutes engaged in the development of smart transport systems/technologies;
- Local stakeholders engaged in the provision of transport services (such as public bus-service providers, Municipalities which engage in transport, etc)

#### 2.A.3.5.2 *Guiding principles for selection of operations*

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

<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.
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Funds will be channeled on a priority basis to projects diverting private car usage in favour of collective transport solutions (public transport, car-pooling, etc) and to projects optimizing road traffic conditions in order to reduce CO2 emissions.

The following conditions will also be observed:

- Projects have to demonstrate a need for cross-border cooperation or increased added value resulting from cooperation and clearly illustrate the contribution expected from each partner. Projects must define the precise need(s) addressed by the project, how this affects each partner, and the specific benefits expected from the cooperation.
- Projects with broad area impacts/significance will receive priority over projects with localized effects. For the latter – which may be pilot applications - it will be required to demonstrate and justify the relevance of their activities for the rest of the eligible area.
- Projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non-discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No financial Instruments will be used

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No major projects will be implemented

#### **2.A.6.5.c *Output indicators*** (by investment priority)

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators**

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Target value (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
CO16	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	Kms	45	Programme MIS	Annually
	Number of projects on intelligent transport systems interventions	projects	7	Programme MIS	Annually

### 2.A.7.c Performance framework

(Reference: point (b)(v) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

**Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis**

Priority Axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
3	OUTPUT		CO16 Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km		45	MIS	
3	Key implementation step:		Projects with at least one signed Contract of technical - construction works sub-projects	number	4			Projects that contribute to the above CO16
3	Financial		Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	euro	7.888.352,67 €	34.200.721,00 €		(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework (optional)

### 2.A.8.c Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

#### Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	34	26.604.637
	44	2.465.976

Table 7: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	01	29.070.613

Table 8: Dimension 3 – Territory type		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	07	29.070.613

Table 9: Dimension 4 – Territorial delivery mechanisms		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	07	29.070.613

### 2.A.9 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

**2.A.1.d          Priority axis 4 “A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area”**

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

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

**2.A.2.d          Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or Fund (where applicable)**  
(Reference: Article 8(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

**2.A.3.d          Fund and calculation basis for Union support**  
(Repeated for each combination under a priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<i>ERDF</i>
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<i>24,408,706 €</i>

**2.A.4.d.i Investment priority**

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

<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.
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**2.A.5.d.i Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results**

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

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

**Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators** (by specific objective)  
(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Baseline value</i>	<i>Baseline year</i>	<i>Target value<sup>8</sup> (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
CO38	Population covered by improved health services	inhabitants	0	2014	2,700,000	Official population statistics	2018, 2023
	Disadvantaged participants employed by social enterprises	disadvantaged participants	0	2014	56	Social Enterprises / Programme MIS	2018, 2023

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<sup>8</sup> target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

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

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<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.
<p><b>Specific Objective: Improve access to high-quality health services in the CB area</b></p> <p>Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• Development of cross-border mobile services, telemedicine and telecare infrastructure and other technology-oriented health care provision methods will be supported, in order to alleviate the local lack of healthcare workers;</li> </ul> <p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vulnerable population groups (e.g. disabled, poor, etc), population groups exhibiting high incidence of health problems and high CB mobility (e.g. Roma, transients, illegal migrants, etc), areas with low access to health care</li> </ul> <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based and Primary health care providers (only public sector stakeholders), Municipalities, and social enterprises engaged in health care provision;</li> <li>• Hospitals;</li> <li>• Medical Faculties of Universities.</li> </ul>	

**Specific Objective: Increase the capacity of social enterprises in the CB area**

Types of Actions:

- Support for the establishment and provision of operational support to Social Enterprises that offer innovative solutions, promote inclusive CB labour markets and social services accessible to all in the CB area;
- Support for social franchising which is the cross-border transfer of a social enterprise business model from one side of the border to the other.
- Support for the development and implementation of methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of social, economic and environmental impacts of social economy in the CB area.

Main target groups:

- unemployed, vulnerable groups, marginalized communities.

Types of beneficiaries:

- Social economy organisations (cooperatives/social enterprises, mutual societies, associations, foundations); NGOs; Non-Profit Organisations

#### **2.A.6.2.d Guiding principles for selection of operations**

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No financial instruments will be used

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

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

No major projects will be implemented

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

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**Table 4:**      **Common and programme-specific output indicators**

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Target value (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	Health care institutions	12	Programme MIS	Annually
	Number of ICT systems developed	ICT systems	12	Programme MIS	Annually
	Number of supported social enterprises	social enterprises	14	Programme MIS	Annually

#### 2.A.7.d Performance framework

(Reference: point (b)(v) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

**Table 5: Performance Framework of the Priority Axis**

Priority Axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
4	OUTPUT		Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	number		12	MIS	
4	Key implementation step		Projects with at least one signed Contract of (technical - construction works or other) sub-projects	number	6			Projects that contribute to the above output indicator
4	Financial		Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis		5.629.836,90 €	24.408.706,00 €		(n+3 = 2014 + 2015)

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework (optional)

#### 2.A.8.d Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

#### Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	53	10.788.648
	81	3.042.977
	113	6.915.775

Table 7: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	01	20.747.400

Table 8: Dimension 3 – Territory type		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	07	20.747.400

Table 9: Dimension 4 – Territorial delivery mechanisms		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	07	20.747.400

#### 2.A.9 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

## 2.B Description of the priority axes for technical assistance

(Reference: point (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

### 2.B.1 Priority axis “Technical Assistance”

<i>ID of the priority axis</i>	5
<i>Title of the priority axis</i>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>

