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Republic of Bulgaria
Ministry of Regional Development – DG Territorial
Cooperation Management
**EX-ANTE EVALUATION AND SEA OF THE BULGARIA –
TURKEY IPA CBC PROGRAMME 2014-2020**
FINAL DRAFT



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Executive Summary

According to Art. 55 of the Regulation (EU), No 1303/2013 laying down common provisions, ex-ante **evaluations shall be carried out to improve the quality of the design of each programme**, under the responsibility of the authorities in charge of the preparation of the programme. Ex-ante evaluations shall be submitted to the Commission at the same time as the programme, together with an executive summary.

The purpose of this section is therefore to highlight the **main findings of the Ex-ante evaluation on the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Draft Operational Programme (OP) 2014-2020** for each **evaluation component**, namely:

- Programme Strategy;
- Indicators, monitoring and evaluation;
- Administrative capacity, data collection procedures and evaluation;
- Consistency of financial allocation;
- Contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Ex-ante Evaluator also assessed the **programming process itself**, analysing how **lessons learned** during the 2007-2013 programming period were taken into account in the elaboration of the new Operational Programme as well as the modalities adopted for **involving relevant stakeholders** in the programme design.

The following Table aims to give evidence to **conclusions and recommendations drawn on the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014)** as well as to **related changes in the OP** implemented by the programmer following previous Ex-ante Evaluator's suggestions¹.

Additional recommendations concerning the Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014) are marked as "to be revised by the MA".

¹ See "Ex-ante evaluation and SEA of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Cross-boerder Programme 2014-2020"- DRAFT, June 2014

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
Programming process			
Lessons learned during the 2007-2013 programming period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lessons learned during the 2007-2013 have been greatly taken into consideration while drafting the new OP (overall needs assessment) with the objective to improve Programme performances. Following the 2007-2013 experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme's strategy is backed by a sound and well-grounded socio-economic analysis; ▪ Cross-border added value along with budget restraints have been taken into account while drafting the new OP; ▪ Soft measures and investments are well balanced and are given an appropriate weighting in the Draft OP; ▪ The Programme's internal coherence has been ensured through a clear demarcation between Priority axis and between Specific Objectives; ▪ Horizontal principles have been taken into consideration and respected during the programming process and will be further promoted and monitored during the Programme life-cycle; ▪ Result indicators are tailored on Programme's specific objectives and will be monitored through feasible methods for appraising baseline and target values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It would be useful to include a summary of the most relevant of lessons learned in the past programming period in Par. 1.1.1 "<i>Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the selected thematic priorities (...)</i>" to give evidence to programme's solid background enabling to capitalize good practices and overcome bottlenecks detected during 2007-2013 programme implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be revised by MA
Involvement of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In line with Art. 5 of Regulation (EU) n. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given the high participation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accepted. After the approval of the OP,



Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
stakeholders in the programme design	<p>1303/2013, programming authorities have started a participatory pathway involving relevant stakeholder in the cross-border area from the very beginning of the programming process. Tools and events were appropriately promoted through the programme's web sites and guaranteed a wide and active participation of representatives of central and regional institutions, public and private bodies, civil society along with private citizens. Needs and proposals gathered through the on-line survey and the Regional Consultative Forum were duly taken into account in the definition of both "Thematic concentration" and the Draft OP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs by relevant stakeholders were taken into consideration in the elaboration of the Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014). Tables summarizing proposals received during public consultations also included motivations for accepting or not stakeholders' suggestions. The involvement of stakeholders will certainly be of added value also during the implementation of the future OP, ensuring an informed and more efficient participation to the Programme life-cycle. Aware stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, will be more concerned about the proper implementation of activities along with related monitoring and evaluation and will actively promote and give evidence to programme 	<p>stakeholders to programming events, it is recommended to foster continuity of the participatory pathway in the forthcoming phases to enable Programme authorities to design strategy, expected results and possible actions truly adhering to cross-border territorial needs and challenges. To this end, it would be appropriate to organise additional meetings of the Regional Consultative Forum to share the final Draft of the OP with stakeholders before submitting it to the EC for approval. It would be also essential to organize an additional event, once the OP is approved, to share the final OP, giving evidence to how stakeholders' proposals have been acknowledged by the Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the 2014-2020 programming period, managing authorities should foster the active participation of stakeholders throughout programme implementation though both on-line instruments and periodic events aiming at sharing progresses gradually made. To this end, it would be useful the provision of an on-line platform able to guarantee a direct dialogue between MA and beneficiaries on specific issues as well as to share information, documents and experiences among partners/beneficiaries. At the same time, periodic meetings will allow to share all kinds of information about the programme life-cycle and to jointly overcome possible difficulties. 	<p>the Programme will be broadly promoted through public events in the cross-border area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted. Second Draft of the OP (par. 5.7) includes references to the involvement of stakeholders also during Programme implementation.

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
	achievements.		
Programme strategy			
External coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis carried out by the Ex-ante Evaluator showed the overall external coherence of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 with EU, Bulgaria and Turkey strategic frameworks, avoiding overlaps and facilitating the concentration of funds. The Programme consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy and to the Common Strategic Framework is clear as well as direct contribution to macro-regional strategies. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, the strategy proposed directly contributes to the objectives of the National Reform Programme, the National Development Programme, the National Regional Development Strategy along with the Position Paper and the Partnership Agreement as well as with relevant Operational Programmes. The CBC Programme will also contribute to the achievement of the goals set in the EC Country Strategy Paper for Turkey and in the Tenth Development Plan. The analysis also revealed possible synergies with future ETC programmes, such as, for example, Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC Programme, Danube Transnational Programme and INTERREG Europe, which directly involve Bulgaria as Partner Country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give evidence to the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme consistency with EU, national and regional frameworks, it is recommended to give more evidence to programme external coherence in Chapter 1 “Strategy for the for the cooperation programme’s contribution to the selected Thematic Priorities and the relevant Partnership Agreement and Country Strategy Paper(s)” of the Draft Operational Programme. To this end, it would be useful to include both a paragraph on the Programme’s contribution to the EU Strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as one on direct linkages with objectives of the Partnership Agreement for Bulgaria and Country Strategy Paper concerning Turkey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted. Developed and implemented in the Draft OP (Version 2.0 – July 2014)
Internal coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis of the Programme’s Intervention Logic showed the internal coherence of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to select the most appropriate actions for achieving Programme’s objectives, it would be useful to better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially accepted. Selected indicative actions are tailored on proposed strategy and grouped into categories of



Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
	<p>giving evidence to the links between objectives, expected results and proposed actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The selection of the Specific Objectives (SOs) match the needs assessment, taking into account challenges and needs detected through the regional and SWOT analysis as well as suggestions from relevant stakeholders. ▪ SOs within the same Priority Axis reinforce each other and have potential synergies with SOs relating to others thematic priorities. ▪ Most examples of actions to be supported are in line with the objectives proposed and are expected to guarantee a high contribution to their achievement. ▪ Related target groups and potential beneficiaries are identified and clearly described. ▪ The definition of some actions is vague and their contribution to programme objectives achievement is not clear. 	<p>outline the cause-effect relation between specific objectives, expected results and actions. To this end, both investments and soft measures may be further grouped into typologies of actions (for instance, awareness raising campaigns, events, small-scale interventions, etc.) so as to make interventions more tailored on proposed strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to revise the vague definition of some actions ▪ Further clarifications are needed about the contribution of possible actions to the achievement of Specific Objectives. 	<p>interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accepted. The formulation is revised according to comments. ▪ Partially accepted. Further clarifications will be provided in Guidelines for applicants during programme implementation. Unclear actions were specified and related text corrected in the OP.
Horizontal principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Horizontal principles foreseen by Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 were duly considered in preparatory works (baseline and SWOT analysis) and were taken into account throughout the programming process as highlighted by the participatory pathway aimed at the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the programme design. ▪ Section VI of the Draft OP properly describes how the Programme will deal with and foster the respect of horizontal principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is advisable to introduce indicators able to monitor how horizontal principles will be fulfilled. To this end, information about the respect of horizontal principles may derive from projects' progress reports and Programme's Annual Implementation Reports. ▪ As far as equality between men and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not accepted as formulated in the First Draft of the Ex-ante evaluation Report where there was a reference to climate change. MA nevertheless stated that other cross-cutting issues will be monitored during programme implementation (i.e. N° of total created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites) ▪ To be revised by MA

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects will contribute to their achievement, integrating measures considering horizontal principles. 	women is concerned, where possible, indicators may be broken down by gender (i.e. OI 2.2-4 n° of people involved in training and capacity building activities in the field of sustainable tourism – out of which n° of women-).	
Indicators, monitoring and evaluation			
Relevance and clarity of proposed indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific Objectives and related expected results are clearly defined to properly address future monitoring. The choice of foreseeing one Result Indicator (RI) for each expected result is sharable. Common output indicators (Annex of Reg.EU N.1299/2013 on ETC goal) have been taken into consideration while defining OP's monitoring system (i.e. indicators relating to SO 2.1) Clarifications about the contribution of possible actions to the achievement of specific objectives are given in the Draft OP. The programmer accepted Ex-ante evaluator's suggestions to clarify some output indicators' and to improve the definitions of some result indicators, making appropriate revisions in the OP. The analysis of the revised set of indicators according to S.M.A.R.T. criteria proved result a output indicators' suitability to monitor and verify Programme's achievements. Nonetheless, some additional fine-tunings may be appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Output Indicators (OIs) seem to be suitable for monitoring the progresses of proposed actions. Nonetheless, some definitions need additional clarifications. The analysis of Programme specific RIs showed that the definitions of some result indicators are generic and similar to those of OIs. Following the analysis of result and output indicators according to S.M.A.R.T. criteria, the Ex-ante evaluator suggests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To revise or delete RI-1.2-1, since it measures the related expected result only indirectly and may be considered more as an output indicator; to consider the possibility of reformulating output indicators related to Specific Objective 1.2 or rely on just OI-1.2-3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted. Related text is corrected in the Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014) Accepted. Related text is corrected in the OP (version 2.0 – July 2014) To be revised by MA
Quantified baseline and target value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Draft OP includes programme specific result indicators' baseline and target values along with measurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the qualitative approach adopted to monitor result indicators, it would be worth to identify a punctual percentage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be revised by MA



Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
	<p>units, sources of data and frequency of reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme specific result indicators' baseline will be established, at the beginning of programme implementation, through ad hoc surveys aimed to detect relevant information on the starting conditions, that will be then monitored through projects and programme reports during the programming period (in 2019) and <i>ex post</i> (in 2023). ▪ Programme specific result indicators' target values will be represented by the increase of the baseline (expressed with a percentage or ordinal scale). ▪ As for common and programme specific output indicators, the programmer has identified countable indicators (i.e. Kilometres, number of initiatives) that will be monitored annually through progress and annual implementation reports. ▪ Common and specific output indicators' target values for the year 2023 related to output indicators are under establishment. 	<p>measuring the expected increase (for instance, 10%, 20%, etc.) to be identified taking into consideration baseline values, the expected number of projects to be supported and the financial allocation.</p>	
Administrative capacity, data collection procedures and evaluation			
Composition and functions of the Joint Monitoring Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The indicative list of the members of the JMC is composed mainly of a list of categories of institutions and organizations. This is still insufficient for the proper identification and assessment of the relevance of the composition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The indicative list of members of the JMC shall identify more precisely which are the institutions and organizations which will take part in the work of the body. ▪ The Programme may use the possibility of involving bodies in the work of the JMC with advisory role, since they can provide valuable input for the programme coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be revised by MA ▪ To be revised by MA
Description of the functions of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The functions and responsibilities of the bodies responsible for the management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The functions of the Joint Secretariat should be better described and made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be revised by MA

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
bodies responsible for the management and control system of the programme	<p>system are in line with the regulatory framework and well described</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of the JS in coordinating the work of the controllers is questionable. 	<p>consistent with the description of the procedures under point 5.4. Please also consider the possibility of including the description of the JS tasks under the next point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of the antennae in Edirne (Turkey) should be described in more details The description of the first level control system in Turkey should be more detailed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be revised by MA To be revised by MA
Compliance with the principle of separation of tasks between the management bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The links and relations among different management bodies is clearly explained, the division of roles is satisfactory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific recommendation on this topic is drawn 	-
Efficiency and functionality of the management and control system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The description of the management and control system is satisfactory. According to Art. 39 of Implementing Regulation 744/2014, <i>"the beneficiaries shall cooperate in the development and implementation of operations. In addition, they shall cooperate in either the staffing or the financing of the operations."</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first statement under "Selection of operations" section (page 77) shall be revised according to Art. 39 of Implementing Regulation 744/2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be revised by MA
Consistency of financial allocation			
Consistency of financial allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial allocation seems generally coherent with the Intervention Logic and in line with the challenges and needs identified through the territorial and SWOT analysis. In setting the investment strategy, the programmer took into account lessons learned in the 2007-2013 programming period, inputs by relevant stakeholders as well as financial limits. The selection of thematic priorities took into account budget restraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority axis were given the same financial weighting, but further clarifications are needed about SOs financial allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted. Justifications are given in the Draft OP

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations	Implemented change in the OP
	that led to thematic prioritization and to concentration of financial resources on the themes with the highest cross-border added value.		
Contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy			
Contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis showed the direct contribution of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme to the Europe 2020 Strategy. Specific Objectives within Priority axis 1 will directly contribute to an intelligent and sustainable growth given the focus on the prevention and mitigation of natural and man-made hazards as a pre-requisite for the sustainable development of the cross-border area, that will be pursued through innovative solutions of risk prevention and management. Specific Objectives relating to Priority axis 2 aim to the increase of tourist attractiveness through the better utilization of natural and cultural resources along with the improvement of sustainable touristic services will be pursued by taking advantage of innovative tools (i.e. ICT facilities, GIS platforms), which represent the basis for a smart growth. The analysis on Programme's expected results and the Strategy's targets emphasized the high contribution of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme to relevant Community targets such as the growth of the employment rate and of the investments on innovation as well as to the reduction of greenhouse emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give evidence to the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme consistency with the EU framework, it would be useful to include both a paragraph on the Programme's contribution to the EU Strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as one on direct linkages with objectives of the Partnership Agreement for Bulgaria and Country Strategy Paper concerning Turkey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted. Developed and implemented in the Draft OP (Version 2.0 – July 2014)

1 Foreword

1.1 Objectives of the Ex-ante Evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Regulatory framework for the period 2014-2020 drives European policies towards **results** in order to contribute to the **Europe 2020 strategy** for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. To this end, Regulations increase the importance of well-designed programmes taking into great account European, national and regional needs as well as their expected results.

