

**Implementation Report for
Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Bulgaria – Serbia
2014-2020**

PART A

IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Key information on the implementation of the cooperation programme for the year concerned, including on financial instruments, with relation to the financial and indicator data.

The year 2019 was very significant, in terms of successful finalization of projects under 1st Call for Proposals, on one hand, and timely contacting of projects approved under 2nd Call for Proposals of the INTERREG-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Bulgaria - Serbia (hereinafter referred to also as Programme), on the other hand. Until the end of 2019 the total verified amount for the projects was EUR 14 299 931 (41,93% from the Programme budget).

1st Call

By the end of 2019 a total of 37 projects were finalized and important results have been registered in all priority axis of the Programme. One project was terminated due to identified violations of the subsidy contracts and serious discrepancies found in the implementation of the project activities, as described in the Application form. In the past quarter of 2019, the Managing Authority (MA) suspended one project due to unfavourable situation in the winter season related with investment component of the Lead beneficiary.

2nd Call

In the first quarter of 2019, main efforts of the MA and National Authority (NA) were focused on negotiations with the 41 provisionally approved projects proposals (with JMC's decision from 26.11.2018) - 15 under Priority Axis 1 (PA 1), 9 under Priority Axis 2 (PA 2) and 17 under Priority Axis 3 (PA 3). After conducting of all pre-contracting procedures the list with the projects, provisionally selected for financing, was shortened to 36 projects, as follows: PA 1 - 14 projects, PA 2 - 8 projects and PA 3 - 14 projects.

Following the pre-contracting procedures it was identified that available funds under PA 3 were not sufficient for funding of all 14 approved projects. Therefore, the available budget under PA 3 could cover only the 9 high ranked projects at the amount of EUR 3 545 029,74. For the remaining 5 projects under PA3, subsidy contracts may be concluded in case of available financial resources. Thus, on 16 May 2019, an official ceremony for awarding of the first set of 20 subsidy contracts on total amount of EUR 4 897 731,14 under the 2nd Call was held at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) in Sofia, Bulgaria. The contracts were awarded by the Minister of RDPW of the Republic of Bulgaria, Minister of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia and Deputy Minister of RDPW of Bulgaria. In the period June-December 2019 MA awarded additional 9 subsidy contracts at total amount of EUR 2 731 255,06.

Based on the decision of the JMC from 23 April 2020, the MA together with the NA, executed an in-depth analysis of the current status of Programme implementation with a view to the achievement of all Output indicators (OIs) and the need to ensure full absorption of the funds in advance, according to the N+3 rule. The analysis for each Priority axis comprised all possible sources: realized savings from completed projects from the 1st Call, recoveries as a result of financial corrections imposed and optimizations following budget negotiations with the approved projects under the 2nd Call. Since the Programme was allocating all of its remaining funding in the 2nd Call, fulfilment of all targets for the underachieved OIs will be essential for assessment of the Programme's overall performance. Hence, the Managing bodies made sure that all levels of OIs are reached by making a separate ranking of project proposals under each OI in accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants and contracted as many projects from each separate ranking list as necessary for securing the set OI target. The analysis showed the actual level of budget absorption per Priority axis and outlines the measures to be taken for efficient and appropriate spending of the remaining Programme funds. Based on the information for the available resources per Priority axis, the Managing bodies have explored the option to finance additional projects from the approved reserves lists which will ensure achievement of the Programme OIs by the year of 2023. In addition, the analysis under PA 3 showed shortage of EUR 2 029 744,15 which should be reallocate from PA 2 when it was identified the available funds for contracting of additional projects. Thus, with JMC's decision from 02.10.2019 additional 26 project proposals were proposed for financing as well as anaysis was approved. Moreover, with the same JMC's decision the MA launched a procedure for amendment of the Programme document to the European Commission in view of the needed budget reallocation of EUR 2 029 744,15 from PA2 to PA3 for financing of all approved projects need for achievement of OIs. Therefore, in the last quarter of 2019 MA had initiated internal national procedure for amendment of the Programme. Based on decision from Bulgarian Council of Ministers the proposed modification for Programme amendment was sent to EC for consideration and approval in the beginning of 2020.

In 2019, MA in coordination with NA started the process of programming for future CBC Programme for programming period 2021-2027. The Regional consultations with relevant stakeholders were held on Bulgarian and Serbian territory as follows: Botevgrad – 30.09.2019, Montana – 01.10.2019, Bor – 02.10.2019 and Nis – 03.10.2019. Participants, representatives of Bulgarian and Serbian stakeholders - local and regional authorities, educational institutions, branch organizations, non-governmental organizations from the target regions, were presented with the new elements for the next programming period, such as N+2 rule, extended application of flat rates and simplified costs, strategic projects and small project fund as well as discussion for their needs and expectations for the new programming period. Questionnaires with comments/recommendations related to preparation of the future programme were filled in and summarized. Another activity was related with nomination and establishment of Joint

Working Group (JWG) for preparation of the future CBC Programme. The first meeting of JWG was held on 08.11.2019 in Sofia, Bulgaria where Rule of procedures of JWG were adopted and the next steps of programming 2021-2027 were discussed.

During the year, the funds approved by the JMC under PA 4 Technical assistance were used for actions and services related to Programme management and implementation, such as: remuneration of the Joint Secretariat and First Level Control, travel costs, daily allowances and accommodations, organization of events and JMC meetings, training seminars.

