

# **Draft Programme Intervention Logic**

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## **BULGARIA – SERBIA CBC Programme 2021-2027**



**INTERREG - IPA  
BULGARIA - SERBIA PROGRAMME  
2021-2027**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to the draft cohesion policy legal framework for 2021-2027, the funds shall support 5 general Policy Objectives and 2 Policy Objectives dedicated to Interreg programmes, namely:  
General Policy Objectives:

- A smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation ('PO 1')
- A greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management ('PO 2')
- A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility and regional ICT connectivity ('PO 3')
- A more social Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights ('PO 4')
- A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives ('PO 5')

Interreg specific objectives:

- A better Interreg Governance (ISO 1)
- A safer and more secure Europe (ISO 2)

Based on the draft Regulations, at least 60% of the ERDF and, where applicable, of the external financing instruments of the Union allocated to each Interreg strand A, B and D programme, shall be allocated on Policy objective 2 and a maximum of two other policy objectives as set out in Article 15 (1) in the new ETC.

## 2. TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS

The Territorial Analysis of the Bulgaria-Serbia Cross-border region identifies the needs and the potentials of the area in the following main fields: economic development, transport infrastructure, tourism, environment, human capital, governance etc. The main conclusion of the analysis is that both countries in the cross-border area share many common challenges such as a low GDP, negative demographic trends ('depopulation'), outdated infrastructure and a high vulnerability to natural hazards. Poor employment opportunities in the rural areas and smaller settlements lead to concentration of business activities and employment opportunities mainly in the bigger towns. Seasonal nature of tourism sector in the CBC area does not allow fully use of the existing potential of the region landmarks, cultural and historical heritages. The borderline remains a barrier and business activity remains mainly local. Significant opportunities for business development remain unexploited because of the limited market size and scope of the economic activities. In general, the economic structure in the cross-border region is characterized by a relatively large service sector, followed by industry and agriculture. The underdeveloped transport links in the bordering region, however, have predetermined the relative isolation of the area. The proximity to the Pan-European corridors and the major infrastructure projects to be completed in the coming years (the most important for the region being the highway Sofia-Niš) should become the driving force for the development of various trade and transport-related services – wholesale markets and showrooms,

logistic parks, warehouse facilities, hotels and catering, repair services, etc. The industry on both sides of the border is mainly represented by mining, which continuously rises environmental concerns.

Taking into account the economic development of the border area as well as significant unfavorable economic and social effects of the COVID-19 health crisis, the programme is considered as most suitable in supporting SMEs and local businesses in peripheral and border region. In that respect measures for direct support to SMEs in low-employment lagging regions will contribute to an enhanced economic development and reduction of interregional economic differences. Investments in diversification of the tourism products and reducing the seasonality of the sector, value-chain cooperation, automated production systems, digital and green transformation, marketing, customer relationships, product-service linkages, new business models, internal competences is expected to boost the regional competitiveness and the economic growth in the CBC area.

In addition, the territorial analysis shows a vulnerability of the cross-border area to natural disasters, mainly forest fires. In the last five years, an increasing share of the CBC fires has been observed. Having in mind the already established good cooperation between the responsible bodies in Bulgaria and Serbia and the recognized need for integrated and coordinated measures to reduce the risk of natural disasters, a strategic approach on risk prevention and rapid response management in case of different emergencies – wildfires, disasters, earthquakes, collapses etc. could be envisaged. The concept of disaster preparedness is embedded into a number of international commitments, including the UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, and the Grand Bargain commitments. The European Commission's Action Plan on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 proposes new “all-of-society and all-hazards risk approach across economic, social, and environmental policy areas, with a view to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience”<sup>1</sup>. The EC's Action plan also foresees a strong role for regional organisations in supporting the efforts of countries in reducing disaster risks. The above-mentioned, as well as the outcomes of the regional consultation process on programming the 2021-2027 CBC Bulgaria-Serbia programme paved the way to the evolution of a cross-border strategic project in the field of disaster preparedness with the aim to make the emergency response as local as possible – a streamlined approach in the EC's Action plan on Sendai Framework. This project is expected to have a greater impact on the targeted area and in national context as well, as it shall involve key authorities playing diverse roles on various levels in the entire system of disaster management – from public bodies through academia to NGOs. Moreover, the project envisages to enhance the interface between science and policy to build up a stronger knowledge base for decision-making.