The **role of ex-ante evaluation is therefore reinforced** as an essential support to programming authorities in designing OPs' architecture and in outlining **suitable implementing and monitoring devices** to meet evaluation requirements.

As stated in Chapter 2 "Objective, purpose and expected results" of the Terms of Reference², in the framework of the Ex-ante Evaluation and SEA of the forthcoming Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme, it is expected that the Evaluator will pay close attention to the following issues:

- **Justification for thematic priorities** selected and **consistency with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Common Strategic Framework**;
- **Relevance and consistency of proposed result and output indicators**;
- **Plausibility of targets** and explanation of the **contribution of outputs to identified results**;
- **Administrative capacity** for the management and implementation of the programme;
- **Quality of the monitoring system and methods for collecting data**.

The main **expected results** of the evaluation exercise is the **improved quality of Programme design** and its **consistency with relevant regulations, principles and requirements**.

Bearing in mind the concept of the **utility of the evaluation** and according to the suggestions stated in the "Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation" drafted by the European Commission³, the Ex-Ante evaluation and SEA of the IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey OP is conceived as an **iterative process** involving the Evaluator, the MA and the experts in charge of drafting the new Programme. The Ex-ante Evaluation aimed at providing appropriate **judgments and recommendations** to ensure the successful design of both the future strategy and Programme's implementing mechanisms.

Following this iterative and participative approach, ex-ante evaluation and SEA tasks and deliverables were set in **tight cooperation with the Contracting Authority and programming authorities** closely following the progresses gradually made by the programming itself and focusing on the specific MA's cognitive needs. To this end, the Evaluator has adopted a **flexible attitude**, open to whatever changes and **new informative needs** arising during the evaluation exercise.

² Annex II: Terms of reference (including clarification before the deadline for submitting tenders) of the Service Contract

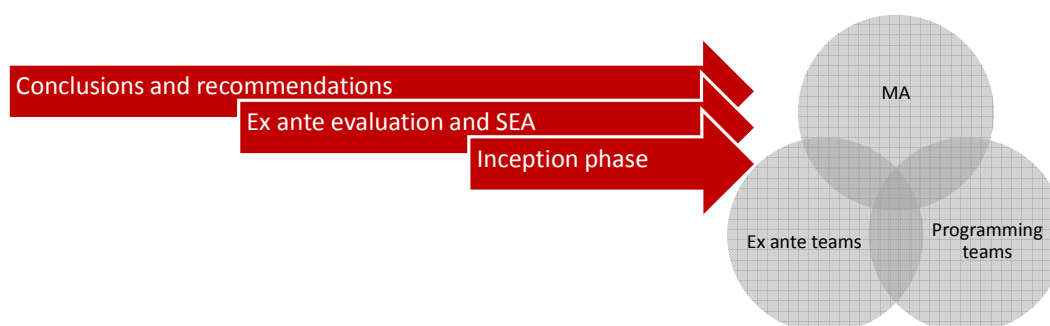
³ See "The programming period 2014-2020 – Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy", January 2013

In this context, the activities developed within the Interim Phase allowed the Evaluators to give **preliminary responses to Evaluation Questions (EQs)** given in the “Terms of Reference” and to draw **provisional recommendations** addressing proposed Programme’s needs and challenges and enlightening possible bottlenecks.

Results of these activities are included in the present **Second Draft Report**, outlining main findings and conclusions about components included in the Draft Operational Programme (Version 2.0-July 2014) and providing recommendations for improvement.

1.2 The evaluation process and coordination with the Managing Authority

The process of ex-ante evaluation considered as a whole has been divided into **three main integrated phases strictly linked and characterized by a continuous collaboration and sharing with the MA and programming teams.**

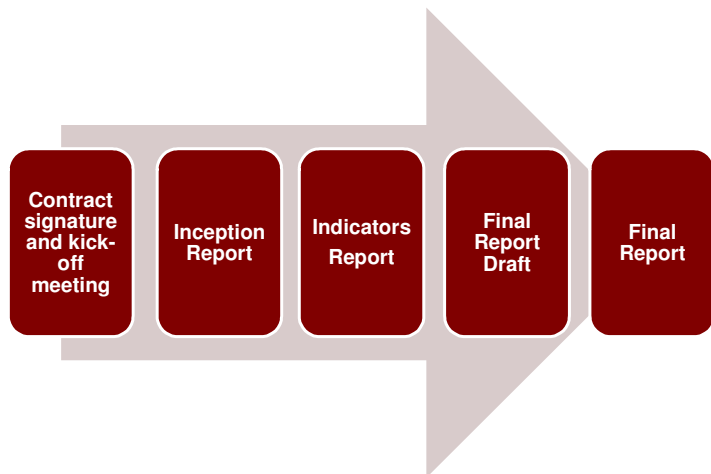


1. **Inception phase** aimed to better outline the structure of the ex-ante evaluation and SEA pathways, taking into account the concrete needs of MA and other relevant stakeholders as well as the **evaluation questions** exemplified in the “Terms of reference” and addressing the whole evaluation exercise. Methods and techniques have been further specified in the **Inception Report**, while timing has been detailed in the up-dated time schedule duly shared with the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development according to programming phases;
2. **Analysis of the ex-ante evaluation components and SEA** aimed to give **timely feedbacks** throughout the programming process. This phase includes the assessment of the proposed Programme’s strategy, in terms of both external and internal coherence, and the related financial allocation; the efficiency of the monitoring system envisaged; the administrative capacity for the management of the Programme. These tasks implied a preliminary **overview of primary and secondary information sources** (the first directly collected by the Evaluator and the second already existing) and the use of a **mix of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools**. To do so, the Evaluator has worked in close cooperation with the experts in charge of drafting the OP and has taken into account evaluation recommendations of the current programming periods with the aim to **learn from experience and capitalize CBC Bulgaria-Serbia results**. Activities developed within this phase allowed the Evaluator to draw **recommendations** about possible bottlenecks. Results of these activities are included in **the present Draft Report**, outlining main findings and conclusions and providing recommendations for improvement;

3. **Conclusions and recommendations** based on analysis evidence. Bearing in mind the utility of the ex-ante evaluation and in line with the iterative process described, the **final results** of the analysis developed are summarized by conclusions as basis for **clear recommendations addressing proposed Programme's needs and challenges**. The main objective of this phase is to ensure **full and adequate responses to evaluation questions** to improve and strengthen the quality of the new OP. All the above will be part of the **Final Ex-Ante Evaluation Report (including SEA)** and will be subject to final approval.

The Picture on the side shows the main ex-ante evaluations phases and outputs delivered by the evaluation team.

Besides the previous described three main phases, the ex-ante evaluation service also includes the **management phase** and **communication** aimed to **disseminate ex-ante evaluation's main findings and results** through modalities duly shared with the Contracting Authority and programming bodies, even by taking advantage of existing informative tools (e.g. CBC Bulgaria-Serbia web-site).



2 The Ex-ante Evaluation

2.1 Designing the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020

The objective of this section is to analyze the programming process, focusing on qualitative themes such as the incorporation of lessons learned and the involvement of stakeholders in programme design, which are considered valuable methods for both the needs assessment and the following elaboration of good-quality programmes.

As a matter of fact, on the one hand, the **Commission encourages, as a good practice, to take into consideration lessons learnt from previous analyses or evaluations** at each step of the programming process⁴ and, on the other, the new regulatory framework identifies **partnership** as the main **instrument for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy** and for executing public policies promoted by the Community Strategic Framework (CSF)⁵.

Given these premise, the Ex-ante Evaluator appraised the extent to which lessons learnt and recommendations for the forthcoming programming period as well as proposals by relevant stakeholders have been taken into account in the definition of the new strategy and of the implementing provisions of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020.

2.1.1 Lessons learned during the 2007-2013 programming period

The following pages aim to show how and to what extent **lessons learnt** in the framework of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013 have been taken into consideration by the programmer to **capitalize good practices** as well as to **overcome bottlenecks** detected during programme implementation for **improving future Programme's performances**.

To this end, the Ex-ante Evaluator made an **overview of the main recommendations for the forthcoming programming period given in the On-going Evaluation Final Report**⁶ and verified whether they were acknowledged in the Draft OP.

It is worth highlighting that specific recommendations about the monitoring of progresses in contracting and payments of funds are not verifiable at the ex-ante evaluation stage and need to be assessed during programme implementation. Nonetheless, the Draft OP includes a **comprehensive description of implementing provisions** for the proper management, evaluation and control of the future Programme. Additional information will be given in the "Programme Implementation Manual"⁷.

The Table given below, exemplifies the findings of the evaluation exercise, showing if and to what extent, recommendations, divided per theme handled in the ex-ante evaluation, were taken into consideration in the programme design⁸.

⁴ EC, *Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation*, January 2013

⁵ Regulation (EU) n.1303/2013, Article 5 "Partnership and multi-level governance"

⁶ Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme 2007-2013, *On-going Evaluation of IPA CBC Programmes 2007-2013 managed by the Republic of Bulgaria - Revised Final Report*, Sofia, August 2013

⁷ See Chapter V – Implementing provisions for the Cooperation Programme, Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020, Draft Operational Programme, Version 2.0 – July 2014

⁸ Recommendations marked by "N.V" are Not Verifiable yet and should be assessed during future programme implementation.



Theme	Recommendation	Lessons learned			
		Yes	No	Partly	N.V.
<i>Relevance, consistency and complementarity of Programme's objectives</i>	The future CBC Programme needs good and well-grounded socio-economic analyses with statistical data	v			
	Consider less investment priorities in order to focus the available funding for the period 2014-2020	v			
<i>Progress in contracting and payments of funds</i>	Put efforts to retain qualified and experienced personnel				v
	Ensure that the JTS and the Antennae Offices are properly staffed and equipped for the whole time Programme implementation				v
<i>Programme implementation</i>	Clear demarcation between Aols and between Priority axis to be ensured	v			
	Project objectives have to be relevant to the objectives of the Priority Axis, not to the Programme's overall and specific objectives. It is advisable this to be reflected in the Guidelines for Applicants and the application form	v			
	To elaborate regions' tourism strategy, to identify priorities and integrate tourism projects to be supported in the future	v			
<i>Integration and respect of horizontal principles</i>	Developing guidelines regarding the application of horizontal principles in the project preparation and stress their importance to the potential applicants during information days and trainings				v
	The MA/NA to put more attention in the monitoring and implementation of horizontal principles both on project and programme level	v			
	It is advisable to break down Programme indicators by gender, where possible			v	
<i>Indicators</i>	It would be not feasible to use any of the original result indicators of the 2007-2013 Programme	v			

As far as **relevance, consistency and complementarity of Programme's objectives** are concerned, the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 **strategy is backed by a sound and well-grounded socio-economic analysis** based on statistical data, cartographic and tabular information, review of strategy documents and overview of programming documents at European, national and regional level⁹. What is more, based on the identified SWOT components, the programming team highlighted potential linkages between internal and external factors, which were the basis for the **definition of possible future potentials and/or barriers** to the proper development of the IPA CBC Programme. The latter can rightly be defined as a **good practice**.

Cross-border relevance of the themes to be handled and funding restraints have been duly taken into consideration both for thematic concentration¹⁰ and for the selection of

⁹ See Preparation of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020, *Baseline analysis & SWOT analysis*, April 2014

¹⁰ See Preparation of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020, *Thematic Concentration*, April 2014

possible activities to be supported. Foreseen **soft measures and investment** (small-scale interventions) **are well balanced** and are given an appropriate weighting in the Draft OP. Moreover, findings of the territorial and SWOT analysis were shared with relevant stakeholders in Programme's eligible area (see Par. 2.1.2 "Involvement of stakeholders in the programming process").

Recommendations concerning **Programme implementation** were fulfilled while defining the Programme strategy and structure. A **clear demarcation between Priority axis and between Specific Objectives** was ensured as well as the overall Programme's internal coherence (see Par. 2.2.2 "Internal coherence"). Projects will contribute to the achievement and the monitoring of Programme's expected results. To this end, **guidelines for applicants will be drafted and trainings for potential and actual beneficiaries will be organized** in the framework of the 2014-2020 cross-border Programme.

Integration and respect of horizontal principles were duly considered throughout the programming process and will be further developed during the Programme life-cycle (see also Par. 2.2.3 "Horizontal principles"). As stated in the Draft OP, the quality assessment for projects **selection will be based on criteria aimed to verify the contribution of each project** to the promotion of sustainable development and to the respect of the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as to the equality between men and women.

The On-going Evaluator also highlighted the need to **review the set of indicators**, stressing the difficulty to use any of the original result indicators of the 2007-2013 Programme. Given this premise, the MA and the experts in charge of the programming made a big effort to define **more tailored and feasible result indicators**, putting particular attention to the **methods for defining baseline and target values** to be monitored through both quantitative and qualitative information (see Par. 2.3.1 "Relevance and clarity of proposed programme indicators" and Par. 2.3.2 "Quantified baseline and target values").

2.1.2 Involvement of stakeholders in the programming process

One of the main innovations introduced by the regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 programming period is represented by the identification of **partnership** as the main **instrument for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy** and for executing public policies promoted by the Community Strategic Framework (CSF). In this regard, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) n.1303/2013 laying down common provisions states that each Member State shall organize, for defining the Partnership Agreement and each Programme, a partnership representing institutions, political, economic and social entities working in their territories, with the objective to **develop strategies and propose actions truly adhering to the needs and demands of those directly and indirectly involved in the program**, ensuring, at the same time, the **strengthening of a sense of collective ownership of Community policies**.