### 2.B.2 Fund and category of region (repeated for each combination under the priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	ERDF
<i>Calculation basis</i>	7,781,734 €

### 2.B.3 Specific objectives and expected results

(Reference: points (c)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<i>ID</i>	5
<i>Specific objective</i>	To manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently
<i>The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>High absorption capacity for high quality projects which contribute to the objectives of the programme.</p> <p><i>Support structures</i> which enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• informed decisions by programme management bodies and effective steering; and</li><li>• beneficiaries performing their planned activities efficiently.</li></ul> <p>A <i>monitoring and control system</i> that provides adequate insight in the regularity and quality of the supported actions with as <i>little administrative burden</i> to beneficiaries and programme bodies as possible.</p> <p>Suitable channels and activities for the <i>communication, dissemination and application of the results</i> of cooperation operations.</p>

## 2.B.4 Result indicators<sup>9</sup>

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

(Reference: point (c)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 )

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value <sup>10</sup> (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
	Share (%) of total programme budget absorbed	%	0	2014	100%	Monitoring Reports / MIS	2018, 2023
	Share (%) of achieved planned outputs.	%	0	2014	90%+	Monitoring Reports / MIS	2018, 2023

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

(Reference: points (c)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

### 2.B.5.1 A description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

(Reference: points (c)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Priority axis	Technical Assistance
<p><b>Specific Objective: To manage and implement the Cooperation Programme effectively and efficiently</b></p> <p>Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish and manage Joint Secretariat and Infopoints:</li> <li>• programme management and steering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ organisation, preparation and facilitation of meetings of the programme steering bodies;</li> <li>○ evaluations, analysis and studies related to the delivery of the programme in support of the continuous improvement of its management and implementation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• monitoring, control and reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an IT system for programme management, monitoring, audit and control;</li> <li>○ guidance and support to ensure adequate control of the programme at all levels</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<sup>9</sup> Required where objectively justified given the content of the action and where Union support for technical assistance in the programme exceeds EUR 15 million

<sup>10</sup> Target values may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values may be adjusted accordingly. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

(partners, controllers, partner State Bodies responsible for first level control)  
e.g. through seminars, guidance documents and counseling;

- coordinating and organising of programme level audit activities, including the (external) audits on operations and supporting the Group of Auditors;
- regular reporting to the European Commission on programme progress.
- project generation and selection:
  - application forms, calls for proposals/terms of reference and guidance documents for potential applicants;
  - assistance and advice to potential applicants before and during calls, e.g. through seminars, bilateral consultations and contacts, partner search forums, etc;
  - quality assessment of project applications (scoring);
  - risk assessment of projects.
- support to project partners:
  - tools and guidance documentation (manuals, supporting operation beneficiaries implement their project);
  - assistance and advice to lead partners and partners on the implementation of their project e.g. through seminars on implementation procedures, first level control seminars, etc.
  - meetings, events and “on-the-spot visits” to projects to address progress, outputs and results as well as obstacles to implementation.
- communication, dissemination and promotion
  - development and maintenance of the programme website;
  - publishing of programme information and publications;
  - organisation of events to generate interest for participation in the programme, showcase and disseminate results of the programme supported projects to professional audiences and the wider public, and facilitate inter-operation interaction and cooperation.

In addition to the activities and programme bodies described above, the Programme may decide to use Technical Assistance funding to contribute to activities carried out by Partner States.

Main target groups:

- potential project applicants and project partners of selected projects, steering committee, European commission

Types of beneficiaries:

- JTS, MA, NA, infopoints

**2.B.5.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results (by priority axis)**  
(Reference: point (c)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**Table 11: Output indicators**

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Target value (2023) (optional)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>
	Number of Joint Secretariat and Infopoint staff recruited	Number	10	MIS
	Number of Monitoring Committee meetings	Number	10	MIS
	Number of training & information events for potential final beneficiaries	Number	10	MIS
	Number of people trained on programme related issues	Number	360	MIS
	Number of project proposals assessed	Number	340	MIS
	Number of operations approved	Number	170	MIS
	Number of on-the-spot visits carried out	Number	10	MIS
	Number of operation monitoring reports drafted;	Number	310	MIS
	Number of relevant studies/surveys completed	Number	5	MIS

**2.B.6 Categories of intervention**

(Reference: points (c)(v) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

## Tables 12-14: Categories of intervention

Table 12: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
5	121	4.744.474 €
	122	595.000 €
	123	1.275.000 €

Table 13: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
5	01	6.614.474 €

Table 14: Dimension 3 – Territory type		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
5	07	6.614.474 €

### SECTION 3 FINANCING PLAN

(Reference: point (d) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

#### 3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in EUR)

(Reference: point (d)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**Table 15**

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
ERDF	12.127.000,00 €	13.300.000,00 €	14.300.000,00 €	15.500.000,00 €	16.500.000,00 €	18.700.000,00 €	19.814.234,00 €	110.241.234,00 €
IPA								
ENI								
Total	12.127.000,00 €	13.300.000,00 €	14.300.000,00 €	15.500.000,00 €	16.500.000,00 €	18.700.000,00 €	19.814.234,00 €	110.241.234,00 €

### **3.2.A Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (EUR)**

(Reference: point (d)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

- 1. The table sets out the financial plan by priority axis. Where outermost regions' programmes combine cross-border and transnational allocations, separate priority axes will be set out for each of these.*
- 2. The financial table shall show for information purposes, any contribution from third countries participating in the cooperation programme (other than contributions from IPA and ENI).*
- 3. The EIB contribution is presented at priority axis level.*