To sum up, the cross-border region needs support in almost all spheres and in order to avoid uncoordinated, dot-like investments, a more integrated territorial approach is seen most appropriate based on the needs and competitive advantages of the region. In that respect, simultaneous and interlinked actions in several sectors are needed and an integrated development under PO5 is the most suitable way forward.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/1\\_en\\_document\\_travail\\_service\\_part1\\_v2.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/1_en_document_travail_service_part1_v2.pdf)

### 3. LESSONS LEARNT

#### Experience in current and previous programming periods

The Bulgaria-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2007-2013 operated in a wide range of priority areas and covered a variety of sectors, without clear prioritization. Despite the thematic concentration imposed by the EU Regulations in 2014 -2020 period, the areas of intervention defined under INTERREG-IPA CBC Programme 2014 -2020 still remained quite diverse and without any interdependence.

Opposite to limited (even reduced in 2014-2020 period) financial resources, the interest in the programme remained high during both programming periods. In 2007-2013 period – under the 2 open calls 367 projects were submitted and 156 contracts signed while in 2014-2020 period – under the 2 open calls 559 projects were submitted and 101 project signed. This comes to show that more than 70 % of the project proposals were not financed. Reasons for that varies from high expectations of potential beneficiaries through low quality of project proposals to lack of clear thematic focus of the calls. The evident disproportion between the numbers of applied and contracted projects resulted in scattered sectoral investments, as well as in fragmented and dot-like interventions which are generally not capable of comprehensively addressing actual needs and potentials of the CBC area, thus fail also to significantly impact inclusive and sustainable growth. Despite the demonstrated high interest, the low competence of some beneficiaries in terms of project implementation of certain measures and the low level of partnership between public and non-governmental sectors contributed to the lack of capitalization of the project results. In addition exhaustion in generation of project ideas was observed – e.g. circulation of routine and repetitive project actions has been vastly observed as well as an increased number of projects, with already financed similar ideas/objectives. Furthermore, and in all calls most of the applicants were one and the same organizations/institutions.

#### Outcomes of the performed mid-term and ex-post evaluations

The Impact Evaluation of the 2007-2013 Programme, as well as the Midterm evaluation of 2014-2020 Programme, showed that, in correspondence to the diversity of the spheres of intervention, a wide number and range of outputs were delivered. From a financial perspective, it was observed a drastic discrepancy between available, requested and contracted funds - in average, the total budget of all applications exceeds with 498 % the available one, while only 16 % of the total requested funding has been contracted. Often, such financial disproportion is a precondition for weak programme effects in terms of efficiency and sustainability. That is why it is difficult for the programme to bring out benefits for the communities, to intensify its effects for the region and especially its value added achieved through cooperation. In that respect, in order a visible impact to be achieved, a new, more results-oriented approach in the implementation of the future programmes was recommended. It is expected that a better programme focus would strengthen linkages between needs and resources (through concentrating more funds to most demanded intervention areas) thus generating proportionate and sustainable effects on the territory.

#### Conclusions

The above lessons learned from current and previous programming periods show that for avoiding uncoordinated, dot-like investments and ensuring a stronger impact of the programme results, a more strategic approach is desirable, based on the needs and competitive advantages of the CBC region. This can be achieved in the following ways:

- PO5 “a Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives” is extremely appropriate to be part of the programme intervention logic. It will give the opportunity the multi-thematic challenges of the border area to be tackled through a territorial development strategy, applying integrated measures across different sectors. The integrated investments for fostering the territorial development in local economy will bring higher added value and ensure the leverage effect of the funds.
- Pre-defined strategic project/s which will contribute to ensuring a stronger impact of project/s results and will lead to more tangible benefits for the region. Up to now the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programmes show lack of large-scale flagship projects that contribute for a greater impact on the whole cross-border area as well as for meeting the objectives of the Danube Strategy.
- In addition, expanding the possible beneficiaries by including SMEs as eligible applicants and providing them with a direct support will on one hand diversify the objectives and respectively the results of the project proposals and on the other hand will expand the economic activities in the region. A scheme for direct support to SMEs is a logical continuation of the indirect assistance provided during the current and previous programming periods. The support for SMEs may be carried out under PO1 “A smarter Europe”, Specific objective (iii) Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs, through a competitive approach – open calls.