The implementation of the service contract for Implementation evaluation under Interreg - IPA CBC Programmes had been completed in March 2019. The final report was approved by includes information about the current programme progress and provides recommendations for further improvement of the overall management and implementation which could contribute towards successful achievement of objectives, results and outputs.

At the same time, Programme web site and social media accounts were constantly updated with news, FAQs and information.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	<p>By the end of 2019, two 2 investment projects at total amount EUR 1 127 825,33 financed under the 1st Call were completed.</p> <p>Under the 2nd Call 13 projects at the total amount of EUR 3 150 527,49 were contracted distributed per Specific objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO 1.1 "Tourist Attractiveness" – 3 investment projects with project duration of 24 months and the total amount EUR 1 638 197,72. • SO 1.2 "Cross-border Touristic Product" – 3 projects – soft measures with project duration between 12 and 15 months at the total amount EUR 526 291,75. • SO 1.3 "People to People Networking"-7 projects – soft measures with project duration between 12 and 15 months at the total amount EUR 986 038,02. <p>No significant request for modifications/changes were submitted by the beneficiaries under Priority axis 1 with exception of one project which was suspended due to unfavourable situation in the winter season related with investment component of the Lead beneficiary. Its implementation shall resume in 2020 year.</p> <p>It is expected with projects finalized under 1st Call and contracted under 2nd Call all 10 Output indicators under PA 1 to be achieved. There were no significant problems observed with the implementation of the Priority 1.</p>
2	YOUTHS	<p>All project financed under 1st Call were successfully completed in 2018. No projects in implementation in 2019.</p> <p>Under the 2nd Call for Proposals 7 projects at the total amount of EUR 933 428,96 were contracted and distributed per Specific objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO 2.1 "Skill and entrepreneurship" – no financed projects since all OIs are achieved with projects from 1st Call; • SO 2.2 "People to People Networking" – 7 projects – soft measures at the total amount EUR 933 428,96 were contracted and were in process of implementation. Duration of the projects is between 12 and 15 months.

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>It is expected with projects finalized under 1st Call and contracted under 2nd Call all 3 Output indicators under PA 2 to be achieved. There were no significant problems observed with the implementation of the Priority 2.</p>
3	ENVIRONMENT	<p>By the end of 2019, two 4 investment projects at total amount EUR 2 302 923,87 financed under the 1st Call were completed and contributed to the Programme objectives.</p> <p>In 2019 under the 2nd Call for Proposals were approved for funding 14 projects on total amount of EUR 6 449 183,97. Since the available budget under the Priority axis 3 was not enough for signing of subsidy contracts will all of them, with JMC decision was approved to be financed 9 projects, ranked by final scores. Those projects were contracted in 2019 at the total amount of EUR 3 545 029,74 and distributed per Specific objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO 3.1 "Joint Risk Management" – 2 investment project with project duration of 24 months and total amount EUR 1 188 890,96. • SO 3.2 "Nature protection" – 7 project at the total amount EUR 2 171 430,48 were under implementation (3 “soft measures” projects with duration between 12 and 15 months and 4 investment projects with duration between 18 and 24 month). <p>For the remaining 5 projects under PA3, provisionally selected for financing, subsidy contracts will be concluded after modification of the Programme, namely reallocation of funds from PA 2 to PA 3. MA launched a procedure for amendment of the Programme document to the European Commission.</p> <p>It is expected with projects finalized under 1st Call and contracted under 2nd Call all 10 Output indicators under PA 3 to be achieved with exception of one OI (Output indicator 3.2.1) due to lack of enough projects for this specific OI.</p> <p>There were no significant problems observed with the implementation of the Priority 3.</p>
4	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	<p>The Annual Technical Assistance Plane for 2019 was approved by the JMC on 1st of March 2019 together with a detailed breakdown and rules on Eligibility of Technical Assistance Expenditures. The indicative budget of Priority axis 4 “Technical assistance” for year 2019 amounted to EUR 641 576,50. In August 2019 modification of the Eligibility of Technical Assistance Expenditures was approved by JMC due to identified saving in remuneration for the First Level Controller Unit.</p>

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>During the reporting period, Programme management activities were performed that ensured the necessary support related to projects implementation and administrative and operational activities concerning MA, NA, JS and FLC units within the MA (staff remuneration, participation in various events and training seminars, maintenance of office premises, etc.).</p> <p>The Programme activities also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of JMC meetings; • Organization of technical meetings of Programme bodies; • Pre-contracting procedures under 2nd Call; • The official ceremony for awarding of the subsidy contracts under the 2nd Call; • Trainings for team members of projects funded under the 2nd Call; • Regional consultations and focus groups aiming at raising awareness on the programming process; • Meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) for preparation of the future CBC Programme 2021-2027; • Finalizing of implementation of the Service contract for Implementation evaluation under Interreg - IPA CBC Programmes, managed by the Republic of Bulgaria (completed in March 2019); • Ongoing upgrading and maintenance of Programme official website and MIS. <p>There were no significant problems observed with the implementation of the Priority axis 4.</p>

3.2 Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Priority axes other than technical assistance

Priority axis	1 - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
Thematic Priority	d - Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 1.d