**Table 16: Financing plan**

Priority Axis	Fund	Basis for calculation of Union support	Union support	National counterpart	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding	Co-financing rate	For information	
					National public funding	National private funding (1)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
			(a)	(b) = (c) + (d))	(c)	(d)	(e) = (a) + (b)	(f) = (a)/(e) (2)		
Priority axis 1	ERDF	20.751.292€	17.638.598 €	3.112.694 €	3.112.694 €	0 €	20.751.292 €	0,85		
Priority axis 2		42.553.116 €	36.170.149 €	6.382.967 €	6.382.967 €	0 €	42.553.116 €	0,85		
Priority axis 3		34.200.721 €	29.070.613 €	5.130.108 €	5.130.108 €	0 €	34.200.721 €	0,85		
Priority Axis 4		24.408.706 €	20.747.400 €	3.661.306 €	3.661.306 €	0 €	24.408.706 €	0,85		
PA 5: Technical Assistance		7.781.734 €	6.614.474 €	1.167.260 €	1.167.260 €	0 €	7.781.734 €	0,85		
Total		129.695.569 €	110.241.234 €	19.454.335 €	19.454.335 €	0 €	129.695.569 €	0,85		

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

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

**Table 17: Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective**

(Reference: point (d)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
PA 1: A competitive and Innovative Cross-Border area	3	17.638.598 €	3.112.694 €	20.751.292 €
PA 2: A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area	5	12.033.773 €	2.123.607 €	14.157.380 €
	6	24.136.376 €	4.259.360 €	28.395.736 €
PA 3: A better interconnected Cross-Border area	7	29.070.613 €	5.130.108 €	34.200.721 €
PA 4: A socially inclusive Cross-Border area	9	20.747.400 €	3.661.306 €	24.408.706 €
PA 5: Technical Assistance		6.614.474 €	1.167.260 €	7.781.734 €
<b>Total</b>		<b>110.241.234 €</b>	<b>19.454.335 €</b>	<b>129.695.569 €</b>

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

(Reference: Article 27(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)<sup>11</sup>

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Proportion of total allocation to the operational programme (%)
2	17.122.508	47,34%
3	986.390	3,39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.108.899</b>	<b>16,43%</b>

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<sup>11</sup> This table is generated automatically on the basis of tables on categories of intervention under each priority axis.

## SECTION 4 INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

(Reference: Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

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

### 4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (a) of Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

*Not applicable*

### 4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b) of Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

*Not applicable*

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

Fund	ERDF support (indicative) ((EUR))

**4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)**

(Reference: point (c) of Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

*Not applicable*

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

Priority axis	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (EUR)
<b>Total</b>	

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

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

(Reference: point (d) of Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

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

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

(a) Promote *business and entrepreneurship* within the Black Sea Basin and

(b) Promote coordination of *environmental protection* and joint reduction of marine litter in the Black Sea Basin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PA4: A *shared* Mediterranean Sea.

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

## SECTION 5 IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

(Reference: Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

### 5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

(Reference: Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**Table 21: Programme authorities**

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing Authority	Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness of Greece	
Certifying Authority, where applicable	The Paying Authority for the CSF, the Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness of Greece	
Audit Authority	Financial Control Committee (EDEL) Ministry of Finance - General Accounting Office of the State, Greece	

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

Reference: point (b) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<input type="checkbox"/> The managing authority	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The certifying authority	The Paying Authority for the CSF, the Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness of Greece

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

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	The Certifying Authority is the Paying Authority for the CSF, the community initiatives and the Cohesion Fund, at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness, Greece For Bulgaria: decentralized system established and co-ordinated by the Ministry of Regional Development	

Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	<p>The Audit Authority is the Financial Control Committee (EDEL), set up at the Ministry of Finance – General Accounting Office of the State), Greece.</p> <p>The Financial Audit Committee consists of seven members and is independent of the Managing and Certifying Authorities.</p> <p>The Audit Authority shall be assisted by a group of auditors comprising a representative from each participating Member State, carrying out the duties provided for in article 127 of Regulation 1303/2013</p>	
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## 5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

(Reference: point (a)(iv) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

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

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

## 5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

(Reference: point (a)(v) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

ments shall be adopted by the JMC.

The programme language is English.

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

#### *5.3.a. Managing Authority*

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

The Managing Authority of the Operational Programme (OP) shall:

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

Regarding the selection of operations, the Managing Authority shall:

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

- (i) ensure the contribution of operations to the achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority;
- (ii) are non-discriminatory and transparent;
- (iii) take into account the general principles of promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination and sustainable development
- (b) ensure that a selected operation falls within the scope of the EARDF and can be attributed to a category of intervention of the operational programme;
- (c) ensure that beneficiaries are informed of the specific conditions concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, the time limit for execution and the financial and other information to be kept and communicated; satisfy itself that the beneficiary has the capacity to fulfil these conditions before the approval decision is taken; ensure that the procedure for evaluating proposals was carried out under the terms of the call for proposals, including the operations selection criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee;
- (d) ensure that the Lead beneficiary of an operation is provided with a document setting out the conditions for support of the operation, including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, and the time-limit for execution
- (e) satisfy itself that the Lead beneficiary has the administrative, financial and operational capacity to fulfil the conditions referred to in point (c) before approval of the operation;
- (f) satisfy itself that, where the operation has started before the submission of an application for funding to the managing authority, applicable law relevant for the operation has been complied with;
- (g) ensure that operations selected for support from the ERDF do not include activities which were part of an operation which has been or should have been subject to a procedure of recovery in accordance with Article 71 of Regulation 1303/2013 following the relocation of a productive activity outside the programme area;
- (h) determine the categories of intervention to which the expenditure of an operation shall be attributed.

