

Bulgaria – Turkey

IPA Cross-border Cooperation

Programme 2014– 2020

Participation of stakeholders in the programming process

February – August 2014



This project is co-financed by the European Union through IPA Cross-Border Programme Bulgaria-Turkey
CCI number 2007CB161IPO008



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I. INTRODUCTION

The participation of stakeholders during the programming process of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 is a result of applying partnership and multilevel governance principles. This process has provided extensive stakeholders' involvement. In different stages (preparatory, drafting, finalisation), levels (Joint Working Group, broad public) and with different forms (on-line survey, Regional Consultative Forums, Joint Working Group, Task Force and other meetings, e-mail communication, web site announcements, information's/documents) of communication, coordination and consultation process was organised and implemented.

In November 2013 the process of preparing the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 have been launched with a first meeting of the Joint Working Group. The programming process was a result of building on many inputs, from the situation analysis of a broad array of fields (economy, infrastructure, transport, environment, demography, labour market, education, cultural relations etc.) through the comments and suggestions received from the Task Force, the Joint Working Group and, the stakeholders from the eligible programme area, to the lessons learned from previous co-operation programmes. In line with the EU Cohesion Policy, a greater thematic concentration within the Programme was constantly pursued.

An important step in this programming process was to seek views of stakeholders on the shape and content of the future programme. The public consultations contributed to the programming with experience and know-how. Furthermore, it helped to identify specific demands and expectations towards the new Programme among potential target groups and beneficiaries.

In the context of programming the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 series of public consultations with relevant stakeholders were planned and performed:

- An online survey was the first step in this consultative process. It has aimed at collecting perceived needs, suggestions, and strategic addresses directly from a broad group of different relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders were invited to give their input to the development of the future Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 at an early stage of its elaboration. The online consultation has run over the period 3rd to 14th of February 2014, and 130 respondents gave their feedback on the issues raised.
- The 1st Regional Consultative Forum (RCF) brought together stakeholders who have expressed their opinion on the results of the situation and SWOT analysis in regards to the challenges and opportunities for cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Turkey, as well as on the possible thematic prioritisation of the new bilateral Programme. The Forum was held between 20th to 21st of March 2014 in Haskovo, Bulgarian and Edirne, Turkey. The regional meetings were attended by 103 participants representing municipalities, regional and national administration/public institutions, regional NGOs, educational and other relevant institutions.
- In the frame of 2nd Regional Consultative Forum, public consultations with stakeholders was held again in the programme area over the period 19th – 20th of June 2014 with the aim: (1) to present the Programme's 'thematic concentration' and thematic priorities of the new IPA CBC programme; and (2) to present and discuss with stakeholders the Programme's 'intervention logic' - programme's specific objectives, respective results and future activities. The 2nd RCF was attended by 91 participants representing municipalities, regional and national