The involvement of stakeholders also encourages the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the preparation and implementation of strategies, increasing the **effectiveness and transparency of decision-making processes**. Moreover, the same art. 5 gives the Commission "the power to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 149, to establish a European code of conduct on the Partnership (the "Code of Conduct ") defining objectives and criteria to support the implementation of partnership and facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, results and good practices between Member States. This code of conduct rules, in particular, the active involvement of stakeholders throughout the life cycle of programs: preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

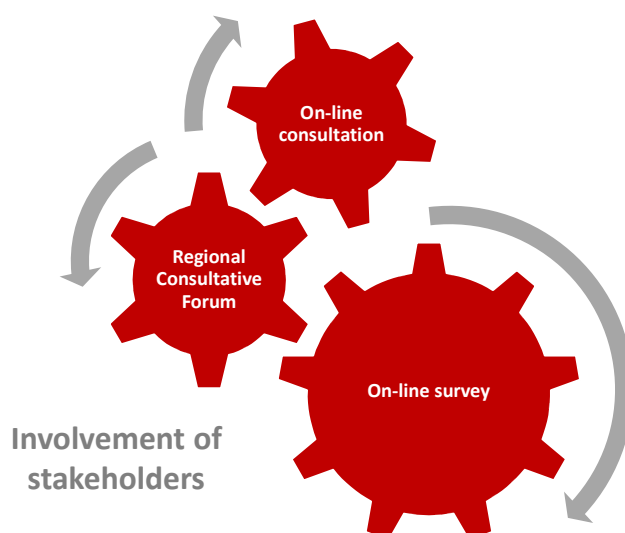
The Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC programming authorities have undertaken a fruitful **participatory pathway** from the very beginning of the programme design process, involving relevant stakeholders in the cross-border region with the aim **to gather first-hand information** about needs in the cooperation area as well as expectations and operational proposals for the forthcoming 20014-2020 Programme.

The aforementioned pathway is made of **consecutive steps**, duly promoted on the programme's web-site¹¹, and takes advantage of several methods and tools guaranteeing a **wide and informed participation of regional stakeholders in the programming**.

Target groups are national and regional institutions, public authorities, private bodies and socio-economic partners, universities, civil society (associations, foundations, etc), NGOs and private citizens, including beneficiaries of the current programme.

As a first step, an **on-line survey**¹² was launched in February 2014 with the twofold objective of collecting expectations about scope and contents of the new CBC programme and to identify both priorities with main added value as well as possible barriers to the proper implementation of the future strategy.

A first **Regional Consultative Forum** was then held in Haskovo (BG), on the 19th of March, and in Edirne (TR), on the 20th March, to inform stakeholders from both sides of the border on the on-going programming and about external experts' findings on regional analysis and identified needs. The Forum also represented the occasion to **prioritise IPA II thematic priorities** according to the Bulgaria-Turkey cross-border region's needs and to **select possible actions** for addressing the identified needs and challenges in the respective thematic priority areas.



A **second round of the Regional Consultative Forum** was organized, on the 18th and 19th of June, with the aim to **share with stakeholders Programme's identified thematic priorities, specific objectives, expected results, target groups and indicative activities**.

All meetings were managed as **plenary sessions** and, in all cases, managing authorities and experts in charge of programming presented the preliminary results of the previous programming stages.

Results of the on-line survey and proposals made by partners within the Regional Consultative Forum were taken into account by the programmer in developing both the "Thematic Concentration", which represented the basis for the draft Intervention Logic, and the following Draft OP.

Moreover, in June 2014, an **on-line consultation on the first Draft of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020** was launched to gather further comments and hints to

¹¹ <http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/page.php?c=73>

¹² For details on the results of the on-line survey and the Regional Consultative Forum, please see "Preparation of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 – Thematic Concentration", April 2014

improve the proposed Draft OP (version 1.0 – June 2014). **Additional inputs** were therefore sent by nationally recognised institutions and **taken into consideration by the programmer** while elaborating the second Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014)¹³. **Tables showing justifications** about the reasons why proposals were accepted or not were drafted, allowing a more aware participation in the Programme design.

Most of the proposals were accepted (33%) or partially accepted (25%) and incorporated in the Draft OP.

A description of the involvement of partners in the programme design is included in the Draft OP (paragraph 5.7 “Involvement of partners”) along with provisions aimed to guarantee the future involvement of stakeholder for an informed and aware participation in Programme’s activities.

As stated in the Draft OP, after the approval, the Programme will be broadly promoted through public events in the cooperation area and, **during Programme implementation**, managing bodies will foster the active participation of stakeholders through both **on-line instruments** and **periodic events**.

To give evidence to the effectiveness of the participatory pathway, the following Table shows an evaluation exercise on the level of involvement of relevant stakeholders in the programme design, showing also strengths and possible weaknesses of the methods and tools used for stakeholders’ participation in the programming process.

¹³ See “Table of comments received on the 1st Draft of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020”, sent to the Ex-ante Evaluator by the MA on the 8th of July 2014, including comments delivered by The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds/Birdlife partner in Bulgaria, the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection (Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria).

ASSESSMENT OF THE PARTICIPATORY PATHWAY AIMED AT THE INVOLVEMENT OF RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN PROGRAMME DESIGN

Date	Method/tool	Objectives	Output	Assessment	Strengths	Weaknesses
3-14/02/2014	On-line survey (published on the programme's web-site)	Gathering expectations about scope and contents of the forthcoming CBC programme	Thematic concentration	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of involving a great number of subjects Mapping actors, needs and different inputs Effective sharing and participative Programme design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-line tools not always accessible for all the actors
19/03/ 2014 Haskovo (BG) 20/03/2014 Edirne (TR)	First Regional Consultative Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing regional stakeholders about the on-going programming process and the external experts' findings on regional analysis and identified needs Presenting and discussing a possible prioritisation of themes to be developed by the future cross-border programme Discussing potential actions that may be relevant for addressing the identified needs and challenges in the respective thematic priority areas 	Thematic concentration	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Territorial events organized directly in the territories concerned Special emphasis to the cross-border added value Large number of various actors involved Great consideration of the outcomes in selecting the thematic priorities targeted on actors needs Effective sharing and participative Programme design Facilitation by external experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less time for collecting data
18/06/2014 Edirne (TR) 19/06/2014 Haskovo (BG)	Second Regional Consultative Forum	Presenting the Programme's thematic priorities, specific objectives, results, target groups, beneficiaries, indicative activities	Draft Programme's Intervention Logic			
20/06/2014	Consultation on the first Draft of the	Collecting comments and contributions on the proposed draft OP	Revised draft of OP	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared intervention logic and Programme as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time constraints

Date	Method/tool	Objectives	Output	Assessment	Strengths	Weaknesses
	IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey Programme 2014-2020				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibility of collecting inputs on possible actions very close to potential beneficiaries 	

Legenda on levels of involvement of stakeholders: H=High M=Medium L=Low

2.1.3 Conclusions and recommendations

The following Table shows conclusions and recommendations on the lessons learned from the previous programming period and about the involvement of stakeholders in programme design.

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
Lessons learned during the 2007-2013 programming period	
<i>Lessons learned during the 2007-2013 programming period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In designing the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020, the Programmer took into account lessons learned during the 2007-2013 programming period by acknowledging recommendations developed in the framework of the on-going evaluation with the aim to capitalize good practices and overcome bottlenecks detected during programme implementation. Following the 2007-2013 experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme's strategy is backed by a sound and well-grounded socio-economic analysis; Cross-border added value along with budget restraints have been taken into account while drafting the new OP; Soft measures and investments are well balanced and are given an appropriate weighting in the Draft OP; The Programme's internal coherence has been ensured through a clear demarcation between Priority axis and between Specific Objectives; Horizontal principles were taken into consideration and respected during the programming process and will be further promoted and monitored during the Programme life-cycle; Result indicators are tailored on Programme's specific objectives and expected results and are given feasible methods for appraising baseline and target values. It would be useful to include a summary of the most relevant of lessons learned in the past programming period in Par. 1.1.1 "Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the selected thematic priorities (...)" to give evidence to programme's solid background.
Involvement of stakeholders	
<i>Involvement of stakeholders in programme design</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with Art. 5 of Regulation (EU) n. 1303/2013, programming authorities have started a participatory pathway involving relevant stakeholders in the cross-border area from the very beginning of the programming process. Tools and events were appropriately promoted through the programme's web sites and guaranteed a wide and active participation of representatives of central and regional institutions, public and private bodies, civil society along with private citizens. Needs and proposals gathered through the on-line survey and the Regional Consultative Forum were duly taken into account in the definition of both "Thematic concentration" and the Draft OP. Following the on-line consultation on the Draft OP (version 1.0 – June 2014), proposals by relevant stakeholders were accepted and acknowledged in the following version of the same document. The MA and programming authorities drafted tables with justifications about the reasons why proposals were accepted or not in the Draft OP. Given the high participation of stakeholders to programming events, it is

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
	<p>recommended to foster continuity of the participatory pathway in the forthcoming phases to enable Programme authorities to design strategy, expected results and possible actions truly adhering to cross-border territorial needs and challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be appropriate to organise additional meetings of the Regional Consultative Forum to share the final Draft of the OP with stakeholders before submitting it to the EC for approval. It would be also essential to organize an additional event, once the OP is approved, to share the final OP, giving evidence to how stakeholders' proposals have been acknowledged by the Programme. During the 2014-2020 programming period, managing authorities should foster the active participation of stakeholders throughout programme implementation though both on-line instruments and periodic events aiming at sharing progresses gradually made.

2.2 Programme strategy

Evaluation questions' check list

Are the identified national or regional challenges and needs in line with the Europe 2020 objectives and targets, the Council recommendations and the National Reform Programmes?	+++
Do the investment priorities and their specific objectives consistently reflect these challenges and needs?	+++
Were the key territorial challenges analyzed and taken into account in the programme strategy?	+++
Are the identified challenges and needs consistently translated into the objectives of the OP (i.e. the thematic objectives, the investment priorities and corresponding specific objectives)?	+++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

In the context of the 2014-2020 programming period, **consistency** means that programme priorities and related specific objectives are in line with **IPA II priorities, Europe 2020 objectives and targets**, with the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Contract for **Bulgaria** and the Country Strategy Paper developed in the framework of IPA assistance for **Turkey** as well as with challenges and needs detected through the SWOT analysis.

As a result, a well-planned strategy ensures the coherent structure of the OP, the efficiency of the monitoring and evaluation system, the accurate allocation of funds along with programme's active contribution to Union strategies for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Given these premises, the ex-ante evaluation has focused on the:

- external coherence** of the proposed strategy, taking into account the broader context where the programme will spread its effects and the Programme's contribution to the EU and national strategic frameworks;
- internal coherence** highlighting the linkages between Specific Objectives, expected results and actions to be supported under each priority axis as well as the suitability of each action for achieving programme's results;



- **horizontal principles**, namely the Programme's adequacy to ensure equal opportunities between men and women, to prevent discrimination and to foster sustainable development in both the "*preparation and implementation of the programme*" (Article 7 of the Reg. EU 1303/2013).

2.2.1 External coherence

Evaluation questions' check list

Is the programme coherent with other relevant instruments at regional, national and EU level?

+++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

The ex-ante evaluator is in charge of assessing the coherence of the Programme with the national or regional challenges and their relation with the specific objectives, as stressed by the European Commission within the "Guidance document on the ex-ante evaluation" of January 2013.

The following tables represent the **ex-ante evaluation outcomes** with reference to the **external coherence assessment**, identifying **direct and indirect links** of Programme specific objectives to the main European, national and regional policy frameworks.

To begin with, the ex-ante evaluator analyzed **links between Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme expected results and country-specific targets contributing to the achievement of Europe 2020 objectives** (see also Par. 2.5 "Contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy").

As for **Bulgaria**, the following Table shows linkages with the **National Reform Programme's targets**¹⁴.

LINKAGES BETWEEN BG-TR IPA CBC EXPECTED RESULTS AND BULGARIA NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME

BG-TR expected results	NRP targets			
	Employment rate at 76% for population aged 20-64	1,5% of GDP to be allocated to R&D	Keeping the increase in non-ETS greenhouse gases within 20%	Reduce number of people living in poverty
R-1.1.1. Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters	++	+++	+	+
R-1.1.2 Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	++	+	+	+
R-1.2.1 Improved conditions of nature-protected sites	++	+	+++	+
R-1.2.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	+++	+	++	+
R-2.1.1 Increased tourist attractiveness of the cross-border region	+++	+	+	++
R-2.2.2 Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region	++	+	+	+

¹⁴ See "Europe 2020: National Reform Programme – 2014 Update", Sofia, April 2014

NRP targets BG-TR expected results	Employment rate at 76% for population aged 20-64	1,5% of GDP to be allocated to R&D	Keeping the increase in non-ETS greenhouse gases within 20%	Reduce number of people living in poverty
R-2.2.3 Enhanced cooperation among regional actors related to sustainable tourism	+++	+	+	+

High contribution +++ Medium contribution ++ Indirect Contribution +

The analysis stressed the **potential high contribution of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme's** to the achievement of Bulgaria national specific target such as the **increase of the employment rate**, which could be fostered through the improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources as well as through the enhancement of tourist attractiveness and the cooperation among regional actors in the field of sustainable tourism. Likewise, the improved preparedness on management of natural and man-made hazards and disasters could contribute to the **investments on research and development**, while the better conditions of natural protected sites may foster the attention on climate change issues with particular reference to the **increase in non-ETS greenhouse gases**.

As far as the Turkish strategic framework is concerned, the Table below represents linkages between Programme's expected results and the **Draft Country Strategy Paper for Turkey 2014-2020**¹⁵.

LINKAGES BETWEEN BG-TR IPA CBC EXPECTED RESULTS AND DRAFT COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER FOR TURKEY 2014-2020

CSP targets BG-TR expected results	Increased n° of finalised transposition and implementation of existing EU acquis (Environment)	Preparation of the list of potential Natura 2000 sites	Increased innovation capacity	Enhancement of green jobs (including social excluded groups)	Employment rate of 20-64 age group (%)	Reduction of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (%)
R-1.1.1. Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters	+++	+	+++	+	++	+
R-1.1.2 Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	+++	+	+	+	++	+
R-1.2.1 Improved conditions of nature-protected sites	+++	+++	+	+++	++	+
R-1.2.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	+++	+	++	+++	+++	+
R-2.1.1 Increased tourist attractiveness of the cross-	+++	+	+	+++	+++	+

¹⁵ Only CSP's targets concerning BG-TR Programme's thematic priorities have been taken into consideration

CSP targets BG-TR expected results	Increased n° of finalised transposition and implementation of existing EU <i>acquis</i> (Environment)	Preparation of the list of potential Natura 2000 sites	Increased innovation capacity	Enhancement of green jobs (including social excluded groups)	Employment rate of 20-64 age group (%)	Reduction of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (%)
<i>border region</i>						
R-2.2.2 Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region	+++	+	+	++	++	+
R-2.2.3 Enhanced cooperation among regional actors related to sustainable tourism	+++	+	+	+++	+++	+

High contribution +++ Medium contribution ++ Indirect Contribution +

The previous Table highlights the **Bulgaria-Turkey CBC Programme's high contribution** to the Strategy Paper for Turkey's general objective of ***acquis* alignment and implementation** in the specific sector of nature protection. Such a goal, deriving from the implementation of joint initiatives, will be one of the most important outcomes of the CBC Programme as a whole with a view to Europe 2020 targets.