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

- (a) Identify that each Member State shall designate the body or person responsible for carrying out such verifications in relation to beneficiaries on its territory (the 'controller(s)')  
The managing authority shall satisfy itself that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by a designated controller referred to in article 21 par. 4 of Regulation 1299/2013.
- (b) ensure that Lead beneficiaries involved in the implementation of operations are reimbursed on the basis of eligible costs actually incurred maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to an operation;
- (c) put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the risks identified;
- (d) set up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of point (g) of Article 72 of Regulation 1303/2013;
- (e) draw up the management declaration and annual summary referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation.

5. Verifications pursuant to article 21 of Regulation 1299/2013 paragraph 4<sup>12</sup>, shall include the following procedures:

(a) administrative checks - that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by a designated controller - with each application for reimbursement by beneficiaries;

(b) on-the-spot inspections – as appropriate - of operations.

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

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

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

The Managing Authority for the Programme is the existing Managing Authority of ETC Programmes at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness, Greece.

#### *5.3.b. Bulgarian National Authority*

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

The functions and tasks of the Bulgarian National Authority shall be laid down in the Memorandum of Understanding.

#### *5.3.c. Certifying Authority*

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

(i) drawing up and submitting payment applications to the Commission, and certifying that they result from reliable accounting systems, are based on verifiable supporting documents and have been subject to verifications by the managing authority

(ii) drawing up the accounts referred to in point (a) of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;

(iii) certifying the completeness, accuracy and veracity of the accounts and that the expenditure entered in the accounts complies with applicable law and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the operational programme and complying with applicable law;

(iv) ensuring that there is a system which records and stores, in computerised form, accounting records for each operation, and which supports all the data required for drawing up payment applications and accounts, including records of amounts recoverable, amounts recovered and amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation or operational programme;

(v) ensuring, for the purposes of drawing up and submitting payment applications, that it has received adequate information from the Managing Authority on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure included in statements of expenditure;

(vi) taking account when drawing up and submitting payment applications of the results

<sup>12</sup> Where the managing authority does not carry out verifications under point (a) of Article 125(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 throughout the whole programme area, or where the verifications are not carried out by or under the responsibility of the managing authority for those Member States

of all audits carried out by, or under the responsibility of, the audit authority;

(vii) maintaining in computerised form accounting records of expenditure declared to the Commission and of the corresponding public contribution paid to beneficiaries;

(viii) keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation. Amounts recovered shall be repaid to the budget of the European Union, prior to the closure of the Operational Programme, by deducting them from the subsequent statement of expenditure;

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

#### *5.3.d. Audit Authority*

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

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

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

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

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

#### *5.3.e. Group of Auditors*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *5.3.g. Joint Secretariat*

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

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

In particular, the JS shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Assist the MA in organising the meetings of the Joint Monitoring Committee and the Joint Steering Committee and provide all necessary documents to ensure the quality of the implementation of the OP in the context of its specific goals by:

- organising the meetings of the Joint Monitoring Committee and the Joint Steering Committee;
- preparing all necessary documents and the minutes of the meetings;
- forwarding to the beneficiaries the decisions made by the Joint Monitoring Committee and the Joint Steering Committee;
- making arrangements for various tasks and services such as interpreting and translation services;

2. Draw up the criteria for selecting the operations and submit them to the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority examines the criteria and when accepted, submits them to the Joint Monitoring Committee for approval;

3. Prepare the material concerning the call for proposals and submit it to the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority examines the material and when accepted submits it to the Joint Monitoring Committee for approval;

4. Provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under cooperation programmes and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

5. Provide support to potential beneficiaries during the preparation of proposals. The JS shall organise information seminars, promote the cooperation and the partnership of bodies from both sides of the border etc. Furthermore, it may cooperate with the Information Office in Bulgaria for the organisation of seminars and promotion activities in Bulgaria;

6. Assist the Managing Authority and the Joint Steering Committee in order to ensure that operations are selected for funding in accordance with the approved criteria applicable to the operational programme and that they comply with applicable Community and national rules governing the implementation of the OP;

7. Provide technical support to beneficiaries throughout the implementation period of the operations;

8. Assist the MA in collecting and recording in computerised form accounting records for all operations. Moreover, assist the MA in collecting implementation data required for financial management, monitoring, verification, audit and evaluation;

9. Assist the MA in collecting and keeping all documents relating to expenditure and audits, in order to ensure an effective audit trail in accordance with the requirements of article 125 par. 2 (d) of Regulation (EC) 1303/2013 by:

- collecting progress reports from beneficiaries;
- assessing the implementation of operations and submitting the respecting progress reports to the MA;
- drafting progress reports concerning the implementation of the OP;

10. Prepare annual reports, as well as the final report on the OP, and submit them to the MA for comments/corrections. The MA examines the reports and, when accepted, submits them to the Joint Monitoring Committee for approval. After approval by the Joint Monitoring Committee, the MA submits the reports to the Commission;

11. Support the MA to ensure that information and publicity requirements referred to in article 115 and 116 of the Regulation 1303/2013 are complied with, by:

- preparing a Communication Plan and supporting its implementation;
- creating and regularly updating the programme's website;
- organising seminars to promote the OP;
- creating a partner search webpage for the benefit of potential beneficiaries;

12. Prepare the Technical Assistance annual plan and forward it to the MA. The MA exam-

ines it and, when accepted, submits it to the Joint Monitoring Committee for approval; The functions and the role of the JS shall be determined, in agreement with the MA and the Member States participating in the Programme, in its rules of procedure. The JTS shall be composed of a balanced number of staff members from the participating Member States.