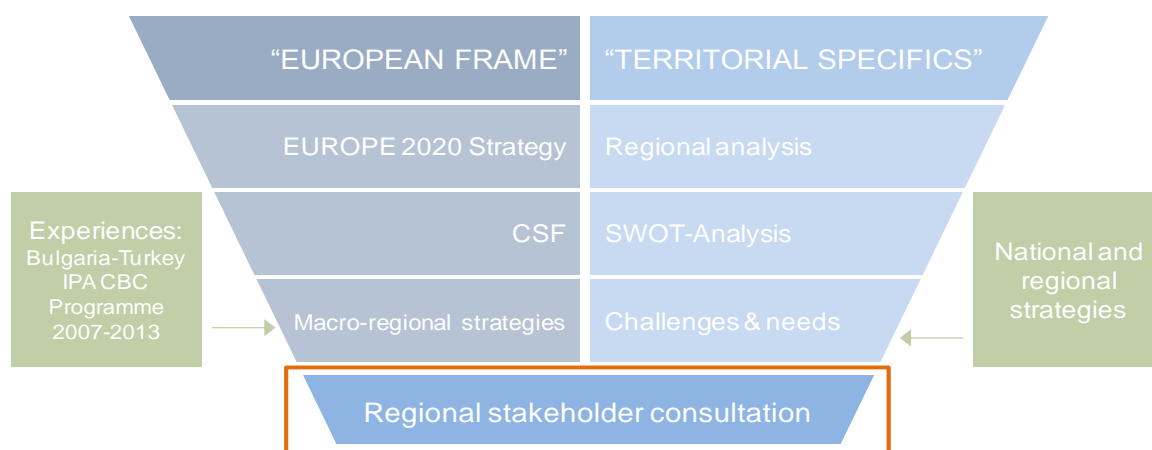


administration / public institutions, regional NGOs, educational and other relevant institutions.

- Based on a First draft of the cooperation Programme, in June 2013 *public consultations was carried out via the WEB-page of the Programme*. Individuals or organisations interested in the Programme were given the opportunity to express opinions towards the draft Programme resulting in final amendments before the adoption of the Draft Final Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Operational Programme 2014-2020 by Joint working group (JWG) in August 2014.

The general overview of the role of stakeholders involvement in the programming process is given in figure below (Source: OIR, 2014).

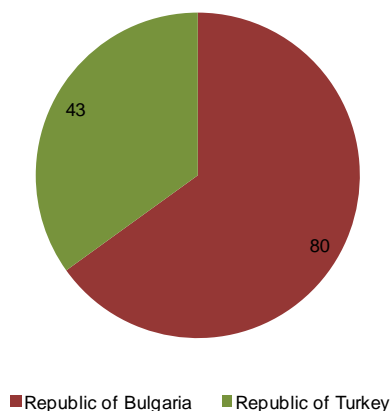
Figure 1: The role of stakeholder consultation



II. Online survey

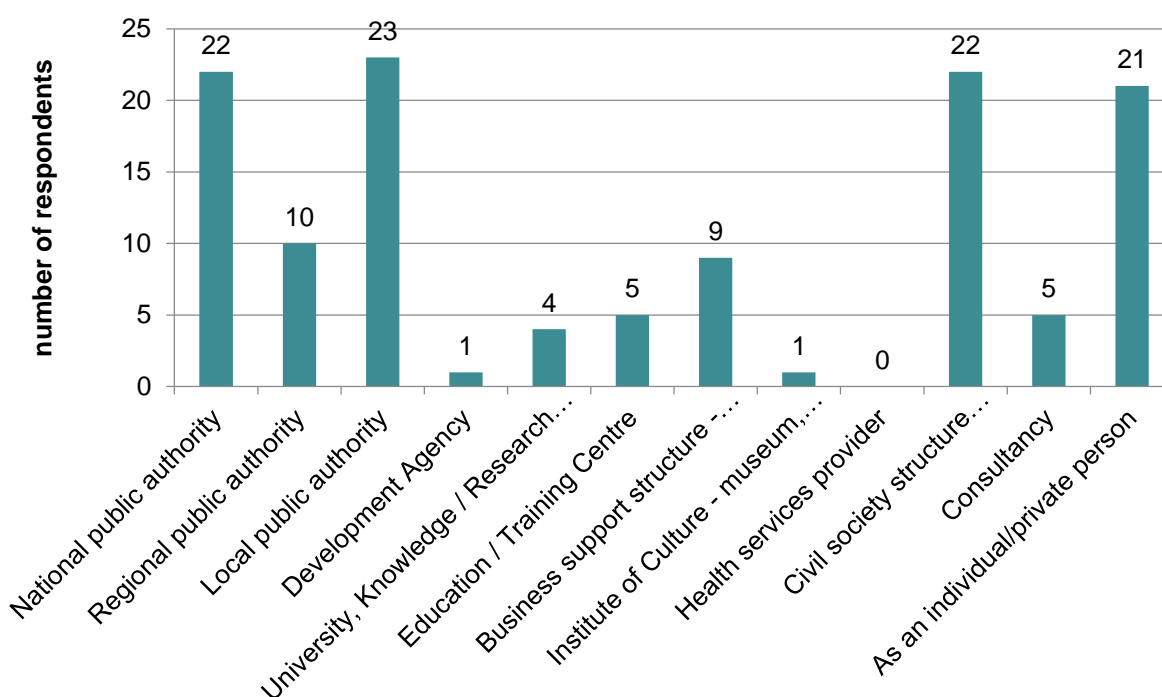
In the context of programming the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 an on-line survey has been undertaken for exploring the opinion of national and regional stakeholders on the focus of the future Programme. The survey was conducted in the period between 3rd to 14th of February 2014 through the web site of the current EU cooperation programme between two countries. The on-line questionnaire comprises three chapters with 9 questions. First chapter with 3 questions generate general responder information's on the origin, type of institution and its involvement in the current CBC programme. Second chapter with 3 questions deal with cross-border cooperation challenges and opportunities (major problems and barriers, major challenges and opportunities and major threats). Responders provided their preferences through weighting the potential answers depending of theirs importance. Third chapter with 3 questions provide information's on the cross-border cooperation added value in the perspective 2014-2020 (most value added, thematic priorities and major problems faced at implementing projects funded under IPA CBC Programmes). Here also responder's weight potential answers depending of theirs importance. Questionnaire has been completed from numerous institutions and private persons from both countries. A total of 130 respondents gather the stakeholders' expectations related to the scope and content as well as other important aspects of the future programme.