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations
F	1.1.1	Total number of reconstructed / restored cultural and historical touristic objects in the eligible border area	number	15.00	10.00	
S	1.1.1	Total number of reconstructed / restored cultural and historical touristic objects in the eligible border area	number	15.00	16.00	
F	1.1.2	Total number of small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	number	15.00	13.00	
S	1.1.2	Total number of small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	number	15.00	23.00	
F	1.1.3	Total number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites	number	5.00	3.00	
S	1.1.3	Total number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites	number	5.00	9.00	
F	1.1.4	Total number of information access facilities created/upgraded	number	5.00	6.00	
S	1.1.4	Total number of information access facilities created/upgraded	number	5.00	11.00	
F	1.2.1	Number of sustainable tourism strategies/action plans of common tourist destinations	number	3.00	1.00	
S	1.2.1	Number of sustainable tourism strategies/action plans of common tourist destinations	number	3.00	5.00	
F	1.2.2	Total number of newly established touristic products / services	number	5.00	3.00	
S	1.2.2	Total number of newly established touristic products / services	number	5.00	5.00	
F	1.2.3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing and promoting tourist products in the eligible border area	number	8.00	7.00	
S	1.2.3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing and promoting tourist products in the eligible border area	number	8.00	10.00	
F	1.3.1	Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	number	20.00	0.00	
S	1.3.1	Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	number	20.00	16.00	
F	1.3.2	Capacity building initiatives for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services	number	20.00	0.00	
S	1.3.2	Capacity building initiatives for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services	number	20.00	14.00	
F	1.3.3	Total number of joint events aimed at promotion and cultivation of the common traditions of the borderland areas	number	15.00	0.00	
S	1.3.3	Total number of joint events aimed at promotion and cultivation of the common traditions of the borderland areas	number	15.00	16.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	1.1.1	Total number of reconstructed / restored cultural and historical touristic objects in the eligible border area	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.1.1	Total number of reconstructed / restored cultural and historical touristic objects in the eligible border area	11.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.1.2	Total number of small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	8.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.1.2	Total number of small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	19.00	19.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.1.3	Total number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.1.3	Total number of created/reconstructed facilities for disabled people in the supported touristic sites	7.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.1.4	Total number of information access facilities created/upgraded	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.1.4	Total number of information access facilities created/upgraded	8.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.2.1	Number of sustainable tourism strategies/action plans of common tourist destinations	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.2.1	Number of sustainable tourism strategies/action plans of common tourist destinations	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.2.2	Total number of newly established touristic products / services	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.2.2	Total number of newly established touristic products / services	3.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.2.3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing and promoting tourist products in the eligible border area	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.2.3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing and promoting tourist products in the eligible border area	7.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.3.1	Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
S	1.3.1	Public awareness initiatives promoting sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.3.2	Capacity building initiatives for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.3.2	Capacity building initiatives for capitalisation of the common touristic product/services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	1.3.3	Total number of joint events aimed at promotion and cultivation of the common traditions of the borderland areas	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1.3.3	Total number of joint events aimed at promotion and cultivation of the common traditions of the borderland areas	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	1 - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
Thematic Priority	d - Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.
Specific objective	1.1 - TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS: Supporting the development of competitive tourist

Table 1: Result indicators - 1.d.1.1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
1.1.1	Increased visitors to the cross-border region	percentage	642,269.00	2014	1.00	916,236.00		Frequency of reporting: 2018, 2023

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
1.1.1	Increased visitors to the cross-border region	916,236.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1.1.1	Increased visitors to the cross-border region	0.00	

Priority axis	1 - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
Thematic Priority	d - Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.
Specific objective	1.2 - CROSS-BORDER TOURISTIC PRODUCT: Capturing economic benefits from development of natural and cultural heritage in the border area through creating common cross-border touristic destination(s)

Table 1: Result indicators - 1.d.1.2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
1.2.1	Increased level of joint and integrated approaches to sustainable tourism development in the border area	scale	2.12	2014	2.50		2.82	Frequency of reporting: 2018, 2023

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
1.2.1	Increased level of joint and integrated approaches to sustainable tourism development in the border area		2.82		0		0		0

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1.2.1	Increased level of joint and integrated approaches to sustainable tourism development in the border area		0

Priority axis	1 - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
Thematic Priority	d - Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.
Specific objective	1.3 - PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE NETWORKING: Capitalising the effect of cultural, historical and natural heritage tourism on border communities through common actions

Table 1: Result indicators - 1.d.1.3

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
1.3.1	Increased level of community involvement and awareness about sustainable use of cross-border tourist resources	scale	3.02	2014	3.50		3.05	Frequency of reporting: 2018, 2023

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
1.3.1	Increased level of community involvement and awareness about sustainable use of cross-border tourist resources		3.05		0		0		0

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1.3.1	Increased level of community involvement and awareness about sustainable use of cross-border tourist resources		0

Priority axis	2 - Youths
Thematic Priority	e - Investing in youth, education and skills through, inter alia, developing and implementing joint education, vocational training, training schemes and infrastructure supporting joint youth activities.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 2.e