#### *5.3.h. Intermediate Body*

In order to simplify and speed up the Programme implementation as well as to overcome administrative complexities and ensure efficiency, the Managing Authority may propose to the Monitoring Committee the designation of an intermediate body, according to Article 123 par.7 of the Regulation 1303/2013). If this will be the case, the intermediate body will be responsible exclusively for the management of the Operational Programme's Technical Assistance budget.

#### *5.3.i. Info Point*

An Information Office shall be set up in Bulgaria.

The main responsibilities of the Information Office shall be:

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

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

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

As stipulated in articles 72, 73, 74 and 124 (2) of Regulation 1303/2013, Member States should adopt adequate measures to guarantee the proper set up and functioning of their management and control systems to give assurance on the legal and regular use of the ERDF Funds allocation to the Programme.

Member States shall also fulfil the management, control and audit obligations, and assume the resulting responsibilities, which are laid down in the rules on shared management set out in the Financial Regulation and the ERDF rules and assume responsibility that the Management and Control System for the Programme functions effectively.

The obligations of Member States as regards the management and control systems of programmes, and in relation to the prevention, detection and correction of irregularities and infringements of Union law should therefore be specified.

The designation of the Managing Authority and Certifying Authority of the Programme shall be based on a report and an opinion of an independent audit body that assesses the fulfilment by the authorities of the criteria relating to the internal control environment, risk management, management and control activities, and monitoring set out in Annex XIII of Regulation 1303/2013. The independent audit body shall be the audit authority of the Programme.

Where the independent audit body concludes that the part of the management and control system, concerning the managing authority or the certifying authority, is essentially the same as for the previous programming period, and that there is evidence, on the basis of audit work done in accordance with the relevant provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 ( 1 ), of their effective functioning during that period, it may conclude that the relevant criteria are fulfilled without carrying out additional audit work.

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

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

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

#### *5.3.l. Generation and Selection of Operations*

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

The Joint Secretariat shall prepare the material concerning the call for proposals and submit it to the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority examines the material and when accepted submits it to the Joint Monitoring Committee for approval.

Then, the Managing Authority shall launch the call for proposals, informing potential beneficiaries about financing, the particular conditions and requirements applicable to their eligibility under the call, the selection procedures and criteria, the main obligations to be undertaken by beneficiaries in case an operation is selected for funding under the OP etc.

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

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

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

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

It shall then carry out an evaluation of proposals based on the operations selection criteria, approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee and submit all the material to the Managing Authority. After the Managing Authority makes sure that the procedure for evaluating proposals was carried out in accordance with the terms of the call for proposals and the approved operations selection criteria, it submits to the Joint Steering Committee:

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

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

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

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

#### *5.3.m. Joint Steering Committee*

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

Steering Committee shall report to the Joint Monitoring Committee.

The Joint Steering Committee is co-chaired by designated representatives from the participating Member States or their substitutes. For the Greek side, the designated co-chairperson is the Secretary General for Public Investments at the Ministry of Development, and Competitiveness. For the Bulgarian side, the co-chairperson is designated by the Minister of Regional Development.

The Joint Steering Committee shall consist of a few members, taking into account the principle of proportionality. Its composition shall be decided by the participating Member States, taking into account that Member States are equally represented.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 5.3.o. *Certification of Expenditure and Financial Flows*

##### 5.3.o.i. Certification of Expenditure

In order to verify the expenditure declared by the beneficiaries, each Member State will set up a control system making it possible to verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed, the soundness of the expenditure declared for operations or parts of operations implemented on its territory, and the compliance of such expenditure and of related opera-

tions or parts of those operations with Community rules and its national rules. For this purpose and according to article 23 par.4 of Regulation 1299/2013, each Member State shall designate the controllers responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each beneficiary participating in the operation. The expenditures deriving will be covered by the Technical Assistance budget. Controllers designated by the two Member States shall apply standard control criteria, jointly prepared by the participating member states, agreed by the Managing Authority and approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

Verifications shall be carried out by the controllers designated by the Member States respectively and will include the following procedures:

i. administrative verifications in respect of each application for reimbursement by beneficiaries;

ii. on-the-spot verifications of individual operations

Where on-the-spot verifications are carried out on a sample basis for an Operational Programme, the Managing Authority shall keep records describing and justifying the sampling method and identify the operations or transactions selected for verification.

The Managing Authority shall determine the size of the sample in order to achieve reasonable assurance as to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, having regard to the level of risk identified by the Managing Authority for the type of beneficiaries and operations concerned;

The Managing Authority shall review the sampling method each year;

The Managing Authority shall establish written standards and procedures for the verifications carried out and shall keep records for each one, stating the work performed, the date and the results of the verification, and the measures taken in respect of irregularities detected.

In the case that delivery of co-financed products or services may be verified only in relation to the entire operation, verification shall be carried out by the Managing Authority.

Where the body designated as Managing Authority is also a beneficiary in the context of operations under the Technical Assistance Priority Axis of the Operational Programme, arrangements for the verifications shall ensure adequate separation of functions in accordance with point (b) of article 72 of Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013.

Verifications shall include procedures to avoid double financing of expenditure under other Community or national programmes and under other programming periods.

As regards the flow of certified expenditure (Diagram 2), the lead beneficiary shall forward all certified expenditure for an operation to the Joint Secretariat which, after conducting a preliminary check (completeness of data and eligibility of declared expenditure) transmits them, together with comments, to the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority shall ensure that all the necessary information is available on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure for the purpose of certification. It then transmits it to the Certifying Authority, in order to prepare and submit to the Commission certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment.