#### **4. BORDER ORIENTATION PAPER (BOP)**

The Border Orientation Paper for the INTERREG-IPA CBC cooperation programmes between Bulgaria and respectively: Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey sets out the key characteristics of the cross-border territories and outlines suggestions for the programming of the next INTERREG-IPA programmes.

Considering the limited programme budget and in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency, the Orientation Paper highlights the following main aspects to be taken into account during the programme preparation and implementation:

- Reinforcing the strategic dimension of the future programme by linking them more strongly with existing strategic frameworks and political initiatives (such as the macro-regional strategies) and applying a top-down approach for part of its envelope (through strategic/thematic/flagship projects);
- Exploring the use of simple financial instruments with a grant component to make them attractive and manageable – putting in place mechanisms to finance small projects or people-to-people projects that make a strong contribution to the social and civil cohesion of the cross-border region.
- Refocusing on functional areas and avoiding duplication, fragmentation and overlapping of measures in order the programme effectiveness to be increased;

Orientations are structured in view of the proposed objectives for Cohesion Policy, as follows:

***PO1: A smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation***

The BOP outlines that the current framework conditions for competitiveness of SMEs in the programme area are challenging and the impact of earlier actions funded by previous programmes on socio-economic development has been limited.

In that respect direct support to local SMEs is suggested that could take the form of grants, voucher schemes and other tools, leading to reducing the administrative burden and simplification of the projects implementation. Joint measures to increase resource efficiency and to promote the circular economy in SMEs may be envisaged as well.

***PO2: A greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaption and risk prevention and management***

A possible strategic/flagship project may include actions concerning climate change and risk prevention, among which:

- Joint climate change measures with a strong focus on sustainable and eco-friendly measures (such as green infrastructure (e.g. flood plains and reforestation));
- Facilitating existing cooperation through the development of joint policies, protocols, procedures and approaches on risk prevention and rapid response management to many potential emergencies (such as wildfires, flooding, natural disasters, severe weather evacuations, health emergencies).

***PO 3: A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility and regional ICT connectivity***

In principle IPA CBC programmes can play an important role for coordinated actions aimed at improving cross-border mobility and connectivity. Taking into consideration the limited programme budget major infrastructure projects are not feasible to be envisaged for financing.

On the other hand such measures are more appropriate to be developed as strategic projects leading to more tangible results but they require good coordination between the responsible bodies well in advance, as well as sufficient resources. The connectivity element could be however very well tackled under PO5 with the respective justification for integrated territorial investment.

***PO4: A more social Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social rights***

The BOP outlines negative demographic trends in both countries (mostly due to ageing and net migration), as well as employment performance considerably lower than the EU average.

In that respect measure addressing the above issues are more appropriate to be tackled at national level and in case activities under PO4 are foreseen a more pro-active interaction and convergence with national employment programmes should be established.

***PO5: A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives***

The BOP outlines that since possible areas of intervention under PO5 can refer to all other policy objectives (PO1-PO4) they should be based on an integrated, place-based strategy, i.e. a strategy targeting a specific geographical area, identifying common challenges and objectives based on the

local needs, developed with appropriate stakeholders involvement, and endorsed by the relevant urban, local or other territorial authorities or bodies.

In case one of the two INTERREG Specific Objectives is obligatory to be included in the thematic concentration of the programme, the managing bodies will propose solutions for discussion within the Joint working group on programming.