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations
F	2.1.1	Total number of supported youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	number	15.00	17.00	
S	2.1.1	Total number of supported youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	number	15.00	16.00	
F	2.1.2	Total number of young people involved in the supported youth entrepreneurship schemes and initiatives	number	300.00	573.00	
S	2.1.2	Total number of young people involved in the supported youth entrepreneurship schemes and initiatives	number	300.00	527.00	
F	2.2.1	Total number of youth networking initiatives supported by the Programme	number	15.00	2.00	
S	2.2.1	Total number of youth networking initiatives supported by the Programme	number	15.00	18.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	2.1.1	Total number of supported youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	12.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2.1.1	Total number of supported youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	16.00	16.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2.1.2	Total number of young people involved in the supported youth entrepreneurship schemes and initiatives	500.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2.1.2	Total number of young people involved in the supported youth entrepreneurship schemes and initiatives	527.00	527.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2.2.1	Total number of youth networking initiatives supported by the Programme	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2.2.1	Total number of youth networking initiatives supported by the Programme	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	2 - Youths
Thematic Priority	e - Investing in youth, education and skills through, inter alia, developing and implementing joint education, vocational training, training schemes and infrastructure supporting joint youth activities.
Specific objective	2.1 - SKILLS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Supporting the development of attractive environment for advancement of young people in the border region achieved through cooperation

Table 1: Result indicators - 2.e.2.1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
2.1.1	Level of young people's satisfaction as regards opportunities for professional and social realization in the border area	scale	2.42	2014	3.00		2.84	Frequency of reporting: 2018, 2023

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
2.1.1	Level of young people's satisfaction as regards opportunities for professional and social realization in the border area		2.84		0		0		0

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
2.1.1	Level of young people's satisfaction as regards opportunities for professional and social realization in the border area		0

Priority axis	2 - Youths
Thematic Priority	e - Investing in youth, education and skills through, inter alia, developing and implementing joint education, vocational training, training schemes and infrastructure supporting joint youth activities.
Specific objective	2.2 - PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE NETWORKING: Promoting cooperation initiatives for and with young people, thus enhancing mobility of young people across borders

Table 1: Result indicators - 2.e.2.2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
2.2.1	Increased level of youth involvement in networks across the border	scale	2.45	2014	3.00		2.55	Frequency of reporting: 2018, 2023

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
2.2.1	Increased level of youth involvement in networks across the border		2.55		0		0		0

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
2.2.1	Increased level of youth involvement in networks across the border		0

Priority axis	3 - Environment
Thematic Priority	b - 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.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 3.b (JS)

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations
F	3.1.1	Total number of joint activities aimed at establishing joint early warning and disaster management systems	number	6.00	5.00	
S	3.1.1	Total number of joint activities aimed at establishing joint early warning and disaster management systems	number	6.00	6.00	
F	3.1.2	Purchased specialised equipment related to disaster management	number	10.00	12.00	
S	3.1.2	Purchased specialised equipment related to disaster management	number	10.00	20.00	
F	3.1.3	Total number of supported small-scale interventions/investments in green infrastructure for natural water retention.	number	5.00	2.00	
S	3.1.3	Total number of supported small-scale interventions/investments in green infrastructure for natural water retention.	number	5.00	8.00	
F	3.1.4	Total number of people participated in risk prevention and management training activities	number	600.00	486.00	
S	3.1.4	Total number of people participated in risk prevention and management training activities	number	600.00	716.00	
F	3.1.5	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	number	580,000.00	810,145.00	
S	3.1.5	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	number	580,000.00	758,582.00	
F	3.1.6	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measure	number	520,000.00	1,586,332.00	
S	3.1.6	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measure	number	520,000.00	1,229,500.00	
F	3.2.1	Protected areas/Natura 2000 sites in the border region with EU conform management plans	number	5.00	0.00	
S	3.2.1	Protected areas/Natura 2000 sites in the border region with EU conform management plans	number	5.00	2.00	
F	3.2.2	Total number of joint interventions, addressing the preservation and restoration of CBC ecosystems, as well as preservation and improvement of the quality of soils, air and water.	number	12.00	4.00	
S	3.2.2	Total number of joint interventions, addressing the preservation and restoration of CBC ecosystems, as well as preservation and improvement of the quality of soils, air and water.	number	12.00	16.00	
F	3.2.3	Education and awareness raising joint initiatives, in the field of preservation and protection of natural heritage, biodiversity and landscape	number	15.00	4.00	
S	3.2.3	Education and awareness raising joint initiatives, in the field of preservation and protection of natural heritage, biodiversity and landscape	number	15.00	21.00	
F	3.2.4	Capacity building initiatives, trainings, exchange of experience and know-how in the field of sustainable use of natural resources	number	15.00	4.00	
S	3.2.4	Capacity building initiatives, trainings, exchange of experience and know-how in the field of sustainable use of natural resources	number	15.00	18.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	3.1.1	Total number of joint activities aimed at establishing joint early warning and disaster management systems	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.1.1	Total number of joint activities aimed at establishing joint early warning and disaster management systems	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.1.2	Purchased specialised equipment related to disaster management	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.1.2	Purchased specialised equipment related to disaster management	13.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.1.3	Total number of supported small-scale interventions/investments in green infrastructure for natural water retention.	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.1.3	Total number of supported small-scale interventions/investments in green infrastructure for natural water retention.	3.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.1.4	Total number of people participated in risk prevention and management training activities	183.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.1.4	Total number of people participated in risk prevention and management training activities	386.00	386.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.1.5	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	808,658.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.1.5	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	511,300.00	511,300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.1.6	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measure	280,898.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.1.6	Population benefiting from forest fire protection measure	1,206,000.00	1,206,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.2.1	Protected areas/Natura 2000 sites in the border region with EU conform management plans	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
S	3.2.1	Protected areas/Natura 2000 sites in the border region with EU conform management plans	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.2.2	Total number of joint interventions, addressing the preservation and restoration of CBC ecosystems, as well as preservation and improvement of the quality of soils, air and water.	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.2.2	Total number of joint interventions, addressing the preservation and restoration of CBC ecosystems, as well as preservation and improvement of the quality of soils, air and water.	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.2.3	Education and awareness raising joint initiatives, in the field of preservation and protection of natural heritage, biodiversity and landscape	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.2.3	Education and awareness raising joint initiatives, in the field of preservation and protection of natural heritage, biodiversity and landscape	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3.2.4	Capacity building initiatives, trainings, exchange of experience and know-how in the field of sustainable use of natural resources	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3.2.4	Capacity building initiatives, trainings, exchange of experience and know-how in the field of sustainable use of natural resources	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	3 - Environment
Thematic Priority	b - 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.
Specific objective	3.1 - JOINT RISK MANAGEMENT: Preventing and mitigating the consequences of natural and man-made cross-border disasters

