

Citizen's Summary of the 2017 Greece-Bulgaria Annual Implementation Report

Interreg V-A Cooperation Programme Greece-
Bulgaria 2014-2020

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What is the Interreg V-A Cooperation Programme Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 about?

The Programme supports regional cooperation among Greek and Bulgarian regions in the 40 thousand square km cross-border area with a population of about 2.7 million people. 2 Bulgarian and 2 Greek Regions cooperate in the Programme.



The structure of the Programme area is predominantly rural, mountainous, remote and sparsely populated, with 10 medium-large cities (>50.000 inhabitants) which accumulate 38,2% of the total population, and 25 small cities (10.000-50.000 inhabitants).

The Interreg V-A cooperation programme Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with 110,723,408.00 Euros. The total budget of the Programme, including national contribution, is 130,262,835.00 Euros. The official language of the Programme is English.

Taking into consideration the territorial analysis, the main needs and challenges in the programme area can be grouped into the following headings: socioeconomic development and demography, environment and transport infrastructure enhancement, better use of the rich natural resources and cultural heritage.

The Programme focuses on finding solutions to those challenges that are of cross-border character and cannot be addressed by mainstream programmes. As such, it concentrates on the thematic objectives of EU2020 strategy that are either characterized by significant cross-border effects or present a high potential for achieving added-value through cooperation.

The Programme combines risk prevention with environmental protection to produce an integrated approach to environmental issues. Furthermore, "Innovation" and "Institutional Strengthening" prevail in all activities as cross-cutting themes.

Four Priority Axes define the scope of Programme interventions:

- Priority Axis 1 - "A competitive and Innovative Cross-border area"
- Priority Axis 2 - "A sustainable and climate adjustable cross-border area"
- Priority Axis 3 - "A better interconnected Cross-border area"
- Priority Axis 4 - "A socially inclusive Cross-border area"

What activities were carried out in 2017?

The first approved project under the Programme was "Aiming at Improving Cross - Border Accessibility (CrossBo)" for the amount of M€ 38,802,558.00. The project is going to further develop the cross-border infrastructure for better connection to TEN-T network and enhance the accessibility and connectivity between two EU member countries. It will improve traffic capacity, roads' safety as well as reduce the harmful gas emissions in the town of Rudozem. In 2017 most of the public procurement procedures started, moreover the contract for upgrading lots 1 and 2 of the Roads II-86 Srednogortsi - Rudozem and bypass of Rudozem was signed and for the construction of a new 3,300 km road section (Dimario - GR/BG Borders) was concluded. All designs for the construction of the new Border cross check point (BCCP) Rudozem - Xanthi were completed, while the selection of contractors for the BCCP and for upgrading of the Road II-59 Momchilgrad - Ivailovgrad were ready to start.

48 Subsidy contracts were signed between the Lead beneficiaries and the Managing authority for the total amount of M€ 90,811,553.38. The projects started implementing their activities such as conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage, protecting and restoring biodiversity including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures, enhancing water management, developing disaster management systems and anti-flood infrastructure at the three (3) cross border rivers Strymon / Struma, Nestos / Mesta and Evros / Maritza, as well as investing in primary and emergency health care (at isolated and deprived communities) and providing support for social enterprises in the cross border area.

The evaluation of one strategic project including measures for prevention and reaction in cases of floods started under the 4th Call for Proposals, the budget of the call being M€ 5,500.00.

What about spending?

The total amount of the verified expenditure till the end of 2017 was € 192,885.36. More than a million euros were spent under the contracted projects for preparation activities, management costs and starting promotional events as well as for staff costs of the Joint Secretariat's team and the Info Point in Bulgaria thus enabling the proper management and organization of Programme implementation.

Do you need further information?

Should you need further information about Interreg V-A cooperation programme Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020, please visit our websites:

<http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu> and <http://www.interreg.gr>