Bulgaria shall establish a decentralised FLC system.

The Minister of Regional Development or authorised person by him/her will assign the FLC tasks to the controller(s) in accordance with applicable public procurement legislation or under existing labour law.

The cost for FLC verification shall be covered by the programme budget under PA “Technical assistance”.

#### 5.3.o.ii Financial Flow of Public Expenditure

The Certifying Authority receives ERDF contribution payments from the Commission. The Greek national contribution is transferred from the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness to the Certifying Authority. The national contribution of Bulgaria is transferred from the Ministry of Regional Development to the Certifying Authority. The Certifying Authority transfers the total public expenditure to the lead beneficiaries of selected operations. The lead beneficiaries are responsible for distributing the total public expenditure to all beneficiaries.

### *5.3.p Monitoring*

#### *5.3.p.i Joint Monitoring Committee*

The Joint Monitoring Committee of the OP is set up within 3 months from the date of the notification to Greece of the European Commission's decision approving the OP according to article 47 par.1 of Regulation 1303/2013.

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

The Joint Monitoring Committee shall be co-chaired by the designated representatives of the participating Member States or their substitutes. For the Greek side, the designated co-chairperson is the Secretary General for Public Investments at the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness. For the Bulgarian side, the co-chairperson is designated by the Minister of Regional Development.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- consider and approve the criteria for selecting the operations to be financed within six months of the approval of the Operational Programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs;
- periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets of the Operational Programme on the basis of documents submitted by the Managing Authority;
- examine the results of implementation, particularly the achieving of the targets set for each priority axis and the evaluations
- consider and approve the annual and final reports on implementation referred to in (article 14 (1) of Regulation 1299/2013 and article 50 (1) of Regulation 1303/2013.;

- be informed of the annual control report, or of the part of the report referring to the Operational Programme concerned, and of any relevant comments the Commission may make after examining that report or relating to that part of the report;
- may propose to the Managing Authority any revision or examination of the Operational Programme likely to make possible the attainment of the ERDF's objectives referred to in article 3 or to improve its management, including its financial management;
- consider and approve any proposal to amend the content of the Commission decision on the contribution from the ERDF;
- approve the material of the call for proposals;
- approve the Technical Assistance annual plan

### 5.3 p.ii. Monitoring Indicators

As stipulated in article 49 of Regulation 1303/2013 monitoring of the Operational Programme shall be carried out by the Managing Authority and the Joint Monitoring Committee of the programme, mainly by reference to indicators (financial indicators and indicators for output and results) specified for each priority axis in the Operational Programme.

The indicators of the Operational Programme have been developed on the basis of the Annex of Regulation 1299/2013.

The choice of indicators for monitoring the attainment of the objectives of the Operational Programme shall meet the particular character of the Operational Programme, its objectives and the prevailing socio-economic and environmental conditions of its geographic implementation area in accordance with article 27 par.4 of Regulation 1303/2013 and article 8 par 2 b and c of Regulation 1299/2013.

Data necessary for calculating the indicator values during the implementation of the programme shall be collected at the level of operation and aggregated at priority axis level and finally at programme level.

In the context of regular evaluation of the quality and the effectiveness of the implementation of the OP, the Managing Authority shall send to the Joint Monitoring Committee data derived from the monitoring system, mainly summarised financial data and information pertaining to output and result indicators.

A management information system will be used to record information on all operations financed under the programme and collect reliable financial and statistical data concerning the implementation of the programme.

### 5.3.p.iii. Annual Report

In the context of monitoring the OP, the Managing Authority – with the assistance of the JS - shall draw up an annual report on programme implementation for the previous fiscal year and, after approval by the Joint Monitoring Committee, shall send it to the Commission (article 14 (1) of Regulation 1299/2013 and article 50 (1) of Regulation 1303/2013. The report shall include all information referred to in paragraph 2 of article 50 par.2 of Regulation 1303/2013 and shall be drawn up according to the Implementing Acts adopted by the Commission.

In that context, the Managing Authority shall take steps to continually monitor and improve indicators used for monitoring and evaluating the programme.

### 5.3.p.iv. Annual Review Meeting

As stipulated in article 15 of Regulation 1299/2013 and article 51 of Regulation 1303/2013, an annual review meeting shall be organised every year between the Commission and the Managing Authority of the Programme to examine the performance of each programme, taking account of the annual implementation report and the Commission's observations

where applicable.

At that meeting the Managing Authority for the Operational Programme and the Commission shall examine the progress made in implementing the operational programme, the principal results achieved over the previous year, the financial implementation and other factors with a view to achieving the desired outcome.

The Member State shall ensure that appropriate follow-up is given to comments of the Commission following the annual review meeting concerning issues which significantly affect the implementation of the programme and, where appropriate, inform the Commission, within three months, of the measures taken

#### *5.3.q. Evaluation*

##### *5.3.q.i. General*

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the contribution of the Community and national funds to the cohesion policy, evaluations shall be carried out before, during and after the implementation of the Operational Programme (articles 54-57 of Regulation 1303/2013).

These strategic or operational evaluations shall take account of the objective of sustainable development and of the relevant Community legislation concerning environmental impact and strategic environmental assessment. Evaluations shall be carried out under the responsibility of the Managing Authority or the Commission by experts or bodies, functionally independent from the certifying and the audit authorities designated in the framework of the management and control system of the programme. The results of the evaluations shall be published according to the applicable rules on access to documents.