Table 1: Result indicators - 3.b.3.1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
3.1.1	Increased level of preparedness to manage risks of transnational dimension	scale	1.90	2014	2.50		2.33	Frequency of reporting: 2018, 2023

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
3.1.1	Increased level of preparedness to manage risks of transnational dimension		2.33		0		0		0

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
3.1.1	Increased level of preparedness to manage risks of transnational dimension		0

Priority axis	3 - Environment
Thematic Priority	b - 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.
Specific objective	3.2 - NATURE PROTECTION: Promoting and enhancing the utilization of common natural resources, as well as stimulating nature protection in the programme area, through joint initiatives across the border

Table 1: Result indicators - 3.b.3.2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2019 Total	2019 Qualitative	Observations
3.2.1	Increased capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the border region	scale	2.13	2014	2.50		2.34	Frequency of reporting: 2018, 2023

ID	Indicator	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative
3.2.1	Increased capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the border region		2.34		0		0		0

ID	Indicator	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
3.2.1	Increased capacity for nature protection and sustainable use of common natural resources in the border region		0

Priority axes for technical assistance

Priority axis	4 - Technical Assistance
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Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 4.Technical Assistance

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2019	Observations	
F	4.1.1	Number of performed evaluations of the programme	number	2.00	0.00	Not cumulative.	
S	4.1.1	Number of performed evaluations of the programme	number	2.00	0.00	Not cumulative.	
F	4.1.2	Updated MIS system	number	1.00	1.00	Not cumulative.	
S	4.1.2	Updated MIS system	number	1.00	1.1.	1.00	Not cumulative.
F	4.1.3	Number of Monitoring Committee meetings	number	14.00	1.00	Not cumulative.	
S	4.1.3	Number of Monitoring Committee meetings	number	14.00	1.00	Not cumulative.	
F	4.1.4	Number of publicity events for beneficiaries	number	4.00	4.00	Not cumulative.	
S	4.1.4	Number of publicity events for beneficiaries	number	4.00	4.00	Not cumulative.	
F	4.1.5	Number of employees (full time) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	number	8.00	29.00	Not cumulative. 6 BG FL controllers, 11 MA experts, 5 JS experts in Sofia (1 ongoing competition for JS expert in sofia), 4 JS experts in Nis, and 3 SR FL controllers.	
S	4.1.5	Number of employees (full time) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	number	8.00	30.00	Not cumulative. 6 BG FL controllers, 11 MA experts, 6 JS experts in Sofia, 4 JS experts in Nis, and 3 SR FL controllers.	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	4.1.1	Number of performed evaluations of the programme	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	4.1.1	Number of performed evaluations of the programme	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	4.1.2	Updated MIS system	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
S	4.1.2	Updated MIS system	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
F	4.1.3	Number of Monitoring Committee meetings	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00
S	4.1.3	Number of Monitoring Committee meetings	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00
F	4.1.4	Number of publicity events for beneficiaries	13.00	3.00	8.00	12.00	0.00
S	4.1.4	Number of publicity events for beneficiaries	13.00	3.00	8.00	12.00	0.00
F	4.1.5	Number of employees (full time) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	27.00	28.00	12.00	5.00	0.00
S	4.1.5	Number of employees (full time) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	22.00	28.00	12.00	5.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

3.3 Table 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework (JS)

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone 2018 total	for	Final target (2023) total	2019	Observations
1	F	1	Eligible certified expenditure of the priority axis 1 Sustainable Tourism	EUR	734 770		11,935,790.00	4 796 995,24	Total certified amount (IPA + national funding)
1	I	1.1.2	Number of projects contracted related to small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	number	8		9.00	1.2. 13.00	
1	O	1.1.2	Total number of small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	number	4		15.00	13.00	
1	O	1.2.3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing and promoting tourist products in the eligible border area	number	4		8.00	7.00	
2	F	2	Eligible certified expenditure of the priority axis 2 Youths	EUR	524 836		8,525,565.00	3 574 687,72	Total certified amount (IPA + national funding)
2	I	2.1.1	Number of projects contracted related to youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	number	9		9.00	8.00	
2	O	2.1.1	Total number of supported youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	number	2		15.00	17.00	
3	F	3	Eligible certified expenditure of the priority axis 3 Environment	EUR	629 803		10 230,676.00	4 595 651,48	Total certified amount (IPA + national funding)
3	I	3.1.1	Number of projects contracted addressing joint early warning and disaster management systems	number	5		6.00	6.00	
3	O	3.1.1	Total number of joint activities aimed at establishing joint early warning and disaster management systems	number	2		6.00	5.00	