## **5. INVOLVEMENT OF THE RELEVANT PARTNERS IN THE PROGRAMME PREPARATION (Respecting of partnership principle)**

### **5.1. Establishing of the Joint working group**

The principle of partnership is a key feature in the implementation of the EU funds, building on the multi-level governance approach and ensuring the involvement of civil society and social partners. The partners that had taken part in the future Programme preparation were the most representative of the relevant stakeholders and were nominated as duly mandated representatives, taken into consideration their competence, capacity to participate actively and appropriate level of representation. Involving all relevant partners from the beginning in the programming phase, builds a stronger basis under the Programme, which will facilitate its implementation later on.

Based on the above-mentioned considerations and for the purposes of community-led programme preparation for 2021-2027, as well as in respect of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds, a Joint Working Group (JWG) was set up in October 2019. The aim of the JWG is on an operational level, to periodically review and make suggestions and proposals to the programming process as well as to approve the main stages of the programme's preparation and ultimately the final version of a needs-oriented and a focused programme. The JWG members were nominated in accordance with the relevant institutional and legal framework and respecting the partnership principle. The JWG is composed of a balanced number of representatives of the two partnering countries, including representatives of public authorities (national, regional and local), economic and social partners, relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination. The first meeting of the JWG took place on November, 8<sup>th</sup> 2019 in Sofia where Rules and procedures and a Concept note with a timeschedule for the programming process were adopted.

### **5.2. Regional consultations**

The establishment of the JWG was preceded by a large regional consultation process implemented in both countries. The negotiation between Bulgaria and Serbia for the programming period 2021 – 2027 started with four regional consultation meetings. Two of them were organized in September 2019 in Botevgrad (Bulgaria), and in October 2019 in Montana (Bulgaria). Two other parallel meetings were held in October 2019, in the cities of Bor and Nis (Serbia). Participants in all



meetings were representatives of key stakeholders that are most affected by the programme interventions - local and regional authorities, educational institutions, branch organizations, employers' organizations, non-governmental organizations. During the consultation meetings, issues of policy and strategic programme importance were discussed. For instance, there were active talks on how to capitalise results from the previous programmes, what are the needs for modifications of the new Programme components in terms of approach, thematic scope of objectives and interventions, eligibility rules, etc., so as to design an agreeable vision for CBC development in the next 7 years. During the regional consultations it was highlighted that a more strategic/result oriented approach (as advised in the *Ex post* evaluation of Interreg 2007-2013) is appropriate to be applied in the pursuit of a coherent strategy to promote the development and socio-economic and territorial integration of the CBC area. Taking into consideration the importance of applying also a bottom-up approach, in developing the implementation characteristics of the new Programme - priorities, potential beneficiaries and thematic coverage of actions to be supported by the Programme (i.e. concrete intervention needs) the regional consultations continued in a more structured format, under the form of standardised questionnaires. The objective was to enable aggregation and systematisation of respondents' perceptions, opinions and recommendations on the new Programme so as to ensure evidence-based grounds for its design and for the decision-making in all programming stages.