Figure 2: Respondents of the on-line survey

Source: OIR, 2014.

Taking a look at the background of the respondents of the survey shows, that most of them came from local public authorities, national public authorities, and the civic society (associations, foundations, etc.); additionally a large number of private persons participated in the survey. Most of the respondents were actively involved as direct beneficiaries in the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013.

Figure 3: Background of respondents of the on-line survey

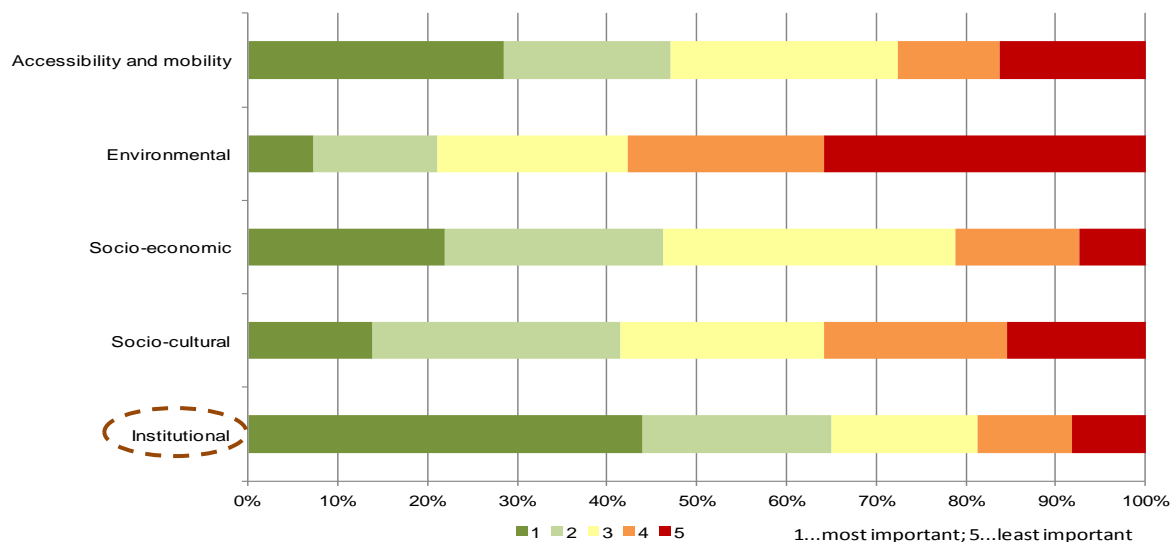
Besides the identification of those thematic priorities which imply the most value-added for the CBC region, the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC on-line survey also contained questions regarding cooperation challenges and opportunities, problems and barriers for CBC and major threats for cooperation.