##### *5.3.q.ii. Ex-ante Evaluation*

The Member States of the Programme shall carry out ex ante evaluations to improve the quality of the design of each programme in accordance with article 55 of Regulation 1303/2013

##### *5.3.q.iii. Evaluations during the Programming Period*

As stipulated in article 56 of Regulation 1303/2013, an evaluation plan shall be drawn up by the managing authority of the programme.

During the programming period, the Managing Authority shall ensure that evaluations, including evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact, are carried out for the programme on the basis of the evaluation plan and that each evaluation is subject to appropriate follow-up in accordance with the ERDF rules. At least once during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess how support from the ERDF has contributed to the objectives for each priority. All evaluations shall be examined by the monitoring committee and sent to the Commission.

##### *5.3.q.iv. Ex-Post Evaluation*

As stipulated in article 57 of Regulation 1303/2013, the responsibility for carrying out an ex-post evaluation rests with the Commission or by the Member State where the Managing Authority is located in close cooperation with the Commission.

Ex post evaluations shall examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the ERDF and its contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth taking account of the targets established in that Union strategy and in accordance with specific requirements established in the Fund-specific rules

Ex-post evaluation is a strategic evaluation carried out by independent evaluators and shall be completed by 31 December 2024. It is carried out by the Commission in close cooperation with the Managing Authority, with the latter providing all necessary information.

#### *5.3.r. Communication Strategy*

As stipulated in article 116 of Regulation 1303/2013, the Member States and the Managing Authority for the Operational Programme shall draw up a communication strategy for the Programme so as to ensure the required publicity thereof. The information shall be addressed to the European Union citizens and beneficiaries at the aim of highlighting the role of the Community and ensure that assistance from the ERDF is transparent. Implementation of the communication strategy and the information and publicity requirements is described in Annex XII of Regulation 1303/2013.

#### *5.3.s. Electronic Exchange of Data*

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

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

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

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

(Reference: point (a)(vi) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Provisions of articles 85, 122(2) and 143 to 147 of Regulation 1303/2013 concerning financial corrections and recoveries apply as well as article 27(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

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

If the lead beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment from other beneficiaries or if the managing authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead beneficiary, the Member State or third country on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the managing authority any amounts unduly paid to that beneficiary. The managing authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union, in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States as laid down in the cooperation programme.

The details for the criteria for the financial corrections that apply, the relevant procedure and the obligations of the participating countries are described in the above-mentioned articles of Regulation 1303/2013.

### **5.5 Use of the Euro (where applicable)**

(Reference: Article 28 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

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

## **5.6 Involvement of partners**

(Reference: point (c) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

### Involvement of partners during programme preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Phase C: Wide public consultation through internet.

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

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

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

## **SECTION 6 COORDINATION**

(Reference: point (a) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

## **SECTION 7      REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES**

(Reference: point (c) of Article 8(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

Identification of 4 main areas where simplification and harmonization will be sought:

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

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

2. E-cohesion tool In line with the requirements of art 122 p3 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 [CPR], the Programme will implement an IT solution embedding a set of simplification measures based on IT technologies, so called "e-cohesion". The following measures will be developed:
  - a. Implementation of a communication platform that will allow any exchange of information between the beneficiaries and Programme bodies. The communication platform will ensure secure exchange of information in both directions: from the Programme to the beneficiaries and vice versa. Beneficiaries will be granted exclusive access to the platform through an online interface available without the need to download additional software. The portal will work as a unique information centre, where the beneficiary will be able to access the documentation relevant to their operation as well as submit the information required by the Programme. The communication portal will also allow exchange of information between relevant Programme bodies, so as to avoid information redundancy and reduce the risk of error (application of the interoperability requirement).
  - b. Implementation of a core database that will collect input data in a secure system. The database will be connected with the communication portal and will ensure that information already submitted by the beneficiary will be displayed anytime useful (application of the only-once encoding principle). Beneficiaries will therefore be provided with structured documents partly filled in for those fields that were completed once before in the life of the

operation. Moreover, the database will be equipped with a set of automatic functionalities to ensure correctness and completeness of the information encoded.

3. Simplification of procedures and Programme rules. One of the key elements to achieve a reduction of the administrative burden is the application of simplified rules and procedures. In the GR-BUL OP, the following measures are considered for implementation:
  - a. The introduction of a flat rate calculation of office and administrative costs, as regulated in Article 68 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.
  - b. The introduction of simplified cost options, as regulated in Article 67 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, in the field of supporting certain project activities, such as the project preparatory phase (e.g. preparation costs reimbursed on a lump sum basis).
  - c. The implementation of the Delegated Act on General Rules on Eligibility of Expenditure for Cooperation Programmes when preparing the programme's eligibility rules and financial structures (e.g. budget lines). Harmonization of eligibility rules will reduce the need for beneficiaries participating in different programmes to study and understand various interpretations of eligibility rules. It will also simplify the work for the first level controllers.
  - d. Review and, if possible, streamlining of procedures for shared costs, in-kind contributions and other items related to the project budgets.
  - e. The Programme plans to apply the measures above from the beginning of the new programme period.
4. Lean management throughout all implementation processes The implementation processes within the Programme will be evaluated and monitored on an ongoing basis to enable continuous improvements during the programme period. The aim will be to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries and programme bodies, as well as to reduce the risk for administrative errors to a minimum.

## SECTION 8 HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

(Reference : Article 8(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

### 8.1 Sustainable development

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

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

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

Priority 2/Specific Objective 2.3(Enhance water and soil management) with indicative actions: Development of CB eco-innovation partnerships and participation in European 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.