### **5.3. Questionnaires**

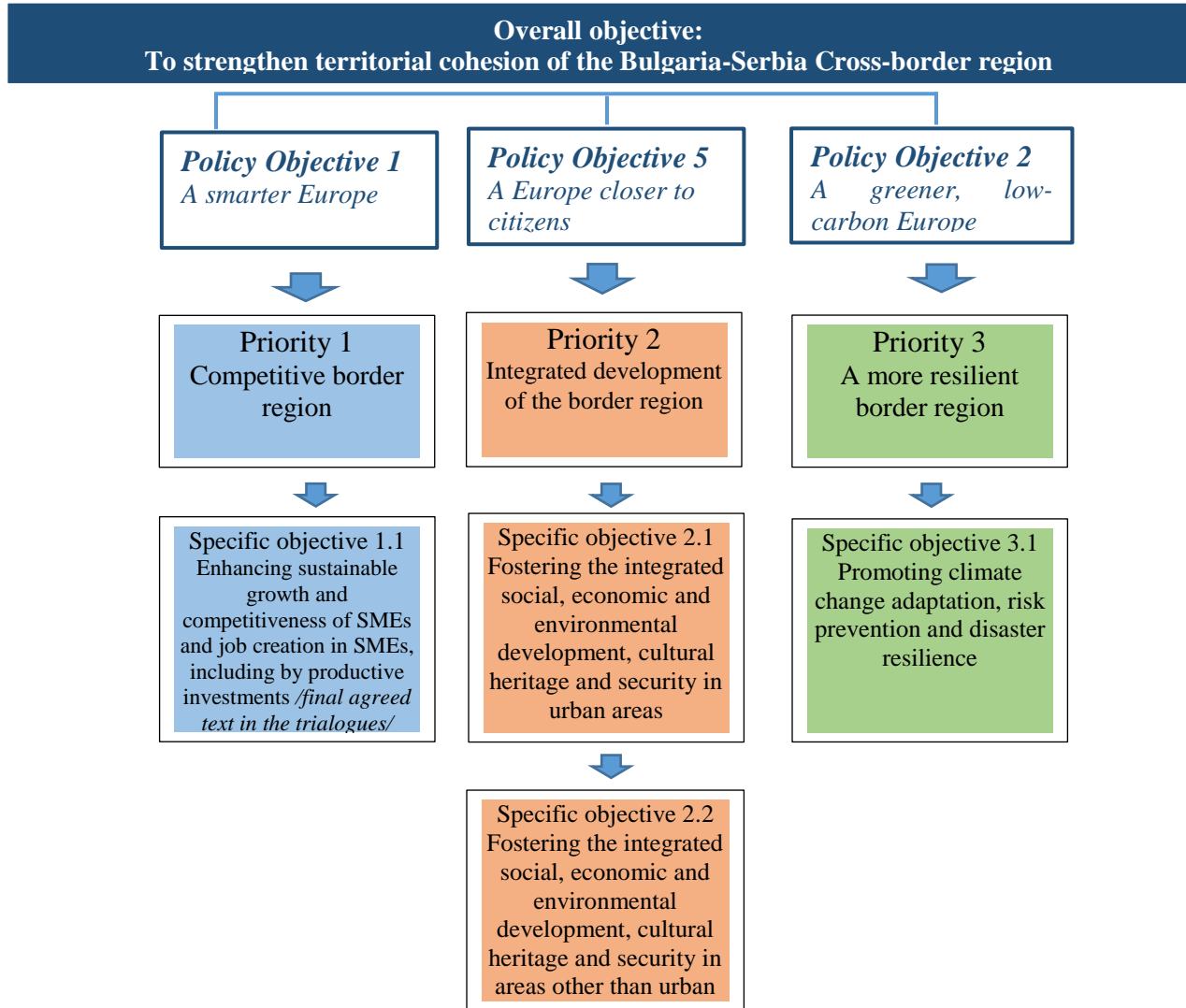
At the regional consultations in both countries, a survey with questionnaires was conducted among the participants, in which they were asked to share their views and opinions on the main problems / deficits in their cross-border region, as well as suggestions for possible new approaches to overcome the common challenges that could be envisaged in the future programming period.

After summarizing the results of the surveys the idea of supporting one or few strategic projects that require better collective actions to produce more shared benefits and widely agreed solutions to common territorial challenges has been welcomed. The respondents proposed the mirror approach for cooperation to be substituted by an integrated approach, thus favoring the cross-sectoral partnering and ultimately supporting only projects with real cross-border effects (i.e. exchange of experience, goods and services). The need for undertaking measures to reduce the administrative and technical burden in the project application, evaluation and implementation processes was highlighted. It has been observed a great interest in the introduction of the Small Projects Fund tool in Bulgaria which may be used in providing a direct support to SMEs and thus help them overcoming specific and pressing problems in a short time.

Positive feedback has been given in favor of applying a combination of strategic projects, open calls for proposals and Small Project Fund, where relevant. In order to discard mirror projects and to encourage more cooperative actions that address common territorial challenges, the respondents gathered around the need to shift the programme intervention approach to a place-based one. Such approach is expected to discontinue the ineffective dot-like interventions which have provisional rather than sustainable effects on the economic growth.