Generally, the results of the online survey did not include a clear ranking of the priority themes, but certain preferences were detectable.

As major problems especially the institutional topic was raised, and also accessibility and mobility were regarded as a major problem and barrier for cross-border cooperation in the area (cf. Figure).

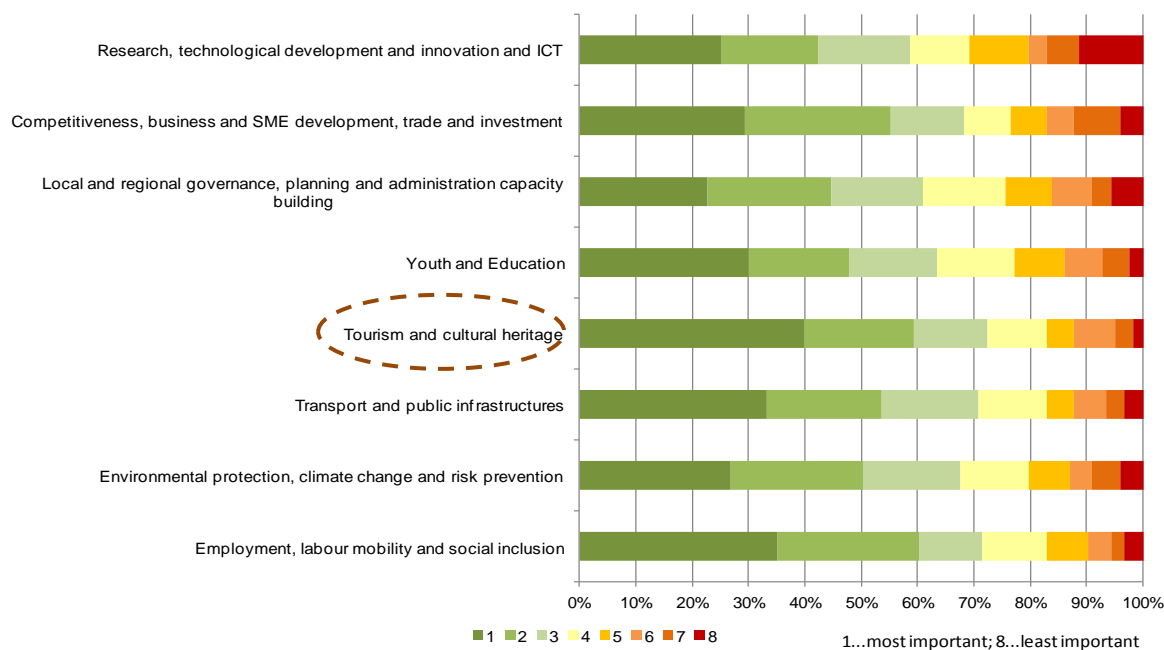
Figure 4: Major challenges and barriers for CBC between Bulgaria and Turkey



Source: OIR, 2014.

The final results of the survey show, that mainly employment, labour mobility and social inclusion, transport and public infrastructures, as well as tourism, natural and cultural heritage and competitiveness, business and SME development, trade and investment were regarded as relevant priorities for the future Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme (cf. Figure 5).

Figure 5: Future priorities with main added-value.