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
1	F	1	Eligible certified expenditure of the priority axis 1 Sustainable Tourism	EUR	2,012,900.30	105,202.86	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	I	1.1.2	Number of projects contracted related to small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	number	11.00	11.00	8.00	0.00	0.00
1	O	1.1.2	Total number of small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions	number	8.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	O	1.2.3	Tools developed and/or implemented for marketing and promoting tourist products in the eligible border area	number	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	F	2	Eligible certified expenditure of the priority axis 2 Youths	EUR	1,980,434.54	205,579.49	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	I	2.1.1	Number of projects contracted related to youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	number	8.00	8.00	8.00	0.00	0.00
2	O	2.1.1	Total number of supported youth-related small-scale infrastructure, training and information facilities	number	12.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	F	3	Eligible certified expenditure of the priority axis 3 Environment	EUR	1,828,420.99	111,520.38	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	I	3.1.1	Number of projects contracted addressing joint early warning and disaster management systems	number	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
3	O	3.1.1	Total number of joint activities aimed at establishing joint early warning and disaster management systems	number	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

3.4. Financial data

Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level

As set out in Table 1 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 (Model for transmission of financial data) and table 17 of model for cooperation programmes under IPA.

Priority axis	Calculation basis	Total funding (€)	Co-financing rate (%)	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (€)	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations (%)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (€)	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority (€)	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries (%)	Number of operations selected
1	Total	11,935,790.00	85.00	10,090,648.16	84.54	9,905,713.47	4,796,995.24	40.19	27
2	Total	8,525,565.00	85.00	5,493,283.18	64.43	5,330,121.12	3,810,559.89	44.70	19
3	Total	10,230,676.00	85.00	10,048,720.97	98.22	10,034,649.59	4,807,852.15	46.99	21
4	Total	3,410,225.00	85.00	2,426,458.50	71.15	2,426,458.50	922,458.39	27.05	10
Grand total		34,102,256.00	85.00	28,059,110.81	82.28	27,696,942.68	14,337,865,67	42.04	77

Where applicable, the use of any contribution from third countries participating in the cooperation programme should be provided (for example IPA and ENI, Norway, Switzerland)

N/A

Table 6: Cumulative cost of all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area

1. Operation (2)	2. The amount of IPA support(1) envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations	3. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the IPA at programme level * 100)	4. Eligible expenditure of IPA support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority	5. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the IPA at programme level *100)
	1 667 877,77	5,75 %	773 545,50	2,67 %

(1) IPA support is the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.

(2) In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

According to the Programme Evaluation Plan (approved on 21.04.2016 by the JMC) the Implementation/mid-term evaluation of the Programme had been launched in June 2018. Tender procedure for Implementation evaluation under Interreg - IPA CBC Programmes, managed by the Republic of Bulgaria, had been completed and service contract with external consultant was signed on 23th of August 2018 with 7 months duration.

The contract ended in March 2019 and the Implementation evaluation report of the Programme 2014-2020 has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Art. 56 (3) of the Regulation (EU) № 1303/2013.

The Report had been submitted and approved with JMC Decision No 29 enters into force on 18.06.2019. The contractor provided feedback and recommendations for further improvement of the overall management and implementation of the current Programme progress, which could contribute towards successful achievement of Programme's objectives, results and outputs.

In addition the Action plan for implementation of the recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020 and of the recommendations for the programming period post 2020 was presented and approved on JMC meeting held on 08 November 2019.

Main findings of the Implementation evaluation report are:

- The approach used for project generation is to a great extent oriented towards the Programme objectives, results and outputs. The application package under the First Call for Proposals was well elaborated, and the GA were exhaustive in content. Full coherence with Programme objectives was ensured through the eligibility criteria and the cooperation criteria that project partners need to comply with. In terms of content, some of the weaknesses identified in the GA, relate to the lack of detailed information on output indicators and their measurement, as well as on the arbitration and complaint procedures. All these deficiencies were addressed accordingly under the Second Call for Proposals. Minor weaknesses were identified in some selection criteria in the Technical and Quality Assessment grid under the First Call, which possibly led to varied interpretations by assessors. Most of these criteria were fine-tuned and reformulated in the grid used under the Second Call.
- The reporting and monitoring processes are structured in such a way as to ensure timely and realistic follow-up of Programme achievements. A smooth reporting process is underpinned by the detailed structure of progress reports and the relatively short deadlines for submitting them. In this way, the JS has high capability of capturing at an early stage various issues concerning achievement of planned project results. However, there are some weaknesses identified with regard to reporting the achievement of Output indicators, which is done just once, after completion of the project. If the achievement of an indicator is at risk, especially with regard to soft measures projects with shorter duration, timely corrective actions could be challenging. Regarding the online monitoring tools (MIS and BP), some beneficiaries, who have experienced technical difficulties, expressed mixed opinions. Overall, there is room for improvement of both online tools, so that they could be more user-friendly.
- Overall, it can be concluded that the different supportive measures offered to beneficiaries regarding project implementation have been adequate, timely and complementary. The content of all Programme manuals, guideline documents, and training materials reflect to a significant extent the most frequently asked questions and issues raised by beneficiaries. In addition, interviewed beneficiaries expressed very high satisfaction with the direct, ad-hoc support and assistance provided by the JS at different stages of project implementation.