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

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

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

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

- including environmental criteria in their procurement procedures (Green procurement procedures, GPP);
- adopting greening measures for the organization and implementation of events;
- giving preference to environmentally friendly transport options for short travel dis-

tances;

- following the procedures described in the environmental management system and certification (EMAS).

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

## 8.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of specific action to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the programme, in particular in relation to access to funding and the need to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **8.3 Equality between men and women**

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

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

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

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

## SECTION 9 SEPARATE ELEMENTS

### 9.1 Major projects to be implemented during programming period

(Reference: point (e) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

**Table 23: List of major projects**

Project	Planned notification/submission date (year, quarter)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority Axes/Investment Priorities

### 9.2 Performance framework of operational programme

**Table 24: Performance framework (summary table)**

Priority axis	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)
1	OUTPUT CO01 Number of enterprises receiving support	number		100
	Key implementation step: Selection of enterprises (number of selected - approved enterprises (related to the above CO01) to participate in CB projects)"	number	30	
	Financial: Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	euro	4.786.258,82 €	20.751.291,11 €
2	"OUTPUT CO22 Population benefiting from flood protection measures	persons		650.000
	"OUTPUT Number of cultural assets rehabilitated/protected"	number		18
	Key implementation step: Selected projects (CO22)		4	
	Financial: Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis		9.814.822,09 €	42.553.116,71 €
3	OUTPUT CO16 Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km		45

	Key implementation step: Projects with at least one signed Contract of technical - construction works sub-projects	number	4	
	Financial: Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	euro	7.888.352,67 €	34.200.721,00 €
4	OUTPUT Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	number		12
	Key implementation step: Projects with at least one signed Contract of (technical - construction works or other) sub-projects (number)	number	6	
	Financial: Eligible Verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis (n+3 = 2014 + 2015)	euro	5.629.836,90 €	24.408.706,00 €

### 9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

#### Respondents to phase A of public consultation (Questionnaire):

##### GREEK PARTNERS

##### Public partners

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

#### Socio-economic partners

21. Chamber of Small and Medium Sized Industries of Thessaloniki
22. Federation of Evros Craft Industries
23. Federation of Industries of Northern Greece
24. Hellenic Fashion Industry Association ( SEPEE )
25. Interregional Cooperation at Scientific Computing in Interdisciplinary Science
26. Support Structure for Organisations of Social Economy and Entrepreneurship

#### Civil Society partners

27. National Confederation of Disabled People - N.C.D.P
28. The Smile of The Child

### **BULGARIAN PARTNERS**

#### Public partners

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

#### Socio-economic partners

16. Bulgarian Industrial Association

#### Civil Society partners

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

### **Participants to phase B of public consultation (Workshops):**

#### **1st workshop (Komotini)**

### **GREEK PARTNERS**

#### Public partners

1. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
2. Decentralized Administration Macedonia-Thrace
3. Municipality of Drama
4. Inter-Municipal Cooperation of East Macedonia-Thrace
5. Democritus University of Thrace
6. Egnatia Odos S.A
7. Center for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH)
8. Region of East Macedonia and Thrace
9. University of Macedonia
10. Regional Association of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace Municipalities
11. Regional Association of Central Macedonia Municipalities
12. Regional Fund of East Macedonia-Thrace
13. Region of Central Macedonia
14. Technological Educational Institute of East Macedonia-Thrace

#### Socio-economic partners

15. Greek-Bulgarian Chamber
16. Federation of Industries of Northern Greece
17. Rodopi Chamber of Trades and Crafts
18. Drama Chamber of Trades and Crafts
19. Thessaloniki Chamber of Trades and Crafts
20. Kavala Chamber of Trades and Crafts
21. Economic Chamber of Thrace
22. OMIKRON Ltd

#### Civil Society partners

23. ARSIS - Association for the Social Support of Youth
24. Inter-Balkan Environment Center
25. OIKOKOINONIA, Citizens' Initiative for the Support of social vulnerable groups
26. Management Body of Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli National Park
27. Management Body of Nestos Delta-Vistonida-Ismarida National Park

### **BULGARIAN PARTNERS**

#### Public partners

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

### **2nd workshop (Sadanski)**

### **GREEK PARTNERS**

#### Public partners

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

#### Socio-economic partners

3. GNOSI ANAPTIXIAKI Business Development Consultants
4. Hellenic Fashion Industry Association (SEPEE)

### **BULGARIAN PARTNERS**

#### Public partners

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

#### Socio-economic partners

13. Association Business Information and Consulting Center - Sandanski
14. Business Information Center - Sandanski
15. Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Blagoevgrad

#### Civil Society partners

16. Press

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

## GREEK PARTNERS

### Public partners

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

### Socio-economic partners

6. Support Structure for Organisations of Social Economy and Entrepreneurship
7. Exhibitions Research Institute

### Civil Society partners

8. Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre (EKBY)
9. Institute Mohamed Ali for the Research of Eastern Traditions (I.M.A.R.E.T.)
10. National Confederation of Disabled People - N.C.D.P.
11. OIKOKOINONIA, Citizens' Initiative for the Support of social vulnerable groups

## BULGARIAN PARTNERS

### Public partners

1. Municipality of Petrich
2. Road Infrastructure Agency

### Civil Society partners

3. European Institute for Development

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

(Reference: Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

*Not applicable*

## **ANNEXES (to be uploaded to electronic data exchange systems as separate files):**

- **Draft report of the ex-ante evaluation, with an executive summary (mandatory)**  
(Reference: Article 55(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)
- **Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme (mandatory)**  
(Reference: Article 8(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)
- **A map of the area covered by the cooperation programme (as appropriate)**
- **A citizens' summary of the cooperation programme (as appropriate)**