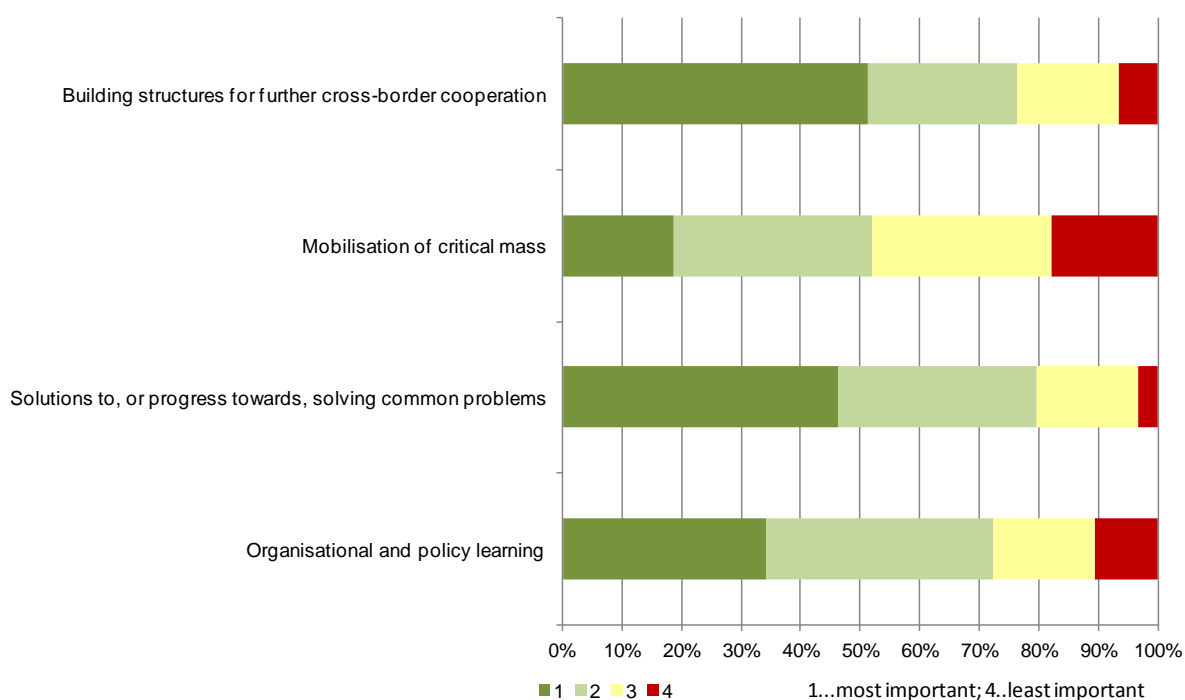
Source: OIR, 2014.

The most added values between the two partnering countries are given below (cf. Figure 6).



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Figure 6: The most added value between partnering countries

The public consultations contributed to the programming with experience and know-how and it helped to identify specific demands and expectations towards the new programme among potential target groups. Results from the on-line survey concerning the new programming period 2014-2020 were published on the current CBC Programme web site.

III. The 1st Regional Consultative Forum

The 1st Regional Consultative Forum (RCF) took place in the beginning of the programming process (20-21 March 2014). It was aimed at presenting the main conclusion of the territorial analysis performed, as well as to further discuss the potentials for development of the border region. It was also aimed at building of capacity and the creation of mutual trust within the eligible programme area thus maintaining broad partnership in the programming area.

In the frame of this RCF, public consultations with relevant stakeholders have been held in the programme area. The aim of these consultations was:

- To present the results of the situation and SWOT analysis, which has taken place in the beginning the programming process;
- To match experts' findings with practitioners' reality and needs;
- To define the fields in which cross-border cooperation is needed;
- To discuss the Programme's thematic concentration (selection of thematic priorities).



Summarising the results, the top TPs which had been identified by the regional stakeholders during the 1st RCF were the following¹:

- TP1 **Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion**: 34 votes □ 7
- TP2 Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation & risk prevention and management: 31 votes □ 5
- TP3 Sustainable transport and public infrastructures: 11 votes □ 1
- TP4 **Tourism and cultural and natural heritage**: 39 votes □ 8
- TP5 Youth, education and skills: 33 votes □ 6
- TP6 Local and regional governance, planning and administrative capacity: 13 votes □ 2
- TP7 Competitiveness, business environment and SME development, trade and investment: 28 votes □ 4
- TP8 Research, technological development, innovation and ICT: 15 votes □ 3

Figure 7: Invitation to the regional consultations in Haskovo and Edirne, 2014.