## 6. DRAFT INTERVENTION LOGIC

The present chart represents the proposal for intervention logic for the new Bulgaria-Serbia Interreg-IPA III CBC Programme (2021-2027).



Indicative distribution of the financial resources (share of the total programme budget)

<b>PRIORITIES<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>P 1: Competitive border region</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>P 2: Integrated development of border region</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>P 3: A more resilient border region</b>	<b>20%</b>

The proposed above Intervention logic is based on:

- The findings of the territorial analysis;
- Border Orientation Paper
- Lessons learnt;
- Regional consultations and questionnaires
- The restrictions set by the regulations related to the thematic concentration<sup>3</sup>
- Limited budgetary resources<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> According to art. 26 of the draft ETC Regulation, Technical Assistance (TA) shall not be presented as a separate Priority Axis. The amount of the funds allocated to TA shall be identified as part of the financial allocation of each priority of the programme. It shall take the form of a flat rate of 10% of the ERDF and the external financing instruments of the Union (art. 26 (2) (b) of the draft ETC Regulation).

<sup>3</sup> Based on the draft Regulations, at least 60% of the ERDF and, where applicable, of the external financing instruments of the Union allocated to each Interreg strand A, B and D programme, shall be allocated on Policy objective 2 and a maximum of two other policy objectives as set out in Article 15 (1) in the new ETC.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the draft Multiannual financial framework a general reduction of the Interreg allocation is envisaged, that could potentially influence the budget of the future programme

**PRIORITY 1: Competitive border region**

Selected policy objective / Selected specific objective	Justification for selection	Actions to be Supported	Output Indicators	Result Indicators	Target groups / Beneficiaries
<p><b>Policy Objective 1</b> <i>“A smarter Europe”</i></p> <p><b>Specific objective</b> <i>(1.1) Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments<sup>5</sup></i></p>	<p>Taking into account the potential for SMEs sector growth, identified challenges and drives for the further development of the sector in the cross-border area as well as the significant unfavorable economic and social effect of Covid-19 crisis, the programme is considered suitable in supporting SMEs competitiveness. Moreover, economic activity is expected to further contract in 2021 as outbreaks of the Covid-19 virus constrain private consumption and investment. The pandemic negative impact on the economic activity may be further deepened if focused and targeted measures to combat it are not put into effect. If we additionally consider the fact that the business activities especially of the SMEs remains mainly at local level and significant opportunities for development remain unexploited because of the limited market size and geographical scope of the economic activities, the economic disparities in border region will continue to worsen.</p> <p>Given the fact that most affected from the crisis are the micro and small enterprises typically having insufficient capital and poor development potentials, a <b>direct</b> support to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Investments in existing enterprises including but not limited to investments in buildings, purchase of equipment and technologies, construction works, modernisation of infrastructure, communication networks etc.;</li> <li>– Investments for the establishment of new enterprises including but not limited to investments in buildings, equipment, and systems and wage costs arising from job creation as a result of the initial investment;</li> <li>– Investments for the development of new products/services including but not limited to research for product development, securing of patents, purchase of royalties, purchase of specialized equipment, IT technologies, installations, vehicles, etc;</li> </ul>	<p><b>RCO01</b> <i>Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large)</i></p> <p><b>RCO02</b> <i>Enterprises supported by grants</i></p>	<p><b>RCR01</b> <i>Jobs created in supported entities</i></p>	<p><b>Target groups:</b> Micro, small and medium enterprises</p> <p><b>Beneficiaries:</b> Micro, small and medium enterprises</p>