As a matter of fact, cross-border cooperation will enhance **innovation capacity** through the exchange of experiences and know-how transfer able to fit territorial needs. The improved capacity of jointly manage natural and man-made hazards and disasters as well as the increase of tourist attractiveness will foster the development of **employment opportunities** in the fields of environment and sustainable tourism, including for vulnerable groups (i.e. youth, that are among the main target groups of Programme's strategy). Moreover, the **expected result of fostering the sustainable use of natural resources rightly match Europe 2020's objectives dealing with climate change related issues.**

The Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme's external coherence was also appraised by taking into account other strategy and programming documents developing complementary policies, variably involving the cross-border area.

Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme's Specific Objectives were therefore related to the EU and national strategic framework

What is more, **possible synergies with future ETC and IPA II/ENI programmes** that will involve the cooperation area have been highlighted. The Tables below show direct and indirect linkages between Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC's Specific Objectives and relevant instruments at EU, national and regional level.

EU Strategic Framework	Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives				
	TP 2 Environment		TP 4 Sustainable tourism		
	SO 1.1. Risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters	SO 1.2 Capacity of nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources	SO 2.1. Tourist attractiveness	SO 2.2 Offer of sustainable touristic services	SO 3.1 Networking in relation to sustainable tourism development potentials
Europe 2020	D	D	D	D	D
ESIF/CSF	D	D	D	D	D
ETC	I	I	I	I	I
EU Strategy for more Growth and Jobs Coastal and Maritime Tourism	I	I	I	I	I
Programme for the Environment and Climate Change (LIFE)	I	I	I	I	I
Community Mechanism for Civil Protection	D	D	I	I	I
EU Strategy for Blue Growth	D	D	D	D	D
EU Strategy Black Sea Region	D	D	D	D	D
Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (referred to as "Bucharest Convention")	D	D	D	D	D
Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea	D	D	D	D	D
Black Sea Synergy – A New Regional	D	D	D	D	D



Cooperation Initiatives					
EU Strategy Danube Region	I	I	I	I	I

Legenda: D=Direct contribution; I= indirect contribution

BG Strategic Framework	Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives				
	TP 2 Environment		TP 4 Sustainable tourism		
	SO 1.1. Risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters	SO 1.2 Capacity of nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources	SO 2.1. Tourist attractiveness	SO 2.2 Offer of sustainable touristic services	SO 3.1 Networking in relation to sustainable tourism development potentials
National Development Programme (NDP) Bulgaria 2020	D	D	D	D	D
National Regional Development Strategy (NRDS) 2012-2022	D	D	D	D	D
Partnership Agreement (PA)	D	D	D	D	D
Position Paper (PP)	D	D	I	I	I
Strategy for sustainable development of tourism in Bulgaria 2014-2020	I	I	D	D	D
OP ESIF Environment	I	I	I	I	I
OP ESIF Regions in Growth	D	D	D	D	D
OP ESIF Human Resources Development	I	D	I	D	I
OP ESIF Good Governance	I	I	I	I	I



Regional Development Strategy of Burgas Region 2014-2020	I	I	I	I	I
Regional Development Strategy of Yambol Region 2014-2020	I	I	I	I	I
Regional Development Strategy of Haskovo Region 2014-2020	I	I	I	I	I

Legenda: D=Direct contribution; I= indirect contribution

TR Strategic Framework	Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives				
	TP 2 Environment		TP 4 Sustainable tourism		
	SO 1.1. Risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters	SO 1..2 Capacity of nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources	SO 2.1. Tourist attractiveness	SO 2.2 Offer of sustainable touristic services	SO 3.1 Networking in to sustainable tourism development potentials
Draft EC Strategy Paper for Turkey 2014-2020	I	I	I	I	I
Tenth Development Plan 2014-2018	I	I	I	I	I
National Climate Change Action Plan	D	D	I	I	I
Tourism Strategy of Turkey - 2023	I	I	D	D	D
Trakya Region 2014-2023 Draft Region Plan	I	I	D	D	D
OP Environment	I	D	I	I	I



OP Regional Competitiveness	I	I	I	I	I
OP Human Resources Development	I	I	I	I	I

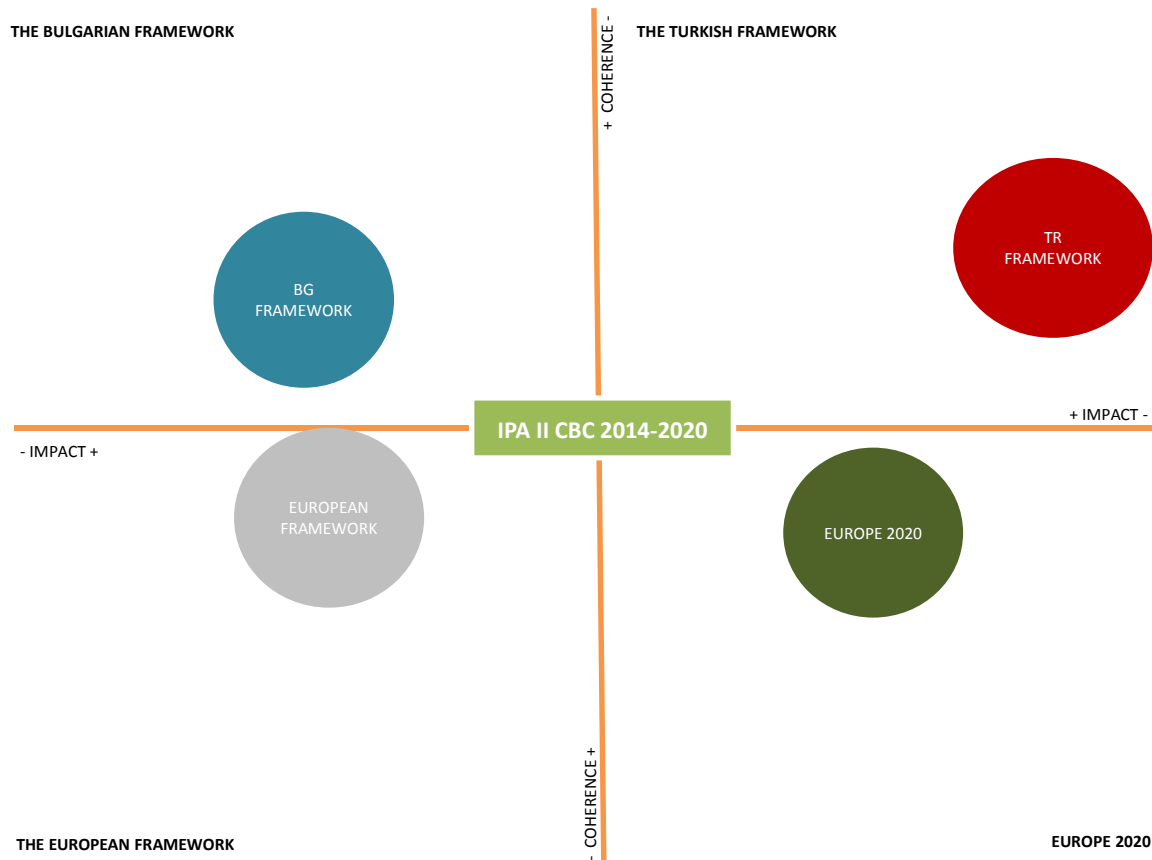
Legenda: D=Direct contribution; I= indirect contribution

Potential synergies with ETC and IPA II Programmes	Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme 2014-2020 Thematic Priorities and Specific Objectives				
	TP 2 Environment		TP 4 Sustainable tourism		
	SO 1.1. Risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters	SO 1.2 Capacity of nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources	SO 2.1. Tourist attractiveness	SO 2.2 Offer of sustainable touristic services	SO 3.1 Networking in relation to sustainable tourism development potentials
Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC Programme	D	D	D	D	D
Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020	I	I	I	I	I
INTERREG Europe	I	I	I	I	I

Legenda: D=Direct contribution; I= indirect contribution



Starting with the findings of the previous analysis on the Programme's external coherence, the Ex-ante evaluator has also appraised the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme's coherence and impact on the Europe 2020 Strategy, the overall European framework, the Bulgarian as well as the Turkish national frameworks.



The Graph above shows the Programme's **high degree of coherence** with both European and national most relevant strategy and programming documents, reinforcing ex-ante evaluation results on the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC strategy's external coherence.

It also highlights the **good potential impact** the Programme will have on the same strategic frameworks. Impact's middling scores may be explained by considering the cross-border nature of the Programme involving only part of the national territory of both sides of the Bulgaria-Turkey border.

2.2.2 Internal coherence

Evaluation questions' check list

Have complementarities and potential synergies been identified between the specific objectives of each priority axis, and between the specific objectives of the different priority axis?

+++

Actions to be supported

Are the proposed actions to be supported in each priority axis, including the main target groups identified, the specific territories targeted and the

+++



types of beneficiaries sufficiently described?	
Do the proposed actions take into account the (non-exhaustive) list of key actions provided in the Common Strategic Framework?	+++
Outputs and results	
Will the proposed actions lead to the expected outputs and intended results?	+++
Were external factors that could influence the intended results identified (e.g. national policy, economic trend, change in regional competitiveness, etc.)?	+++
Are the policy assumptions underpinning the programme logic backed up by evidence (e.g. from previous experiences, evaluations or studies)?	+++
Do other possible action or outputs exist that would be more conducive to the intended results?	+++
The rationale for the form of support proposed (based on Article 55 (3f))	
Are the proposed forms of support suitable to for the types of beneficiaries and the specific objectives of the programme?	+++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

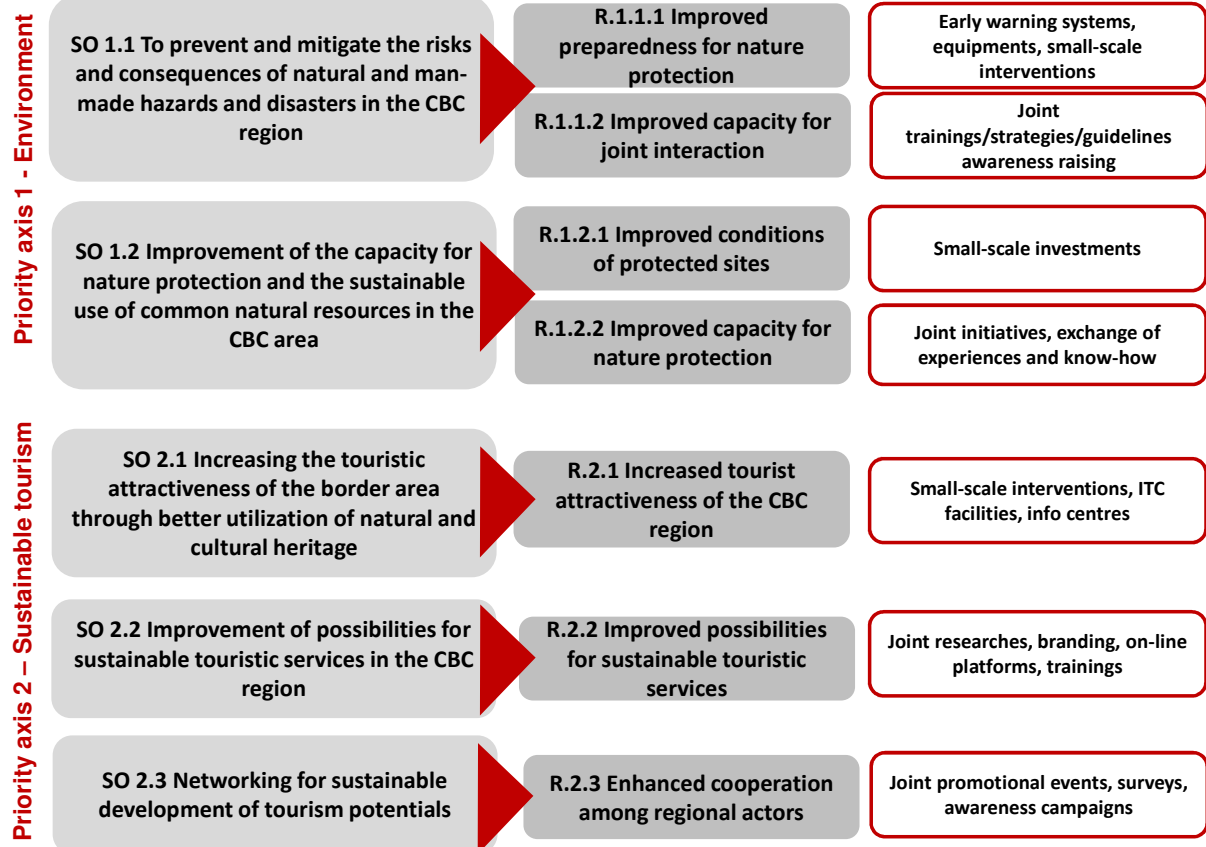
The evaluation of the internal coherence has the objective to **verify whether the Intervention Logic clearly defines programme's Specific Objectives**, taking advantage of potential synergies between them, and if it plausibly explains by which means they can be reached. At this stage of the analysis, the ex-ante evaluation will aim to:

- assess the **coherence between objectives**;
- demonstrate that the **result chain** is logically structured;
- analyze **to what extend the proposed actions are adequate** to meet programme's objectives and expected results.

It is worth stressing that, as stated in the Draft OP¹⁶, the selection of thematic priorities took into account both the **cross-border relevance** of the topics analyzed through the territorial analysis along with the results of the on-line survey, and the available programme budget.

The Picture below summarizes identified Specific Objectives per Priority axis and related expected results as well as the macro-typologies of the examples of actions to be supported, showing the **direct linkages between SOs, expected results and possible actions** to be supported under the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020.

¹⁶ Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020, Draft Operational Programme, par. 1.1.2 "Justification for the choice of thematic priorities"



As duly highlighted in the Draft OP, SOs were identified by taking into account challenges and needs detected through both the territorial analysis and the suggestions by stakeholders from both sides of the border. A final decision on the Intervention Logic was taken on the occasion of the Joint Working Group held in Ankara on the 13th of June, when it was decided that **Priority axis 1-Environment** should encompass also the **cross-cutting principles** of **competitiveness** and **youth** as motors of the future development of vulnerable areas in the cross-border region.