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Regional consultations for preparation of the Bulgaria - Turkey IPA cross-border Programme 2014 – 2020
06.03.14 | 2014-2020

The preparation of the Bulgaria - Turkey IPA cross-border programme 2014 - 2020 has entered on its essential stage, where the views of stakeholders related to the specific cross-border needs and perspectives will contribute to the thematic concentration of the new programme.

Two Regional Consultative Forums will be organized on 19th and 20th March 2014. The meetings will take the form of *plenary discussions* with the aim to:

- Inform regional stakeholders in Haskovo and Edirne about the ongoing programming process for the IPA II Cross-border Programme and the external experts' findings on regional analysis and identified needs;
- Present and discuss a possible prioritisation of thematic priorities for the future cross-border programme;
- Discuss potential actions that may be relevant for addressing the identified needs and challenges in the respective thematic priority areas

A situation and SWOT/needs analysis of the programme area have been elaborated by the programming experts from the Project Planning and Management Consortium under the service contract for preparation of the future IPA II cross-border programme, a project with identification number EuropeAid/133413/D/SER/Multi - Lot 3. Results of the analyses as well as the proposed thematic priorities will be presented by the programming experts.

In view of the above, representatives of municipalities, regional and national administration, regional NGOs, universities, schools, community centres, socio-economic partners etc. are kindly invited to take part in the following events:

Date and Time:	Place:	Address:
19 March 2014 (13:00)	Haskovo	District Administration Haskovo
20 March 2014 (13:00)	Edirne	Tunça Hall, RYS Hotel, Edirne

Registration forms shall be sent to the following e-mail: office@ppmanagement.eu or to fax number: +359 2 953 35 67 not later than **17th March 2014**.

Source: IPA BG-TR², March 2014.

Based on an assessment grid (cf. Annex), two options of selecting thematic priorities are suggested to JWG members so to adopt the OP thematic priorities:

¹ 1...poorly relevant, 8...highly relevant

² Available from: <http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/page.php?c=73&d=272>



- Option 1 focussing on the selection of two thematic priorities, to ensure a thematic concentration and the efficient use of funds.
- Option 2 applying a broader approach and focussing on the selection of three thematic priorities, opening up the possibilities of the project applicants and the implementation of projects in different fields.

Option 1 – focussed thematic orientation 2 thematic priorities

Considering the very limited funds of this CBC Programme it would be justified to concentrate on the two most relevant topics for the cross-border cooperation area. These thematic priorities are:

- TP2: protecting the **environment** and promoting **climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management** through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness, and
- TP6: encouraging **tourism** and **cultural and natural heritage** through inter alia promoting sustainable tourism and nature tourism, joint actions for preserving the natural and cultural heritage, joint actions capitalising on natural heritage (including rural specialities);

The priority focusing on the protection of the environment, including also climate change adaptation and mitigation and risk prevention and managements allows it to tackle common challenges, which have strong effects on both sides of the border and can just be solved jointly (e.g. issue of flooding, etc.). The priority focusing on tourism and cultural as well as natural heritage is strongly promoted by regional stakeholders (cf. results from the on-line survey and the regional consultation) and opens up the future Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 for bottom-up initiatives and people-to-people activities in an area that has a lot of development potential. It would also be possible to integrate certain activities, dealing with issues of competitiveness, employment, youth and education under this thematic priority; this will cause multiplier effects on other thematic priorities suggested in the regulation, but as such not selected for Bulgaria-Turkey. The choice of these most important priorities will have major impact on improving the living conditions of the cross-border population as well as on interaction, relations and collaboration of the institutions from the cross-border cooperation area.