<sup>5</sup>Revised according to the latest agreement between institutions

	<p>SMEs is more appropriate than the usual indirect support from the current and previous programming periods. This could be made through direct access to finance, human resource development and skills formation, improvement of ICT usage and digitalisation, enhance the access to the EU and foreign markets and internationalisation, resource efficiency, etc.</p> <p>The support for SMEs will be provided through a competitive approach – open calls for proposals.</p> <p>Based on the conclusions and recommendations in the territorial and SWOT analysis for the cross-border area and the outcomes from the regional consultations, a <b>direct support to the SMEs</b>, including start-ups, in their efforts to be innovative, digitally up-to-date, sustainable and export-oriented by creating favourable environment for their development is considered suitable for selection under the Programme.</p> <p>The precise economic sectors that are going to be eligible for programme support shall be specified at a later stage, most probably just before the application process to make the programme consistent with the current national planning and strategic policy frameworks. The areas of interventions shall be closely coordinated with the national competitiveness strategies and applicable analyses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Investments aimed at increasing employment in an existing enterprise;</li> <li>– Technological and/or organizational investments aimed at reducing the cost of production/service delivery and any other investment leading to increased enterprise competitiveness including but not limited to purchase of specialized equipment and technologies, monitoring systems; purchase of IT equipment, training and know-how transfer, virtual business centres, e-commerce solutions, possibilities for electronic payments, etc;</li> <li>– Investments aimed at increasing productive capacity and/or securing stable minimum production thresholds (quantities) thus allowing the enterprise to access larger markets;</li> <li>– Investments aimed at quality management for improving product/service quality, including but not limited to improvements in the design of product/service features, improvements in customer after-sales service, improvements in product guarantee, corporate responsibility measures, total</li> </ul>			
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		<p>quality management systems, and any other aspect that defines overall product/service quality level including “product branding” as “green” or “traditional”;</p> <p>– Investments aimed at accessing new markets or market segments including but not limited to marketing studies, distance-spanning technologies, “organisational cooperation” and joint business schemes with other enterprises, company exhibition halls at company’s establishment, etc.</p> <p>– Investments in marketing and promotion, participation in international fairs, exhibitions and other promotional events, consultation and information services, including e-marketing, communication with clients, etc.;</p>			
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## PRIORITY 2: Integrated development of border region

Selected policy objective / Selected specific objective	Justification for selection	Actions to be Supported	Output Indicators	Result Indicators	Target groups / Beneficiaries
<i>Policy Objective 5 “A Europe closer to citizens”</i>	What has emerged from the territorial analysis and lessons learnt, as well as during the regional consultations, is the need for a strategic methodological shift of the	The actions under this priority will be selected on the basis of an integrated territorial strategy (ITS), but in general terms their	<i>RCO74 Population covered by</i>	<i>RCR104 Solutions taken up or up-</i>	<b>Target groups:</b> • Civil society

Annex 2

<p><b>Specific objectives</b>  <i>(2.1) Fostering the integrated social, economic and environmental development, cultural heritage and security in urban areas</i></p> <p><i>(2.2) Fostering the integrated social, economic and environmental development, cultural heritage and security in areas other than urban</i></p>	<p>programme intervention in a way to facilitate an integrated development in almost all policy areas of life with impact on the economic development. The application of a place-based approach, in contrast to the dot-like one, is expected to unleash the territorial potential and satisfy identified needs in a more consistent, efficient and sustainable way. This entails the involvement of all actors playing active roles in the border economy, such as SMEs, public authorities, NGOs, special-purpose organizations, etc. and thus allowing for accountable partnerships that are set up to support the prosperity of the border region. Effective integrated territorial development at a place-based level requires a broad range of economic and community-led incentives that foster active collaborations of stakeholders and service providers from both sides of the border. The selected specific objectives provides a very good <i>strategic framework</i> to bring citizens and authorities together in collective actions that produce shared benefits and widely agreed solutions to common territorial challenges. As far as the <i>implementation framework</i> of PO5 is concerned (in terms of actions to be supported), its concrete parameters will be designed and detailed in the Integrated territorial strategy, whose short description is presented under column “Actions to be supported”. Although the strategy will be elaborated at a later stage, it is known that it will prioritize the support for some projects/operations/activities over others. That is specifically valid for the integrated development of the tourism which proves to</p>	<p>thematic coverage will not differ substantially from the thematic concentration of the present programme. The ITS is the instrument who shapes and leads the implementation of PO5 (<i>CPR Art 22 (c)</i>). In other words, it operationalises the support to integrated territorial development. The ITS shall, in close coordination with a Task Force (composed by relevant regional and local stakeholders), identify the needs and propose interventions for their addressing following the SMART approach (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound). In close coordination with the Task Force, a list of operations, accompanied by concrete NACE codes, to be supported will be established, based on mapping of possible interventions for an integrated development of the region, as well as identifying target groups and potential beneficiaries. The operations from the list shall be grouped, prioritized and time-bound (based on a transparent and clear methodology).</p>	<p><i>projects in the framework of strategies for integrated territorial development</i></p> <p><i>RCO77</i></p> <p><i>Number of cultural and tourism sites supported</i></p>	<p><i>scaled by organisations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local/ regional bodies and authorities, regional structures of central public authorities</li> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• R&amp;D, academic and training institutions</li> <li>• Social institutions</li> <li>• SMEs</li> </ul> <p><b>Beneficiaries:</b> will be identified in the Strategy</p>
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	<p>be among the important areas of programme intervention due to its untapped economic potential and wide public recognition of its regional importance and impact. That is why its support under priority 2 shall be prioritized in terms of funding, allocating 40% of the priority's budget to integrated projects with a focus on sustainable tourism and culture.</p>				
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### PRIORITY 3: A more resilient border region