The OP internal coherence has been assessed also by using a **Cross-objectives Analysis Table** for estimating the **intensity and direction of links between objectives at the same hierarchy** with the aim to determine the degree of influence and sensitivity for each objective, while assuring the absence of contradictions. As a matter of fact, objectives having no influences on the others will be neutral towards their achievement, other objectives might be strategic to each other, while objectives with high degree of influence will be considered as leverage points of the Programme.

To this end, the Table below shows **how SOs put in the row influence SOs put in the column**. Scores vary from 0 meaning “no influence at all” to 3 which stands for “strong influence”.

Objectives	SO 1.1. To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region	SO 1.2 Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	SO 2.1 Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area through the better utilisation of natural and cultural heritage	SO 2.2. Improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region	SO 2.3 Networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials
Objectives					
SO 1.1. To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region		3	3	2	1
SO 1.2 Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	3		3	2	1
SO 2.1 Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area through the better utilisation of natural and cultural heritage	3	2		3	3
SO 2.2. Improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region	1	1	3		3
SO 2.3 Networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials	1	1	3	3	

Legenda: 0=no influence at all, 1=low influence, 2=medium influence, 3=strong influence



The analysis made through the Cross-objective Table may be summarized as follows:

- **SO 1.1 To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region** will have a positive influence on the improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area (SO1.2) and, as a consequence and in the long-term, it will reinforce the objective of increasing tourist attractiveness of the border area through the better utilization of natural and cultural heritage (SO 2.2). On the other hand, it will only indirectly influence the improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region (SO 2.2), having a low influence also in the networking for the sustainable development of tourism potentials (SO 2.3);
- **SO 1.2 Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CNBC area** will strongly influence the prevention and mitigation of risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disaster in the CBC area (SO 1.1) as well as the increase of tourist attractiveness of the border area (SO 2.1). On the contrary, this objective will partially influence the achievement of SO 2.2 (Improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services), which is more focused on touristic branding and consultancy, and will have low influence in the promotion of networking aimed to the sustainable development of tourism potentials (SO 2.3), that is mainly addressed to different target groups;
- **SO 2.1 Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area through the better utilization of natural and cultural heritage** enhances the objective of preventing and mitigating risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters (SO 1.1) even though not directly affecting the improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CNBC area (SO 1.2). At the same time, this objective reinforces the improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services (SO 2.2), strongly affecting also the specific objective of networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials (SO 2.3);
- **SO 2.2 Improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region** strongly influences the objective of increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area (SO 2.1) as it foresees the promotion of niche tourism activities, touristic products and brands. It may also positively impact on the networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials (SO 2.3). Being focused on touristic services, SO 2.2 will exercise only and indirect influence on the objectives of Priority Axis 1 “Environment” (SO 1.1 and SO 1.2);
- **SO 2.3 Networking for the sustainable development of tourism potentials** reinforces both objectives of increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area (SO 2.1) as well as improving the possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region (SO 2.2), through the exchange of good practices and experiences. As it fosters networking on tourism related themes, this objective will partially influences also environmental objectives (SO 1.1 and SO 1.2).

In order to examine the coherence between envisaged actions and stated objectives, the ex-ante evaluator took advantage of a **matrix** giving evidence to **actions’ contribution** (negative, neutral or positive) to the achievement of the objectives proposed (given in the row). Rating scale goes from -1 “*potentially negative contribution*” to 3 “*very positive contribution*”. Scores were given by taking into account both **SOs** and related **expected results**.

TP 2 PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT AND PROMOTING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION, RISK PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT – SO 1.1

Indicative Actions	Early warning and disaster management systems	Equipments related to disaster resilience	Small-scale interventions/investments	Other appropriate investments activities in relation to flooding and fire protection and early warning	Joint trainings and awareness raising	Joint strategies/common guidelines for risk prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters	Awareness raising campaigns in the field of risk prevention and management	Field trainings	Trainings in the use of ITC technologies	Exchange of experiences and good practices	Joint trainings and awareness of public service actors, youthsm volunteers and population
Specific Objectives											
TP 4											
SO 1.1. To prevent and mitigate risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters	3	3	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	1

Legenda: -1=potentially negative contribution, 0=no contribution at all, 1=low contribution, 2=positive contribution, 3= very positive contribution

TP 2 PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT AND PROMOTING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION, RISK PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT – SO 1.2

Indicative Actions	Small-scale accessibility of/to protected sites	Small-scale green infrastructures	Cooperation initiatives on management of protected areas	Joint initiatives on nature protection on the Black Sea coastal zone	Joint initiatives on protection and restoration of ecosystems	Preservation and improvement of quality of natural resources	Capacity building	Exchange of experiences and knowledge	Cooperation on low-carbon economy	Awareness raising campaigns and information in the field of environment and nature protection	Joint initiatives on sustainable use of resources
Specific Objectives TP 4											
SO 1.2. Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	1	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	2

Legenda: -1=potentially negative contribution, 0=no contribution at all, 1=low contribution, 2=positive contribution, 3=very positive contribution

TP 4 – ENCOURAGING TOURISM AND CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE – SO 2.1

Indicative Actions	Rehabilitation of access roads to natural, cultural and historic sites	Public utilities upgrade	Small touristic border crossing and related facilities	ITC facilities	Restoration/maintenance of historical and cultural sites	Conservation and protection of natural, historical and cultural heritage	Cycling routes	Walking paths	Info centres	Joint GIS platforms	Joint on-line platforms	Touristic transport schemes in Black Sea coastal zones
Specific Objectives												
TP 4												
SO 2.1. Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area through the better utilization of natural and cultural heritage	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3

Legenda: -1=potentially negative contribution, 0=no contribution at all, 1=low contribution, 2=positive contribution, 3=very positive contribution

TP 4 – ENCOURAGING TOURISM AND CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE – SO 2.2

Indicative Actions	Joint researches (niche tourism, demand for new tourist destinations and experiences)	Research activities on tourist products	Development of local brands	Development of new products and services	Multi-lingual on-line platforms	Knowledge networks for tourism innovation	Training/consultancy to improve skills and performances	Visualization of local brands (3D, mobil, social networks, etc.)	Organization of fairs and related activities	Identification of best practices	Promotion of alternative forms of tourism (rural, gourmet, eco, etc)
Specific Objectives TP 4											
SO 2.2. Improvement of possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	3

Legenda: -1=potentially negative contribution, 0=no contribution at all, 1=low contribution, 2=positive contribution, 3=very positive contribution

TP 4 – ENCOURAGING TOURISM AND CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE – SO 2.3

Indicative Actions	Organization of events (trainings and courses, exchange of experiences, including on-line forum, etc.)	Organization of networking events	Surveys (domestic and international demand, quality of services, etc.)	Organization of joint events (festivals, exhibitions, performances, etc.)	Promotion of common traditions	Awareness raising campaigns on the value of regional natural and cultural heritage	CBC Capacity Building in the field of tourism	Local events addressed to specific target groups (youth, migrants and others)	Joint marketing and networking activities
Specific Objectives TP 4									
SO 2.3. Networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	3

Legenda: -1=potentially negative contribution, 0=no contribution at all, 1=low contribution, 2=positive contribution, 3=very positive contribution

All in all, the previous coherence matrixes show the **potential high contribution of the indicative actions to the achievement of Programme Specific Objectives**. As a matter of fact, most actions relating to SOs of both Priority Axis registered scores between 2 “*positive contribution*” and 3 “*very positive contribution*” being specific for the related SO and well-targeted.

To overcome possible inaccuracies and avoid gaps in Programme’s internal coherence, it would be useful to **better outline the cause-effect relation between specific objectives, expected result and actions**. To this end, both **investments and soft measures may be further grouped into typologies of actions** (for instance, awareness raising campaigns, events, small-scale interventions, etc.) with the twofold objective to focus and valorize the most suitable interventions for achieving programme objectives and to identify a more limited number of output indicators to ease and target future monitoring.

Nonetheless, the list of possible actions will be further developed and **additional clarifications about the typologies of actions to be supported will be given in guidelines for applicants** during programme implementation stage.

Meanwhile, suggestions aiming to better the definition of proposed interventions were accepted by the MA and related text in the Draft OP was revised accordingly.

2.2.3 Horizontal principles

Evaluation questions’ check list	
Has the principle of equality been taken into account? Are the planned measures adequate to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination?	+++
Are the planned measures adequate to promote sustainable development?	+++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

In accordance with Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, **horizontal principles** of “Promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination” (Art. 7) and “Sustainable development” (Art. 8) **have been taken into consideration throughout the programming process** and the Programme’s contribution to their respect and achievement throughout the programme implementation is duly described in the Draft OP (Section VI- “Horizontal principles”).

As far as the programing process is concerned, the participatory pathway organized from the very beginning of the programme design has ensured the **involvement of relevant stakeholders without discrimination** based on sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sex orientation in the preparation of the programme.

Issues linked to **social and cultural inclusion** along with sustainable development have been **suitably considered in preparatory works**, such as in the regional and SWOT analysis.

In the Draft OP, the programmer duly described how the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 will cope with **sustainable development, equal opportunities** as well as **equality between men and women** by explaining reasons and modalities how Priority axis deal with them, giving evidence also to actions’ contribution to the fulfillment of horizontal principles. It is also stressed that **non-discrimination** is considered as a **cross-cutting principle**.

In the framework of the new Programme, **projects will have to integrate measures considering horizontal principles** and their contribution to the achievements of these principles will be taken into account in the **quality assessment for project selection** along with programme monitoring and evaluation. Related indications for monitoring horizontal principles to potential beneficiaries will be given in guidelines for applicants.

Given the above, the Ex-ante Evaluator considers satisfactory the existing approach of the OP as it is.

Nonetheless, where possible, it would be useful to **break down indicators by gender** (for instance, OI 2.2-4 n° of people involved in training and capacity building activities in the field of sustainable tourism – out of which n° of women-) both at programme and project level.

2.2.4 Conclusions and recommendations

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
Programme strategy	
<i>External coherence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis carried out by the Ex-ante Evaluator showed the overall external coherence of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 with EU, Bulgaria and Turkey strategic frameworks, avoiding overlaps and facilitating the concentration of funds. The Programme consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy and to the Common Strategic Framework is clear as well as the direct contribution to macro-regional strategies. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, the strategy proposed directly contributes to the objectives of the National Reform Programme, the National Development Programme, the National Regional Development Strategy along with the Position Paper and the Partnership Agreement as well as with relevant Operational Programmes. The CBC Programme will also contribute to the achievement of the goals set in the EC Country Strategy Paper for Turkey and in the Tenth Development Plan. The analysis also revealed possible synergies with future ETC programmes, such as, for example, Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC Programme, Danube Transnational Programme and INTERREG Europe, which directly involve Bulgaria as Partner Country. To give evidence to the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme consistency with EU, national and regional frameworks, it is recommended to give more evidence to programme external coherence in Chapter 1 “Strategy for the for the cooperation programme’s contribution to the selected Thematic Priorities and the relevant Partnership Agreement and Country Strategy Paper(s)” of the Draft Operational Programme. To this end, it would be useful to include both a paragraph on the Programme’s contribution to the EU Strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as one on direct linkages with objectives of the Partnership Agreement for Bulgaria and Country Strategy Paper concerning Turkey.
<i>Internal coherence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis of the Programme’s Intervention Logic showed the internal coherence of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC, giving evidence to the links between objectives, expected results and proposed actions. The selection of the Specific Objectives (SOs) match the needs assessment, taking into account challenges and needs detected through the regional and SWOT analysis as well as suggestions from relevant stakeholders. SOs within the same Priority Axis reinforce each other and have potential synergies with SOs relating to others thematic priorities. For instance, the prevention of natural and man-made hazards along with the

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
	<p>improvement of the capacity for nature protection and the sustainable use of natural resources can be rightly considered as pre-requisite for increasing tourist attractiveness and promoting the sustainable development of tourism potentials. Moreover, most examples of actions to be supported are in line with the objectives proposed and are expected to guarantee a high contribution to their achievement. Related target groups and potential beneficiaries are identified and clearly described. Actions, whose definition was vague and whose contribution to programme objectives achievement was not clear, were revised in the Draft OP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to select the most appropriate actions for achieving Programme's objectives, it would be useful to better outline the cause-effect relation between specific objectives, expected results and actions. To this end, both investments and soft measures may be further grouped into typologies of actions (for instance, awareness raising campaigns, events, small-scale interventions, etc.) so as to make interventions more tailored on proposed strategy. Nonetheless, further clarifications will be given in guidelines for applicants.
<i>Horizontal principles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal principles foreseen by Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 were duly considered in preparatory works (baseline and SWOT analysis) and were taken into account throughout the programming process as highlighted by the participatory pathway aimed at the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the programme design. Section VI of the Draft OP properly describes how the Programme will deal with and foster the respect of horizontal principles, stressing that even projects will contribute to their achievement, integrating measures considering horizontal principles. It would be useful to introduce indicators able to monitor how horizontal principles will be fulfilled. To this end, information about the respect of horizontal principles may derive from projects' progress reports and Programme's Annual Implementation Reports. As far as equality between men and women is concerned, where possible, indicators may be broken down by gender (i.e. OI 2.2-4 n° of people involved in training and capacity building activities in the field of sustainable tourism – out of which n° of women-).

2.3 Indicators, monitoring and evaluation

The present section shows the ex-ante evaluation's **findings on the monitoring and evaluation system as well as Programme delivery mechanisms and structure set by the programmer for the efficient implementation of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020**, according to Art. 55 of the Regulation (EU) N. 1303/2013.

Bearing in mind the **increased focus on results of the 2014-2020 programming period**, the Evaluator has appraised:

- the set of result and output indicators' suitability** to assess the progresses made by the programme towards the achievement of the Specific objectives, namely the relevance and clarity of proposed indicators along with quantified baseline and target values;

- the **adequacy of the implementing provisions** with particular reference to the administrative capacity for the management of the programme, the appropriateness of the procedures for data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

As for the analysis on Programme's set of indicators is concerned, it is worth stressing that within the Draft Final Report of 30 June 2014, the Ex-ante Evaluator provided the MA with a series of comments (general and per specific theme) according to the analysis based on the Draft OP (version 1.0 – June 2014).

In light of a very collaborative process, the MA has taken into consideration the Ex-ante evaluator comments and recommendations as shown in dashboard below highlighting the **main conclusions and recommendations regarding indicators, covered by the Overview on indicators (May 2014) and Draft Final Report (June 2014)** in order to provide a complete overview of the different steps conducted.