Thematically it is suggested to focus especially on risk management and prevention and on the protection of the environment (thematic priority 2) as well as on tourism in relation to natural heritage, due to the fact, that these issues show the main potentials of the area (cf. results of the SWOT- and baseline-analysis).

With regard to the European context it gets visible, that the selected thematic priorities contribute to the European Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The intensified efforts in the fields of environment, resource efficiency, climate change adaptation and risk prevention/management will mainly contribute to sustainable growth; smart growth will be supported through innovative solutions of risk prevention and management.



Option 2 – widening the thematic orientation: 3 thematic priorities

Option two would add to the main thematic priorities of focussing on environment (TP2) and tourism (TP4) a third one, which directly addresses a burning issue of the cross-border area:

- TP6: promoting **local and regional governance** and enhancing the **planning and administrative capacity** of local and regional authorities;

Including this priority into the thematic orientation means to open the future Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 sufficiently wide to address many important needs of the region, as depicted in the baseline- and SWOT-analyses. However, a 3rd Thematic Priority weakens the clear focus of the Programme as well as the envisaged strong thematic concentration (implying the concentration of funds). A quite positive aspect of integrating this third priority is the fact, that the enhancement of institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders as well as efficient public administration follows the overall cross-border cooperation goal per se. For the management of border related administrative procedures and cross-border issues in general, joint approaches are needed, to pool efforts e.g. in the field of security. Additionally, common approaches might tackle joint problems of environmental nature, as well as transport and mobility issues, which are not included into any thematic priority (due to the non-fundability of major infrastructures because of budget constraints).

Besides the contribution to the Europe2020 Strategy, the second option, including the thematic priority dealing with governance, directly contributes to the specific objective of IPA of supporting political reforms (through regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations and capacity building measure for border management, etc.) and of supporting economic, social and territorial development (specific focus on the achievements of environmental and social goals).

On May 13th 2014 during the JWG meeting the first option have been chosen as a thematic priorities for the Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Operational Programme 2014-2020.

IV. The 2nd Regional Consultative Forum

The 2nd Regional Consultative Forum took place over the period 19th to 20th of June 2014, after the thematic priorities of the future OP were selected by the Joint Working Group on May 13th 2014 in Ankara, Turkey. The Forum was aimed at presenting the draft strategic framework of the new Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme seeking consensus with stakeholders on its actual performance and discussing the activities to be financed in the period 2014-2020. The 2nd RCF was attended by 91 participants representing municipalities, regional and national administration / public institutions, regional NGOs, educational and other relevant institutions, covering all 13 NUTS-III regions in the programme area. During the discussions it was stressed that the strategic orientation of the future programme needs to consider various EU policies and regulatory framework, as well as the specific situation and needs of the programme area. The strategic orientation further needs to reflect budgetary restrictions of the Programme and the CBC relevance of potential interventions. Special attention should also be given on the implementation provisions, so when discussing future Programme's strategy the regional stakeholders need to consider how it will be actually implemented. Then, the TA programming team has presented the approach for selection of thematic priorities, i.e. the 'assessment grid' and its 4 major components: 1) Lessons learned from the current programme; 2) Territorial (situation) and SWOT Analysis; 3) Regional Consultations 4) Cross-border added value

During the second round consultations the TA team has presented the overall assessment grid



Assessment grid of Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Operational Programme 2014-2020

Thematic Priorities		Current Programme	Online survey	Regional Consultative Forums	Situation & SWOT analysis	Ø	Ranking	CBC added value				TOTAL
								Organisational and policy learning	Solutions to common problems	Generating critical mass	Building structures	
TP1	Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders	1	7	7	6	5,25	6	1				7
TP2	Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	8	4	5	5	5,50	7	1	1		1	10
TP3	Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures	2	6	1	3	3,00	2		1		1	4
TP4	Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	6	8	8	2	6,00	8	1	1	1	1	12
TP5	Investing in youth, education and skills	3	3	6	8	5,00	5	1	1		1	8
TP6	Promoting local and regional governance	8	2	2	7	4,75	4	1	1	1	1	8
TP7	Enhancing competitiveness, the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment	4	1	4	1	2,50	1			1	1	3
TP8	Strengthening research, technological development, innovation and ICT	5	2	3	4	3,5	3	1			1	5