Selected policy objective / Selected specific objective	Justification for selection	Actions to be Supported	Outputs	Results	Target groups / Beneficiaries
<p><b>Policy Objective 2:</b> <i>“A greener, low-carbon Europe</i></p> <p><b>Specific objective</b> <i>(3.1) Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience</i></p>	<p>Locally occurred natural disasters may have a nationwide impact. As evident from the Territorial Analysis, since 1990s a series of disasters have been taking place and have been causing serious material damages and casualties in many regions in Bulgaria and Serbia, including the border region. Few projects, combating natural risks and addressing specific needs in the field, have been implemented in the CBC area throughout previous and current programming periods. Up to now the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programmes show lack of large-scale flagship projects that contribute for a greater impact on the whole cross-border area. A pre-defined strategic project for Preparation of the population for actions in case of disasters and improvement of the capacity of the professional teams for response in case of emergency situations will build on past results</p>	<p>Indicative type of actions to be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of a comprehensive preparedness program for border communities to adequately response to natural disasters, including online and in-situ trainings, simulations, awareness campaigns, etc.;</li> <li>– Strengthening the institutional cooperation in the cross-border region through development of guiding and strategic documentation; exchange of information, knowledge and</li> </ul>	<p><i>RCO 85</i> <i>Participants in joint training schemes</i></p> <p><i>RCO 87</i> <i>Organizations cooperating across borders</i></p>	<p><i>RCR79 Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations</i></p> <p><i>RCR81 Completion of joint training schemes</i></p>	<p>Target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Border population</li> <li>• Regional public authorities;</li> <li>• Socio-economic partners and NGOs,</li> <li>• Stakeholders (business, academia, students, volunteers, professionals etc.)</li> </ul>



Annex 2

	<p>with the aim to leverage, valorise and multiply them by outspreading the idea in two main directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extend the CBC disaster response framework by adding on more types of natural and man-made disasters;</li> <li>2. Enhance regional capacity for disaster response of those who are the most affected – the professionals and the border population.</li> </ol> <p>Reducing the risk of natural disasters requires timely and well-coordinated measures. In that respect together with the responsible institutions (as pre-defined partners), broad community engagement that is properly trained in combatting natural hazards will increase local response capacity and disaster resilience, and at the same time will decrease the degree to which a natural hazard may have damaging impacts on the economic development in the region.</p>	<p>skills; implementation of joint field trainings etc.;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Update of the academic programmes in regards to the development and the implementation of a disaster response framework aiming to enhance the interface between science and policy for a stronger knowledge base for decision-making;</li> </ul> <p>Small-scale investments in public training infrastructure and in specialised equipment</p>			<p>Beneficiaries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Directorate General Fire Safety and Civil Protection – Ministry of the Interior (DGFSCP-MoI), Bulgaria;</li> <li>2) Sector for Emergency Management - Ministry of Interior (SEM MoI), Serbia</li> <li>3) Volunteers organizations</li> <li>4) Other competent institutions in the field</li> </ol>
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