- The Programme has a well elaborated indicator system, which allows provision of information for the achievement of results and outputs. Most indicators are measurable and time bound, with achievable target values for year 2023. Identified potential for improvement of the indicator system concerns mainly consistency of measurement units' used, clear formulation, and simplification of definitions. In addition, the lack of a manual or methodological guidelines for measurement and calculation of output indicators puts at risk beneficiaries' understanding of indicators, as well as the accuracy and comparability of reporting.
- Result indicators seem to be progressing at a good pace. Output indicators under PA 1 are with a generally good achievement rate, with the exception of SO 1.3 "People-to-people networking", where no projects contribute to the achievement of OIs. The level of achievement of targets under PA 2 and PA 3 is uneven, as some OIs are overachieved, while others are lagging behind. Overall, the OIs with weakest achievement rate are those related to soft measures projects. The changed mechanism for selection of project proposals under the Second Call has significant positive impact on the projected achievement of relevant Programme targets. All OIs will reach their targets, if the projects proposed for financing under the Second Call are contracted and implemented as planned. With regard to used resources, approximately 60% of the total funding available for the first three PAs was contracted under the First call. The financial implementation of the Programme is progressing at a very good pace, as over 52% of total contracted funds are verified as of the end of 2018.
- Overall results of the Second Call show that current resources and their distribution across the three priority axes do not allow the Programme to reach all of its OIs targets. A transfer of funds from PA 1 and PA 2 to PA 3, combined with generated savings from financial resources allocated under the First Call, and expected savings after completion of the pre-contracting procedures under the Second Call, would be the most appropriate solution.
- In the next programming period, a closer link could be sought between Programme actions and national priorities in the regional development sector. The introduction of larger strategic projects in combination with grant schemes could increase the effectiveness and impact of the Programme.
- Although the socio-economic situation on both sides of the border has improved since the start of the programme implementation, the development of the BG-RS cross-border region is still lagging behind other parts of the two countries, and the core challenges remain the same. Hence, the needs identified through the SWOT and Situation Analysis, as stated in the Ex-ante evaluation of the Programme, are still relevant to the current socio-economic and environmental conditions in the area.
- The horizontal principles, as well as examples of specific actions which support them, are duly described in Programme documents. The principles of sustainable development and equal opportunities and non-discrimination are mirrored by a number of output and result indicators. During the stages of application and selection of projects, coherence with horizontal principles is ensured through their integration in the evaluation grid. During the implementation stage, the principles are adhered to and duly reported at both project and programme level.
- There is a high level of coherence between the goals of the Programme and the goals set in strategic documents at European, macro-regional, national and regional level. The activities carried out during the implementation of the Programme have significant contribution towards the achievement of the priorities of relevant strategic documents. Most notably, there is strong synergy between the Programme and European Strategy for the Danube Region, as implemented activities directly complement the actions envisaged in the EUSDR Action Plan.
- There is a high level of coherence between the envisaged communication activities and the objectives set in the Communication strategy. The achievement of each general and specific

objective is ensured by several communication measures. Communication activities carried out so far contribute to the achievement of objectives, which is evident from the indicator analysis - all indicators have reached their target values, and more than half are significantly overachieved.

- Implemented communication activities were adequately tailored to different target groups. Potential beneficiaries were successfully reached by the info days and partner search forums. For direct beneficiaries, the most effective communication activities were the training workshops. The general public was successfully reached by publications on the Programme website, the websites of the MA and NA, and on social media. European Cooperation Day celebrations were also adequately tailored to meet the information needs of the general public in the cross-border region. Last but not least, communication activities were also specifically tailored to the target audience in the two newly added districts in the cross-border area: Vratsa in Bulgaria and Toplica in Serbia.
- The combination of online communication tools and mainstream media was very successful in terms of increasing awareness of the Programme. The official Programme website was especially effective, as it was the most popular source of information about the Programme. In terms of attracting potential beneficiaries, the info days were the most effective communication tool. This is evident from the high attendance rates, the generally positive feedback from participants, and the record number of submitted project proposals under the First Call. The social media tools also appear to be quite popular among the target groups of the Programme.
- Overall, the methods envisaged for dissemination and capitalization of projects' and Programme results, are very adequate and effective. A very good, currently applied dissemination method, is the presentation of best practices at appropriate events such as European Cooperation Day celebrations, exhibitions, and fairs.

Name	Fund	From month	From year	To month	To year	Type of evaluation	Thematic priority	Topic	Findings
Implementation evaluation of Interreg-IPA CBC Programmes 2014-2020, managed by the Republic of Bulgaria	IPA (a)	8	2018	3	2019	Process	d, e, b	The overall objective of the evaluation of the implementation of the 3 (three) Interreg-IPA CBC Programmes 2014-2020, managed by the Republic of Bulgaria in terms of assessment of the current programme progress and providing recommendations for further improvement of the overall management and implementation of each of the programmes, which could contribute towards successful achievement of their objectives results and outputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The approach used for project generation is to a great extent oriented towards the Programme objectives, results and outputs. - The reporting and monitoring processes are structured in such a way as to ensure timely and realistic follow-up of Programme achievements. - The different measures offered to beneficiaries regarding project implementation have been adequate, timely and complementary. - The Programme has a well elaborated indicator system. - The result indicators seem to be progressing at a good pace. - Overall results of the Second Call show that current resources and their distribution across the three priority axes do not allow the Programme to reach all of its OIs targets. - In the next programming period, a closer link could be sought between Programme actions and national priorities in the regional development sector. - The horizontal principles, as examples of specific actions which support them, are duly described in Programme documents. - High level of coherence between the goals of the Programme and the goals set in strategic documents at all level. - Implemented communication activities were adequately tailored to different target groups. - The combination of online communication tools and mainstream media was very successful in terms of increasing awareness of the Programme which leads to adequate and effective dissemination and capitalization of projects' and Programme results.