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Annex “A” – “Summary of “thematic concentration” proposal

For selection of thematic priorities (in correspondence to the strategic IPA II Programming Framework) should be taken into account the relevance of the topic regarding cross-border cooperation, as well as budget constraints. The guiding question of the assessment was: *“Which ones of the priorities have cross-border relevance and which ones can develop the highest effects in this particular border setting?”*

Below are summarised the major **criteria for thematic concentration** which were taken into consideration:

- **Availability of alternative funding:** Likelihood of other funding sources (national, EU, other donors’) to be available to support the thematic priority in the CBC eligible area.
- **Importance in national strategies:** The importance of the thematic priority in the national strategies.
- **Quality of life for the people living in the CBC area:** Impact of the thematic priority in order to improve the living conditions of the population residing in the CBC area, e.g. access to public services, quality of livelihood/environment, cultural and social aspects, links to urban areas.
- How **relevant** and/or **important** is cross-border cooperation to address this issue?
- **Feasibility of the implementation:** The emphasis rests on technical assumptions such as tender documentation availability, construction permits received, presence of skilful competent applicants in the CBC area and the financial envelope available can have a tangible impact on that area too.
- **Trigger for development of other thematic priorities:** The implementation of actions under the thematic priority would have multiplier effects on other thematic priorities (e.g. infrastructure - economic development, environment - tourism, etc.).
- **Added value of the CBC approach:** To which extent is the CBC types of actions more effective and efficient to address the needs of the CB area under the TP compared to other types of programmes?
- **Integration of the CB area:** How well this thematic priority can improve the interaction, relations and collaboration of people and institutions living in the CBC area?

The Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 should tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border region (such as poor accessibility, inappropriate business environment, lack of networks among local and regional administrations, research and innovation and take-up of information and communication technologies, environmental pollution, risk prevention, negative attitudes towards neighbouring country citizens) and exploit the untapped potentials in the border area (development of cross-border research and innovation facilities and clusters, cooperation among universities or health centres), while enhancing the cooperation process for the purpose of the overall harmonious development of the region.



Annex “B” - List of consulted stakeholders

Table 1: List of Institutions represented in the Programme’s Joint Working Group

BULGARIA
Ministry of Regional Development (MRD), Directorate General Territorial Cooperation Management (DG TCM)
Council of Ministers’ Administration
Ministry of economy and energy
Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications
Ministry of Environment and Water
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Ministry of Interior
Ministry of Finance
Executive Agency Audit of EU Funds, Ministry of Finance
State Fund Agriculture
MRD, Directorate General Strategic Planning of Regional Development and Administrative Territorial Structure (DG SPRDATS)
MRD, Directorate General Strategic Planning of Regional Development
MRD, DG OPRD
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Culture
National Institute of Statistics
National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
Regional Development Council of South-East region and South-Central region
Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Bulgarian Industrial Association - Union of the Bulgarian Business
Association of Industrial Capital in Bulgaria (BICA)
"Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria - KRIB" Association
Confederation of Labour "Podkrepa"
Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB)
Regional ecological center for Central and Eastern Europe



Ecoforum for Sustainable Development Association
Bulgarian association of consultants for european programmes
Association for social integration
Habitat for Humanity Foundation
Commission for Protection against Discrimination
National Council for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities
University of Library Studies and Information Technologies
TURKEY
Ministry for EU Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Development
Governorship of Edirne
Governorship of Kırklareli
Municipality of Edirne
Municipality of Kırklareli
Trakiya Development Agency