General comments

- Specific Objectives and related expected results are clearly defined to properly address future monitoring.
- Particular attention should be paid to the formulation of indicators (both result and output) making them easily understandable for beneficiaries, who might be directly involved in the gathering of data and monitoring during projects' implementation;
- According to regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 programming period and following Evaluator's recommendations, it is advisable to include a clear reference to the monitoring of horizontal principles in the indicators' system (e.g social inclusion, gender equality, sustainable development).



Output indicators

- Proposed Output Indicators (OIs) seem to be suitable for monitoring the progresses of proposed actions. Nonetheless, some definitions need additional clarifications.



Result indicators

- The choice of foreseeing one Result Indicator (RI) for each expected result is sharable.
- The analysis of Programme specific RIs showed that the **definitions of some result indicators are generic and similar to those of OIs**
- As far as **baseline value of RIs** are concerned, some of them may be calculated through **surveys at the beginning of programme implementation** and be repeated, for instance, after for year (2019 and 2023).
- **Targets can be calculated taking into account** baseline values and

the number of expected actions to be implemented. When statistical data are available, target values can be calculated by applying a growth rate estimated on historical data and the number of initiatives that will be developed

Elaboration by the ex-ante evaluator on the Programme Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020

To give evidence to the evaluation path on proposed indicators, hereinafter are also proposed Evaluator's recommendations included in the Draft of the Ex-ante Evaluation (June 2014). The Tables show Evaluators' comments about the first version of Programme's indicators (version 0.1 of the Draft OP) and present related suggestions for a modified set of indicators.

Further analysis on the revised set of indicators included in Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014) are given in the following paragraphs.

PRIORITY AXIS 1- ENVIRONMENT - PROGRAMME SPECIFIC RESULT INDICATORS: ORIGINAL TABLE

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting	Comments
R-1.1.1: Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters	RI-1.1.1 Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management	Percentage				National (regional) disaster statistics Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023	The indicator is generic and similar to an output's indicator. It could be better to associate the indicator to each a given element (e.g. preparedness to prevention and risk management related to infrastructure, to training, to public bodies, etc.). The monitoring of these indicators could be based on the monitoring system and, given their quantitative nature, they could be quantified on a yearly basis.
R-1.1.2: Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	RI 1.1.2 Increased number of joint initiatives in the field of risk prevention and management	Percentage				National (regional) disaster statistics Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023	The indicator is generic and similar to an output's indicator. It could be replaced with "Joint initiatives related to nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources/ Total initiatives related to nature protection". The baseline can be calculated with survey and the frequency can be 2015, 2019, 2023. The target will be calculated from the baseline and the number of actions to be implemented.
R-1.2.1: Improved conditions of nature-protected sites	RI 1.2.1 Increased number of interventions, addressing improved nature protected sites	Percentage				Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023	The indicator is generic and similar to an output's indicator. It could be replaced with "Surface area affected by the actions of environmental prevention / Total area with environmental risk (seismic, geological, etc.)". The baseline should be available by agencies operating in the environmental protection. The target will be calculated from the baseline and the number of actions to be implemented.
R-1.2.2: Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	RI 1.2.2 Improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area through joint initiatives for nature protection	Percentage	To be established	2013		Survey Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023	The indicator is generic and similar to an output's indicator. It could be replaced with "Increase the number of stakeholders who have improved their knowledge and skills in natural resource management and adoption of sustainable management practices". The baseline can be calculated with survey and the frequency can be 2015, 2019, 2023. The target will be calculated from the baseline and the number of actions to be implemented.



PRIORITY AXIS 1- ENVIRONMENT - PROGRAMME SPECIFIC RESULT INDICATORS: PROPOSAL FOR A MODIFIED TABLE

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-1.1.1: Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters	RI-1.1.1 Increased number of supported interventions in the field of risk prevention and management (specifying the theme: infrastructure, training, etc.)	N. of interventions supported in the field of risk prevention and management related to specific theme	To be established	2014	Increase	Monitoring system Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	Annually
R-1.1.2: Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	RI 1.1.2 Joint initiatives related to nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources/ Total initiatives related to nature protection	Percentage	To be established	2015	Increase	Survey among target groups	2015 2019 2023
R-1.2.1: Improved conditions of nature-protected sites	RI 1.2.1 Surface area of land affected by environmental prevention interventions/ Total area with environmental risk	Percentage	To be established	2014	Increase	National statistics on Environment	2018 2023
R-1.2.2: Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	RI 1.2.2 Increased number of stakeholders who have improved their knowledge and skills in natural resource management and adoption of sustainable management practices	% of actors regarding it as to be good	To be established	2015	Increase	Survey among target groups	2015 2019 2023

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – PROGRAMME SPECIFIC RESULT INDICATORS: ORIGINAL TABLE

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting	Comments
R-2.1: Increased tourist attractiveness of the cross-border region	RI-2.1: Increased number of tourists/ visitors in the cross-border area	Percentage	To be established	2013		Statistical Data; Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023	The measurement unit is "number", because the value is an absolute number. The target could be identified from the baseline value, applying a growth rate estimated on historical data and number of initiatives that will be developed.
R-2.2: Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC-region	RI-2.2: Level of valorisation of natural and cultural heritage in tourism context	Percentage	To be established	2014		Survey	2018 2023	It should specify who are the "actors" that are considered. There should be a short survey to identify the baseline. It could add a further indicator: "Percentage of tourist attractions adopting a policy or plan of protection of cultural heritage." The baseline value should be readily available c / o national agencies operating on the cultural heritage. The target is related to the number of initiatives that will be developed on the subject.
R-2.3: Enhanced cooperation among regional actors related to sustainable tourism	RI-2.3: Increased number of cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable tourism	Percentage	To be established	2013		Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023	The target could be identified from the baseline value, applying a growth rate estimated on historical data and number of initiatives that will be developed.

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – PROGRAMME SPECIFIC RESULT INDICATORS: PROPOSAL FOR A MODIFIED TABLE

Expected Results	Result Indicators	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R-2.1: Increased tourist attractiveness of the cross-border region	RI-2.1: Increased number of tourists/visitors in the cross-border area	Number	To be established	2014	Increase	Statistical Data; Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023
R-2.2: Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC-region	RI-2.2.a: Level of valorisation of natural and cultural heritage in tourism context	% of actors regarding it as to be good	To be established	2015	Increase	Survey among target groups	2018 2023
	RI-2.2.b: Percentage of tourist attractions adopting a policy or plan of protection of cultural heritage	Percentage	TBD	2014	Increase	National statistics on Cultural heritage	2018 2023
R-2.3: Enhanced cooperation among regional actors related to sustainable tourism	RI-2.3: Increased number of cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable tourism	Percentage	To be established	2014	Increase	Progress and Annual Implementation Reports	2018 2023

2.3.1 Relevance and clarity of proposed programme indicators

Evaluation questions' check list	
<i>Result indicators</i>	
Does each priority axis include at least one result indicator?	+++
Do(es) the result indicator(s) reflect the operations and objectives of the priority axes?	+++
Is (Are) the result indicator(s) relevant (e.g. Do they cover the most important intended change? Is their value influenced as directly as possible by the actions funded under the priority axis?)	+++
<i>Output indicators</i>	
Are the output indicators relevant to the actions supported?	+++
Are the intended outputs likely to contribute to the change in result indicators?	+++
<i>Common indicators</i>	
Are the Common indicators used where relevant to the content of the investment priorities and specific objectives?	++
Do programme-specific indicators have a clear title and an unequivocal and easy to understand definition?	+++
Do the indicators have an accepted normative interpretation (e.g. Is there a common understanding that a change in the value of the indicator is positive or negative?)	+++
Are the indicators robust (e.g. Their values cannot unduly be influenced by outliers or extreme values)?	+++
Are data source for result indicators identified and available?	+++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

From the methodological point of view, the ex-ante Evaluator has focused his analysis on the observation of the degree of **coherence between objectives and indicators**, following the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach which states that the role of indicators is *"to describe general and specific objectives and results in operational terms. By specifying indicators as quantifiable measures, they act as instruments aiming to control the objectives' achievement and represent the base for the monitoring system"*. According to the PCM's approach, a good indicator has to be **objectively verifiable**, allowing the examination of different levels of objectives in an operational, concise and reliable way¹⁷.

It is therefore essential for indicators to have an **explanatory power** representing a suitable benchmark for the formulation of an assessment about the degree of effectiveness of the intervention taken into consideration. Given these premises and taking into account the objective of verifying the suitability of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020's proposed set of indicators, the Evaluator had recourse to methodological instructions known in scientific literature as the **S.M.A.R.T**¹⁸ indicators. The acronym stands for:

- **Specific** for the objectives that the indicator aims to observe;
- **Measurable** both in quantitative and qualitative terms;
- **Available** at reasonable costs;
- **Relevant** with reference to the informative needs expressed by Programme's joint

¹⁷ European Commission, EuropeAid – Project Cycle Management Guidelines, 2004.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*

management structures and significant stakeholders;

■ **Time-bound.**

To analyse proposed result and output indicators, the Ex-ante Evaluator took in to account not only indicators' formulation, but also the overall information given in the Draft OP, such as measurement units, baseline and target values, source of data as well as frequency of reporting. Moreover, to make the analysis more usable, the ex-ante Evaluator found it appropriate to specify the meaning of the S.M.A.R.T. criteria by linking them to objective assessment parameters that were given a specific score (from 1 to 3) as shown in the Table below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE S.M.A.R.T. CRITERIA'S METHODOLOGY

S.M.A.R.T. Criterion	Assessment parameter	Maximum score
Specific Indicator related to the objectives that intends to measure and able to give useful and appropriate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the indicator give appropriate information relating to the objectives that it intends to measure? (1 point) Is the indicator significant? (1 point) Is the indicator clear and easily understandable? (1 point) 	3
Measurable Indicator suitable to be quantified, observed and analysed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the indicator be observed through a clear measuring method/instrument? (1 point) Can the indicator be numerically quantified? (1 point) Can the indicator be measured through primary or secondary informative sources? (1 point) 	3
Available The information used to quantify the indicator are available at reasonable costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the indicator be measured through available information? (1 point) Are the necessary information available at reasonable costs according to the "saving principle"? (1 point) Are the necessary information easily achievable? (1 point) 	3
Relevant Indicator able to measure the phenomenon for which it has been proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the indicator suitably measure the analysed objectives? (1 point) Does the indicator give information about the characteristics and the added value of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme? (1 punto) Is the indicator connected to the informative needs of the Programme's joint management structures and relevant stakeholders? (1 point) 	3
Time-bound Indicator duly put into temporal bounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the indicator be referred to punctual span of time? (1 point) Is the indicator repeatable? (1point) Can the indicator be processed, fastly and easily updated with reference to the objectives analysed? (1point) 	3

Explanatory score list: 1=LOW, 2=MEDIUM, 3=HIGH

Source: elaboration by the ex-ante Evaluator

The following Tables show the results of the analysis on both result and output indicators per Priority axis, following S.M.A.R.T. criteria.

The overall judgment on each indicator's suitability to proper monitor Programme's achievements is expressed through colors:



- **green** meaning that the indicator is **highly S.M.A.R.T.**;
- **orange** stands for indicators that are **still good**, but might need further fine-tunings;
- **red** describing indicators, which are **not fully suitable** for assessing expected results.

Proposed **result indicators are generally highly S.M.A.R.T. and suitable to monitor Priority axis 1 achievements**. Among them, RI-1.2-1 reaches a medium score, since it only indirectly measures the capacity of nature protection and the added value of the cross-border programme. Indeed, the surface area addressed by environmental protection interventions will be a consequence of the improved capacity for nature protection and might be considered more as an output indicator. It is therefore **suggested to delete RI-1.2-1 or reformulate it**, making it more suitable to monitor the related expected result.

PRIORITY AXIS 1 – ENVIRONMENT: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON RESULT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Result Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
1.1 To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region	R1.1.1: Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters	RI-1.1-1 Increased interventions in the field of risk prevention and management	H	H	H	M	H	Green
	R1.1.2: Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	RI-1.1-2 Increased joint initiatives in the field of risk prevention and management	H	H	H	H	H	Green
1.2 Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	R1.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	RI-1.2-1 Surface area of land addressed by environmental protection interventions	M	H	H	M	H	Orange
		R-1.2-2 Improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area through joint initiatives for nature protection	H	H	H	H	H	Green

Legend Per each criterion: 1=Low, 2=Medium, 3=High

The S.M.A.R.T. analysis revealed the **appropriateness of output indicators to verify Programme's outcomes** and gradual progresses. As a matter of fact, most output indicators are specific for the objectives they relate to and guarantee relevant information on the interventions they aim to monitor. Nevertheless, the programmer should take into account the possibility of **reformulating output indicators relating to Specific Objective 1.2** or to rely on just OI-1.2-3, which gained the maximum score for each criterion analysed and may duly be considered sufficient for monitoring the improvement of the capacity for nature protection in the cross-border area.

PRIORITY AXIS 1 – ENVIRONMENT: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON OUTPUT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Output Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
1.1 To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region	R1.1.1: Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters	OI-1.1-1 Number of supported interventions/investments related to risk prevention and disaster management of natural and man-made disasters	H	H	H	H	H	
		OI-1.1-2 Supplied specialised equipment/fixed assets; joint tools/services established or improved related to risk prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters	H	H	H	H	H	
	R1.1.2: Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	OI-1.1-3 Joint strategies/common guidelines, trainings, public awareness campaigns, exchange of experience for risk prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters	H	H	H	H	H	
1.2 Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	R1.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	OI-1.2-1 Nature protected areas	M	H	H	L	M	
		OI-1.2-2 Protected areas/sites in the border region with management plans	M	H	H	M	H	
		OI-1.2-3 Capacity building initiatives, trainings, exchange of experience and know-how	H	H	H	H	H	
		OI-1.2-4 Joint awareness raising campaigns	M	H	H	M	H	

Legend Per each criterion: 1=Low, 2=Medium, 3=High

As far as result indicators of **Priority axis 2** are concerned, the assessment based on S.M.A.R.T. criteria highlighted the **suitability of proposed indicators to monitor and verify the achievement of expected results**, being notably specific, measurable and relevant considering the phenomena they intend to monitor.