5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN

(a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken

No significant problems that could have affected the Programme performance were identified during the reporting period.

(b) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, otherwise it will be included in point 9.1. An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate.

N/A

6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (ARTICLE 50(9) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual and the final implementation reports shall be made public and uploaded as a separate file in the form of annex to the annual and the final implementation report.

7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (ARTICLE 46 OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)

N/A

8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (ARTICLE 101(H) AND ARTICLE 111(3) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(B) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)

8.1. Major projects

N/A

Table 7: Major projects

Project	CCI	Status of MP	Total investments	Total eligible costs	Planned notification/submission date	Date of tacit agreement/ approval by Commission	Planned start of implementation	Planned completion date	Priority axis / Thematic priorities	Current state of realisation — financial progress (% of expenditure certified to Commission compared to total eligible cost)	Current state of realisation — physical progress — Main implementation stage of the project	Main outputs	Date of signature of first works contract (1)	Observations
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(1) In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

Significant problems encountered in implementing major projects and measures taken to overcome them

N/A

Any change planned in the list of major projects in the cooperation programme

N/A

8.2. Joint action plans

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

N/A

Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

N/A

9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)

9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

N/A

9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of specific actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

N/A

9.3.Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on sustainable development, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of the actions taken to promote sustainable development in accordance with that Article

N/A

9.4. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

N/A

9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the role of partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme

N/A

10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 1 (A) AND (B), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013

10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations

N/A

10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy

N/A

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 2 (A), (B), (C) AND (F), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)

11.1. Progress in the implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including integrated territorial investments, sustainable urban development, and community led local development under the cooperation programme

N/A

11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the IPA

N/A

11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

As stipulated by the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, recital 19, article 8(3)(d) on the "Content, adoption and amendment of cooperation programmes" and article 14(4) 2nd subparagraph (c) "Implementation reports", this programme contributes to MRS(s) and/or SBS:

The INTERREG-IPA Bulgaria-Serbia CBC Programme contributes to the achievement of the European Strategy for the Danube Region (Danube strategy). The main needs identified in the Danube strategy are structured within the following areas: mobility, energy, environment, risk prevention and mitigation, socio-economic development, and security.

At the stage of assessment and selection of projects under the Second Call of the Programme, coherence with Danube strategy is ensured by a separate selection criterion in Section II of the Technical and Quality Assessment grid. The highest possible score under the criterion (4) point is obtained when a project envisages activities which are coherent with the strategy. Other possible scores are points, when the project does not demonstrate coherence.

At the implementation stage, the CBC Programme is closely coordinated with the Danube strategy, as its priority axes contribute to different pillars and priority areas. More specifically, activities supported under PA 1 Sustainable Tourism are fully coherent with Pillar A: Connecting the Danube Region,

Priority area 3: To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts. PA 1 also partially contributes to Pillar C: Building Prosperity in the Danube Region, Priority area 8: To support the competitiveness of enterprises.

Activities supported under PA 2 Youths contribute to the achievement of the aims of Pillar C: Building Prosperity in the Danube Region, and Priority area 9: To invest in people and skills. For instance, eligible activities under SO 2.1 include support to youth entrepreneurship schemes and initiatives. PA 2 also partially addresses two priority areas under Pillar C of EUSDR: To develop the knowledge society through research, education and information technologies; and to support the competitiveness of enterprises, including cluster development.

Activities supported under PA 3 Environment are fully coherent with Pillar B: Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region. For instance, eligible activities under SO 3.2 include cooperation and networking initiatives tackling water pollution, including Danube pollution. Some of the projects funded under the First Call of the Programme contribute to Priority area 5 of the EUSDR: To manage environmental risks.

The Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2014 – 2020 for Bulgaria aims to outline a coherent framework for identification the strategic priorities for action to reduce the risk of disasters and to support the priorities measures implementation at national, district, municipal and field level. The strategy has 4 main priorities and

PA 3 Environment is relevant to the last three priorities of the strategy.

The six NUTS III regions in Bulgaria that are covered by the Programme (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Sofia, Pernik and Kyustendil) have Regional Development Strategies for 2014 – 2020. In all of them the sustainable tourism development and the adaptation to the climate changes and protection of environment are defined as leading priorities. The CBC Programme supports exactly the same activities.

- EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)
- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)

11.4 Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation

N/A

13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Information and assessment of the programme contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

N/A

14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN — PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)

Where the assessment of progress made with regard to the milestones and targets set out in the performance framework demonstrates that certain milestones and targets have not been achieved, Member States should outline the underlying reasons for failure to achieve these milestones in the report of 2019 (for milestones) and in the final implementation report (for targets).

N/A