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON RESULT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Result Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
2.1 Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the cross-border area through better utilization of natural, cultural and historical heritage and related	R2.1: Increased tourist attractiveness of the CBC region	RI-2.1 Increased visits to cross-border area	H	H	M	H	H	

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON RESULT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Result Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
infrastructure								
2.2 Valorising the cross-border tourism by developing common destinations	R2.2: Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic destinations in the CBC region	RI-2.2 Increased level of touristic valorisation of natural, cultural and historical heritage	M	H	M	H	H	
2.3 Networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials	R2.3 Enhanced cooperation related to sustainable tourism among regional actors	RI-2.3 Increased cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable tourism	H	H	H	H	H	

Legend Per each criterion: 1=Low, 2=Medium, 3=High

Likewise, **output indicators relating to Priority axis 2 are directly linked to the interventions to be supported and meet all the criteria for monitoring the progresses of proposed actions** and for assessing the achievement of expected results, as shown in the Table below.

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON OUTPUT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Output Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
2.1 Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the cross-border area through better utilization of natural, cultural and historical heritage and related infrastructure	R2.1: Increased tourist attractiveness of the CBC region	OI-2.1-1 Total length of reconstructed or upgraded access roads to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.1-2 Total length of newly built, reconstructed or upgraded cycling routes/walking paths	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.1-3 Total length of newly built/reconstructed facilities in/leading to touristic sites in the eligible cross-border area	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.1-4 Total number reconstructed/restored cultural and historical touristic sites in the eligible cross-border area	H	H	H	H	M	
2.2 Valorising the cross-border tourism by developing common destinations	R2.2: Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic destinations in the CBC region	OI-2.2-1 Number of sustainable tourism strategies/action plans of common tourist destinations	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.2-2 Number of marketing initiatives addressing cross-border tourism products &	H	H	H	H	M	

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: S.M.A.R.T. ANALYSIS ON OUTPUT INDICATORS

Specific Objective	Expected result	Output Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Tot
		services						
		OI-2.2-3 Tools developed and/or implemented for promotion of sustainable touristic potential in the cross-border area	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.2-4 Number of people involved in training and capacity building activities in the field of sustainable tourism	M	H	H	M	M	
2.3 Networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials	R2.3 Enhanced cooperation related to sustainable tourism among regional actors	OI-2.3-1 Joint promotional events for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.3-2 Marketing and networking events	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.3-3 Training and capacity building implemented on sustainable use of natural, historical and cultural heritage and resources	H	H	H	H	M	
		OI-2.3-4 Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural, historical and cultural heritage and resources	M	H	H	H	M	

Legend Per each criterion: 1=Low, 2=Medium, 3=High

2.3.2 Quantified baseline and target value

Evaluation questions' check list

Where a quantified baseline has been set for a programme-specific result indicator: Do the baseline use the latest available data? If not, what is the baseline based on most recent and appropriate data?	+++
Where no quantified baseline has been set for a programme-specific result indicator: Is it possible to set a quantified baseline? What is the quantified baseline based on most recent and appropriate data?	+++
Where a quantified target value has been set for common and programme-specific indicators: Is the targeted value realistic taking into account the actions and forms of support as well as the financial allocation to priority axes and the indicative allocation at the level of categories of interventions/investment priorities?	++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

According to the Guidance document on the ex-ante evaluation drafted by the EC, one of main tasks of the Evaluator is to **ensure that all targets have been quantified**, that **target**



values are realistic, that their **estimation is adequate and plausible** (taking into account, if appropriate, both the results obtained in the 2007-2013 programming period and proposed baseline values) and that the assessment **methodology** is clear and easily replicable.

Target values are therefore essential, not only to understand the policy direction, but also to evaluate the intensity of the effort made by the programmer and the future managing authorities for achieving expected results, given a certain baseline value. During programme implementation, annual reports will be drafted to monitor the progresses made, through the observation of the gradual achievement of target values.

Given these premises, the Ex-ante Evaluator analyzed the set of common and programme specific indicators included in the Draft OP, by verifying the following three dimensions:

1. **Quantification of target values;**
2. **Suitability of the methodology** proposed for future monitoring;
3. **Plausibility of target values** also taking into consideration the financial allocations to Priority axis and indicative allocations to categories of interventions.

As shown in the Tables below, the Draft OP includes programme specific result indicators' baseline and target values along with measurement units, sources of data and frequency of reporting.

PRIORITY AXIS 1 – ENVIRONMENT: QUANTIFIED RESULT INDICATORS

Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Target value	Source	Frequency
RI-1.1-1 Increased interventions in the field of risk prevention and management	%	to be established	Increase	Survey Progress and Annual Reports	2019 2023
RI-1.1-2 Increased joint initiatives in the field of risk prevention and management	%	to be established	Increase	Survey Progress and Annual Reports	2019 2023
RI-1.2-1 Surface area of land addressed by environmental protection interventions	%	to be established	Increase	Survey Progress and Annual Reports	2019 2023
R-1.2-2 Improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area through joint initiatives for nature protection	%	to be established	Increase	Survey Progress and Annual Reports	2019 2023

Source: BULGARIA-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 – Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014)

As far as **Priority axis 1** is concerned, baseline values will be established, at the beginning of programme implementation, through **ad hoc surveys** aimed to detect relevant information on the starting conditions, that will be then monitored through projects and programme reports during the programming period (in 2019) and *ex post* (in 2023). Target values will be represented by the **increase of the baseline** (expressed with a percentage).

The same methodology will be adopted for monitoring progresses towards target values identified for **Priority axis 2**, even though measurement units and data sources will be slightly different.

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: QUANTIFIED RESULT INDICATORS

Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Target value	Source	Frequency
RI-2.1 Increased visits to cross-border area	%	To be established	Increase	Statistical data Survey	2019 2023
RI-2.2 Increased level of touristic valorisation of natural, cultural and historical heritage	Ordinal scale (1-10)	To be established	Increase	Survey	2019 2023
RI-2.3 Increased cross-border networks operating in the field of sustainable tourism	%	To be established	Increase	Progress and Annual Reports	2019 2023

Source: BULGARIA-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 – Draft OP (version 2.0 – July 2014)

In all cases, target values will be interpreted as increases of baselines to be calculated through the use of statistical data, surveys or progress/annual reports. Unlike the others, the quantification of RI-2.2 “Increased level of touristic valorization of natural, cultural and historical heritage” will be expressed through ordinal scale values (from 1 to 10) to be monitored by means of surveys, in the years 2019 and 2023.

To make result indicators of both Priority axis more effective, **it would be worth to identify a punctual percentage measuring the expected increase** (for instance, 10%, 20%, etc.) to be identified taking into consideration baseline values, the expected number of projects to be supported and related financial allocation.

As for common and programme specific **output indicators**, the programmer has identified countable indicators (i.e. Kilometres, number of initiatives) that will be monitored annually through progress and annual implementation reports. To this end, projects’ monitoring will be duly taken into account in the appraisal of Programme’s achievements.

At this stage of the programming, target values for the year 2023 related to output indicators are under establishment, so no specific recommendation can be drawn on this topic. Nevertheless, the Ex-ante Evaluator advices to take into consideration, in defining target values, also the nature of ordinary or strategic projects to be supported.

The overall analysis on the set of indicators and the financial allocation shows the coherence along with **direct linkages between result and output indicators and the budget per category of intervention**.

2.3.3 Administrative capacity, data collection procedure and evaluation

This section is intended to analyze the organization of the **management system for the efficient implementation of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020**.

The ex-ante evaluation examined the conformity with the relevant regulatory provisions in force and the functionality and efficiency of the envisioned programme management system. The following Table contains related comments and proposals, mostly based on the experiences of the previous programming period.

Theme	Compliance with the regulatory provisions	Functionality of the programme delivery mechanism and structure	Comments
Composition of the Joint Monitoring Committee	+++	++	The indicative list of the members of the JMC is composed mainly of a list of categories of institutions and organizations. This is still insufficient for the proper identification and assessment of the relevance of the composition.
Description of the functions and responsibilities of the bodies responsible for the management of the programme	+++	++	The function of the bodies responsible for the management of the programme is clearly and sufficiently described. Nevertheless, the tasks of the Joint Secretariat shall be better and more clearly structured and outlined.
Compliance with the principle of separation of tasks between the management bodies	+++	+++	The links and relations among different management bodies is clearly explained, the division of roles is satisfactory.
Efficiency and functionality of the management and control system	+++	+++	According to Art 39 of Implementing Regulation 744/2014, "the beneficiaries shall cooperate in the development and implementation of operations. In addition, they shall cooperate in either the staffing or the financing of the operations." Therefore, the first statement under "Selection of operations" section (page 77) shall be revised accordingly.

The **description of the programme delivery mechanisms and structure is satisfactory**; the Draft OP shows a proper level of detail and the roles as well as links between different bodies are clear.

The **arrangements for the management and control system are explained in detail and are well structured**, with a delimitation between institutional and procedural parts.

The **clear indication of the role of the Joint Secretariat is especially needed**, since its role is not precisely determined within the Regulations. Therefore, it is important to have a presentation of its tasks, **especially in relation to the organization of the procedure for selection of operations and of concluding the Subsidy Contracts**. The present description should be revised and included under point 5.4.

As far as the *Guiding principles for the selection of operations* are concerned, the **selection principles have been clearly outlined** and are comprehensive to ensure a fair and relevant selection procedure:

- The **“Strategic Coherence” criteria** analyses the relevancy of the proposal towards the Program’s objectives, including the CBC character, the partnership principle and the regional relevance;
- The **project design and implementation logic is sufficiently weighted**, but makes no clear mention on the time-bound characteristic of the planned activities;
- The **horizontal principles are briefly enumerated**, with vague links to the gender equality and environmental protection principles.

The selection criteria for **Strategic Projects** makes general comments on the effects envisaged by the respective initiatives; **more detailed/clearer criteria should have been selected**.

It is worth underlining that, during the 2007-2013 programming period, it has been stressed the importance of **strategic projects**, with particular reference to cross-border cooperation Programmes.

While carrying out on-going evaluations in the 2007-2013 programming period, many evaluators highlighted the main characteristics that are considered mandatory for defining projects as “strategic” in order to facilitate the MAs in financing and selecting them.

The following table presents the result of the Ex-ante Evaluator exercise on the main issues a strategic project should cover in order to be complete and valuable. These issues are, at the same time, useful as criteria to be applicable in the **quality assessment for the projects’ selection criteria**.

A STRATEGIC PROJECT SHOULD...	
Main criteria	Sub-Criteria
Impact on the cooperation area	Have a wide and balanced geographical coverage of the cross-border cooperation area
	Contribute to reduce the unemployment rate in the cooperation area, also in the light of worsening of the socio-economic situation surfacing from the global crisis
	Address the criticism of lack of statistic information and data available mainly for CC of the cooperation area, in order to pave the way for reaching common settlement patterns between MS and CC in identifying and implementing more effective and strategic territorial/spatial development policies
	Be directly useful for Local, Regional and National Authorities/other relevant

A STRATEGIC PROJECT SHOULD...

	<p>stakeholders and their results should be of benefit for all the cooperation area, directly or indirectly through a wide dissemination strategy</p> <p>Involve Local and Regional authorities as much as possible in the project's strategic life cycle, moreover with the aim to promote a better governance in the area and foster the institutional and administrative capacity as well as the ownership of territorial institutions</p> <p>Take into account the most successful/relevant CBC projects implemented within the framework of ordinary Call for proposal (i.e. through cross-fertilisation activities between common topics; by establishing capitalisation activities in connection with standard projects focused on common topics; by complying missing project types in the portfolio of at present approved projects)</p>
Strong and coherent partnership	<p>Rely on the building of large partnership of key actors in the specific field of intervention, involving decision-makers, thematic experts, specialised bodies and end-users As a result, partnership should refer to a multi-level governance model as well as to a multi-dimensional governance system</p> <p>Have strict relation between project's general and specific objectives and institutional and administrative competences/skills of partners</p> <p>Involve the most relevant partners able and "politically" committed to achieve the envisaged outputs and results; the project partnership must be competent/committed to develop, implement and disseminate jointly elaborated approaches and tools</p> <p>Have representativeness at national level and the linked partnership has to show capacity to mobilise target groups/stakeholders and assure cross-border involvement/role in international networks on the matters addressed by the proposed projects (permanent partnership, beyond specific co-operation projects)</p>
Sustainability of results	<p>Ensure sustainability at institutional level and include statements and activities which will guarantee that the results achieved will be further used and promoted by other Programmes and projects after the end of the project</p> <p>Be sustainable in economic terms, being able to mobilise additional private and/or public funds to pursue, if necessary, its activities after the end of the project</p>
Coherence with European, national and regional policies	<p>Be developed in coherence with the EU, national and regional policies and with existing cooperation initiatives in the area</p> <p>Be built on the basis of a deep knowledge of existing state of art and taking into account former and current public policies and projects implemented within the area, in order to produce real added value related to existing needs</p> <p>Be concretely aimed at supporting specific objectives of mainstream Programmes within the framework of a cross-border dimension (i.e. Regional Operational Programmes, Macro-Regional Strategies)</p>

An **efficient informative monitoring system** is the backdrop for a sound Programme's management. In light of this, it is mandatory to build the informative system, learning from experience, stemming also from similar contexts.

Alongside the abovementioned, the Ex-ante Evaluator provides the MA with a preliminary list of **hints and suggestions** useful for implementing a sound management and monitoring informative system and, besides, for reducing potential administrative burdens on beneficiaries.



Positive factors for an efficient informative monitoring and management system	Evaluator's hints and suggestions
Single Management and Monitoring System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimization of project lifecycle and of its monitoring in progress: from the creation of the proposal to its physical and financial Monitoring
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimization of logging-in timing of potential beneficiaries (unitary User account to send even more than one project proposal/Application Form) System User-friendliness concerning on-line notification after beneficiaries data-entry System User-friendliness concerning the financial tables interconnection. They allow crossed checks among different data, automatic calculation in different fields and immediate notification for eventual errors or inconsistencies
Programme Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granted support to status and Beneficiaries Progress Reports monitoring, related to the developed activities, as well as the inserted financial data logging-in linearity and traceability of expenditure certifications created by final beneficiaries of the approved projects Efficiency in Application for reimbursement by the Lead Beneficiary after Declaration and validation of Expenditures as well as in Payment Order from the MA to the CA Rationalization of the Controls organization on the expenditures (First Level Control and others)

2.3.4 Conclusions and recommendations

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
Indicators, monitoring and evaluation	
<i>Relevance and clarity of proposed indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific Objectives and related expected results are clearly defined to properly address future monitoring. The choice of foreseeing one Result Indicator (RI) for each expected result is sharable. Clarifications about the contribution of possible actions to the achievement of specific objectives are given in the Draft OP. Common output indicators (Annex of Reg.EU N.1299/2013 on ETC goal) have been taken into consideration while defining OP's monitoring system (i.e. indicators relating to SO 2.1) The programmer accepted Ex-ante evaluator's suggestions to clarify some output indicators' and to improve the definitions of some result indicators, making appropriate revisions in the OP. The analysis of the revised set of indicators according to S.M.A.R.T. criteria proved result a output indicators' suitability to monitor and verify Programme's achievements. Nonetheless, some additional fine-tunings may be appropriate.
<i>Quantified baseline and target value</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Draft OP includes programme specific result indicators' baseline and target values along with measurement units, sources of data and

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
	<p>frequency of reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme specific result indicators' baseline values will be established, at the beginning of programme implementation, through ad hoc surveys aimed to detect relevant information on the starting conditions, that will be then monitored through projects and programme reports during the programming period (in 2019) and <i>ex post</i> (in 2023). ▪ Programme specific result indicators' target values will be represented by the increase of the baseline (expressed with a percentage or ordinal scale). ▪ As for common and programme specific output indicators, the programmer has identified countable indicators (i.e. Kilometres, number of initiatives) that will be monitored annually through progress and annual implementation reports. ▪ Common and specific output indicators' target values for the year 2023 related to output indicators are under establishment. ▪ As far as result indicators are concerned, it would be worth to identify a punctual percentage measuring the expected increase (for instance, 10%, 20%, etc.) to be identified taking into consideration baseline values, the expected number of projects to be supported and the financial allocation.
Administrative capacity, data collection procedures and evaluation	
<i>Composition and functions of the Joint Monitoring Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The indicative list of members of the JMC shall identify more precisely which are the institutions and organizations which will take part in the work of the body. ▪ The Programme may use the possibility of involving bodies in the work of the JMC with advisory role, since they can provide valuable input for the programme coordination.
<i>Description of the functions of the bodies responsible for the management and control system of the programme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The functions and responsibilities of the bodies responsible for the management system are in line with the regulatory framework and well described ▪ The functions of the Joint Secretariat should be better described and made consistent with the description of the procedures under point 5.4. Please also consider the possibility of including the description of the JS tasks under the next point. ▪ The role of the JS in coordinating the work of the controllers is questionable. ▪ The role of the antennae in Edirne (Turkey) should be described in more details ▪ The description of the first level control system in Turkey should be more detailed
<i>Compliance with the principle of separation of tasks between the management bodies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The links and relations among different management bodies is clearly explained, the division of roles is satisfactory.
<i>Efficiency and functionality of the management and control system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The description of the management and control system is satisfactory.

2.4 Consistency of financial allocation

Evaluation questions' check list

Do the financial allocations concentrate on the most important objectives in line with the identified challenges and needs and with the concentration requirements set out in the Regulations?	+++
Are the financial allocations to each priority axis and to categories of interventions consistent looking at the identified challenges and needs that informed the objectives as well as at the planned actions?	+++
Do the allocations correspond to the selected forms of support?	+++
Are the resources coming from different Funds adequately combined?	++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

According to Art. 55 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the Ex-ante Evaluator assessed the consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with Programme's objectives with the aim to prove the **financial external and internal coherence** for verifying the amount of resources allocated to each priority axis and category of intervention as well as their linkage with the major challenges and needs identified through the territorial analysis.

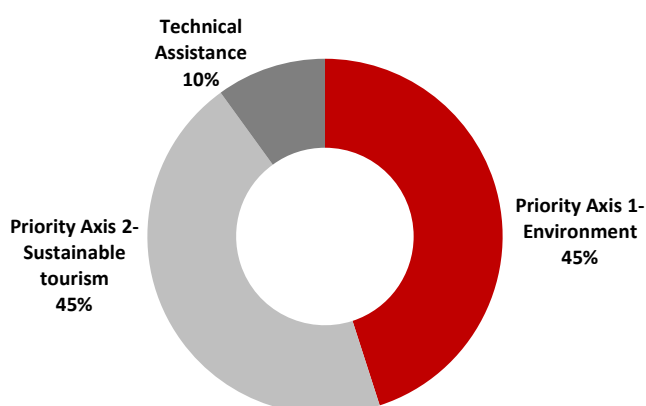
The Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 will have a **total budget of € 25.196.460,00**. The proportion of the Union support to the Programme is expected to be 85% of the total amount.

As stated in the Draft OP, based on the major relevance regarding the cross-border cooperation, overall financial allocation has been divided as follows: **45% to Priority axis 1-Environment**, **45% to Priority axis 2-Sustainable tourism** and **10% to Technical Assistance**.

The financial weighting takes into account **lesson learned** in the framework of the 2007-2013 Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme along with the results of the **needs assessment**, including inputs from relevant stakeholders.

Moreover, in setting the investment strategy, the programmer has stressed how the **selection of thematic priorities took into consideration budget restraints** that led to **thematic prioritization** and to **concentration of financial resources** on the themes with the highest cross-border added value. In doing so, the programmer made it clear that social issues, such as employment and education, could be better addressed through the ESF (for Bulgaria).

Given these premises, the **overall planned financial allocation seems to be coherent**, balanced and appropriate to achieve the Priority axis' objectives. Likewise, financial breakdown per category of intervention is consistent with the identified challenges and needs that informed Programme's objectives.



2.4.1 Conclusions and recommendations

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
Financial allocation	
Consistency of financial allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial allocation seems generally coherent with the Intervention Logic and in line with the challenges and needs identified through the territorial and SWOT analysis. In setting the investment strategy, the programmer took into account lessons learned in the 2007-2013 programming period, inputs by relevant stakeholders as well as financial limits. The selection of thematic priorities took into account budget restraints that led to thematic prioritization and to concentration of financial resources on the themes with the highest cross-border added value.

2.5 Contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy

Evaluation questions' check list

Based on the evaluator's knowledge of the national and regional situation and taking into account the size of the programme, what is the potential contribution of the programme to the macro-regional strategy?

+++

+++ Yes ++ Improvable + No

Launched in 2010, the **Europe 2020 Strategy** aims to drive the Union Member States towards a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, at a time characterized by global challenges, that led to deep economic and social transformations.

The Strategy¹⁹ foresees three mutually reinforcing objectives:

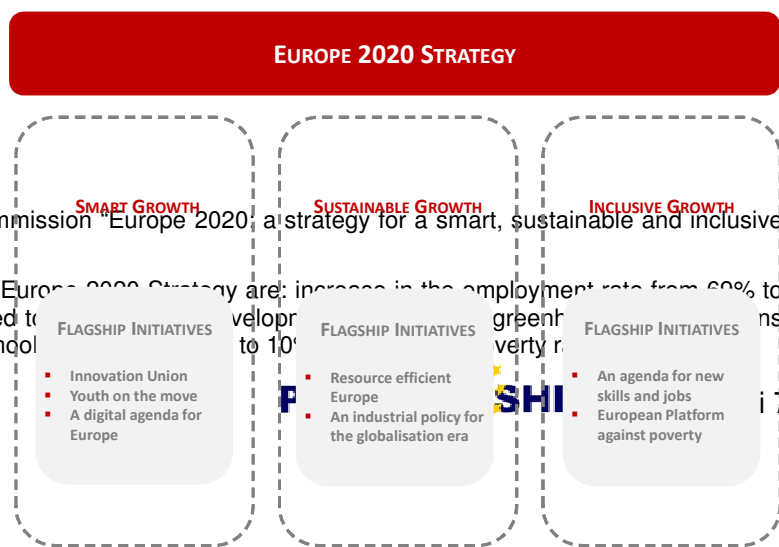
- a **smart growth** capable of developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- a **sustainable growth**, promoting a "greener" and competitive economy, through a more efficient use of resources;
- an **inclusive growth** aimed at developing an economy characterized by high rates of employment along with social and territorial cohesion.

These objectives are pursued through the promotion of a series of flagship initiatives, developed at EU, national and regional level, and monitored through the observation of specific parameters²⁰ to be applied to all Member States.

Although directly binding on Member States, the **Europe**

¹⁹ Communication of the European Commission "Europe 2020: a strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" of the 3rd March 2010.

²⁰ Parameters for the monitoring of the Europe 2020 Strategy are: increase in the employment rate from 68% to at least 75%; 3% of GDP to be allocated to research and development; reduction in the rate of early school leavers from 10% to 9%.



2020 Strategy goes beyond Community borders, representing a development opportunity for neighboring countries, with particular reference to the countries in pre-accession in order to support them in their reform process.

In line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 will develop the following thematic priorities²¹:

- TP2: Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management [...];
- TP4: Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage [...].

To this end, the Bulgaria-Turkey CBC Programme is divided into two main Priority axis foreseeing the following specific objectives:

Priority axis 1-Environment

- SO 1.1 *To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region;*
- SO 1.2 *Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area.*

Priority axis 2-Sustainable tourism

- SO 2.1 *Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area through better utilization of natural and cultural heritage;*
- SO 2.2 *Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region;*
- SO 2.3 *Networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials.*

Moreover, **competitiveness** and **youth** are considered as **horizontal priorities** to be fulfilled through strategy implementation.

Given these premises and according to Art. 55 of Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013, **the ex-ante evaluation appraised the contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy** “*having regard to the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account national and regional needs and potential for development as well as lessons drawn from previous programming periods*”. Given the cross-border nature of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme, the ex-ante evaluator also took into consideration **possible contributions deriving from cooperation and networking activities** supported by the Programme.

As a preliminary exercise, the coherence of Programme’s specific objectives with the European Strategy has been assessed, identifying direct and indirect contribution to its achievement, as well as potential contributions of Programme’s expected results to national and European targets.

To this end, the following tables show the **direct or indirect contribution** of each Specific Objective **to the Europe 2020 Strategy**.

PRIORITY AXIS 1 – ENVIRONMENT: CONTRIBUTION OF SOs TO THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

Specific Objectives	Europe 2020 Strategy		
	Growth		
	Smart	Sustainable	Inclusive

²¹Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), Annex III “Thematic priorities for assistance for territorial cooperation”

Specific Objectives \ PA 1	Europe 2020 Strategy		
	Growth		
	Smart	Sustainable	Inclusive
SO 1.1 <i>To prevent and mitigate the risks and consequences of natural and man-made hazards and disasters in the CBC region</i>	+++	+++	+
SO 1.2 <i>Improvement of the capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area</i>	++	+++	+

High contribution +++ Medium contribution ++ Indirect Contribution +

Specific Objectives within Priority axis 1 will directly contribute to an **intelligent and sustainable growth** given the focus on the prevention and mitigation of natural and man-made hazards as a pre-requisite for the sustainable development of the cross-border area, that will be pursued through innovative solutions of risk prevention and management. On the other hand, the involvement of citizens and most vulnerable groups will be guaranteed through their organizations (for instance, youth associations, NGOs, education and training institutions, etc.), both as target groups and as potential beneficiaries to mainly implement soft measure (awareness raising campaigns, know-how exchange, etc.).

PRIORITY AXIS 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: CONTRIBUTION OF SOs TO THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

Specific Objectives \ PA 2	Europe 2020 Strategy		
	Growth		
	Smart	Sustainable	Inclusive
SO 2.1 <i>Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the border area through better utilization of natural and cultural heritage</i>	+++	+++	+
SO 2.2 <i>Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region</i>	+++	+++	+
SO 2.3 <i>Networking for sustainable development of tourism potentials</i>	++	+	+++

High contribution +++ Medium contribution ++ Indirect Contribution +

As far as Specific Objectives of Priority axis 2 are concerned, the increase of tourist attractiveness through the better utilization of natural and cultural resources along with the improvement of sustainable touristic services will be pursued by taking advantage of innovative tools (i.e. ICT facilities, GIS platforms), which represent the basis for a **smart growth**. At the same time, networking for sustainable development will enable beneficiaries to acknowledge innovative solutions and to widen the possibilities of developing tourism potentials. Proposed types of actions to achieve Programme's objectives will also allow the involvement of a large number of local institutions and professionals, contributing to develop know-how transfer and employment opportunities.

Following EC suggestions on ex-ante evaluation²², it has been also appraised **direct linkages between Programme's expected results and Europe 2020 Strategy's targets** relating to Programme's thematic priorities²³, which are given in the Table below.

²² EC, "Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation", January 2013

²³ Being youth an horizontal principles in the BG-TR IPA CBC Programme, targets concerning education were not taken into account while assessing Programme contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy

LINKAGES BETWEEN BG-TR IPA CBC EXPECTED RESULTS AND EU 2020 TARGETS

EU 2020 targets BG-TR expected results	Employment rate at 76% for population aged 20-64	3% of GDP to be allocated to R&D	Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 20%	Reducing poverty rate to 25%
R-1.1.1. Improved preparedness of the region concerning natural and man-made hazards and disasters	++	+++	+	+
R-1.1.2 Improved capacity for joint interaction in case of fires, floods and other emergency situations	++	+	+	+
R-1.2.1 Improved conditions of nature-protected sites	+	+	+++	+
R-1.2.2 Improved capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the CBC area	+++	+	++	+
R-2.1.1 Increased tourist attractiveness of the cross-border region	+++	+	+	++
R-2.2.2 Improved possibilities for sustainable touristic services in the CBC region	++	+	+	+
R-2.2.3 Enhanced cooperation among regional actors related to sustainable tourism	+++	+	+	+

High contribution +++ Medium contribution ++ Indirect Contribution +

The overall analysis on Programme's expected results and the Strategy's targets emphasized the **high contribution of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme** to relevant Community objectives such as the growth of the employment rate and of the investments on innovation as well as to the reduction of greenhouse emissions.

2.5.1 Conclusions and recommendations

Theme	Conclusions and recommendations
Contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy	
Contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis showed the direct contribution of the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme to the Europe 2020 Strategy. Specific Objectives within Priority axis 1 will directly contribute to an intelligent and sustainable growth given the focus on the prevention and mitigation of natural and man-made hazards as a pre-requisite for the sustainable development of the cross-border area, that will be pursued through innovative solutions of risk prevention and management. Specific Objectives relating to Priority axis 2 aim to the increase of tourist attractiveness through the better utilization of natural and cultural resources along with the improvement of sustainable touristic services will be pursued by taking advantage of innovative tools (i.e. ICT facilities, GIS platforms), which represent the basis for a smart growth. The analysis on Programme's expected results and the Strategy's targets emphasized the high contribution of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme to relevant Community targets such as the growth of the employment rate and of the investments on innovation as well as to the reduction of greenhouse emissions.

