

• **What is the Programme all about?**

The Programme's total budget is **130.262.836,00 €**. It includes co-finance rate of 85% by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and also 15% of national contributions.



The eligible area is consisted by two Greek and two Bulgarian regional administrations, situated at the south-east border of the European Union with a total surface of approximately 40 thousand km² and a population of around 2.7 million people. The area is primarily rural, mountainous and sparsely populated. Demographically the city of Thessaloniki is predominant, concentrating approximately 40% of the area's population.

There are also ten urban agglomerations of more than 50.000 inhabitants and twenty five smaller concentrations with a population ranging from 10.000 to 50.000 inhabitants.

The goal of the Programme is address issues of common interest on an efficient bilateral basis. To this extent, it focuses on four thematic areas of particular value for the cross-border area.



• **2021 in a Nutshell**

2021 was a challenging year for the Program's implementation as it had to adapt to the new reality of the pandemic crisis. In spite of the unforeseen circumstances, the following key milestones took place during the year:

Competitiveness of SMEs: 35 new projects were contracted, involving 123 new beneficiaries. In total, the thematic area numbers **185 beneficiaries**, among which there are **70 private SMEs** receiving direct assistance. All of the projects of the thematic area are on-going.

Environment, Cultural & Natural Heritage: 9 projects finalized within 2021. Given that five projects were finalized earlier in the period, there are still **27 on-going projects**.

Sustainable Transport: The **Strategic Project CROSSBO** remained under full implementation throughout 2021. The scope of the project is to establish an **additional cross-border check point** (axis Dimario – Rudozem) that will improve the local accessibility and mobility.

Social Inclusion: 5 projects finalized within 2021. Given that nine projects were finalized earlier in the period, there are still **10 on-going projects**.

• What about spending?

Seven (7) Payment Claims took place within 2021 and the total certified expenditures reached 22.565.729,04 €. The cumulative total expenditures declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority until 31/12/2021 was 73.661.351,70 € covering 56,55% of the Programme's total budget.

• Indicative Finalized Projects



Project Acronym: VineSOS

Thematic Area: Environment, Cultural & Natural Heritage

Finalized: 11/10/2021

Objective: Identification, protection and conservation of local varieties of vines, especially those in Natura 2000 areas.

Beneficiaries

1. Executive Agency on Vine and Wine, Sofia;
2. Association Prosperity and Development in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad;
3. Business and Exhibition Researches and Development Institute, Thessaloniki;
4. International University of Greece, Thessaloniki

Deliverables

- Joint Research and DNA analysis of local vine varieties.
- Development of experimental fields for traditional vines.
- Conduct and publish local studies on Ampelography.
- Handbook of Sustainable Viticulture Practices.
- Establishment of a Training Center in Blagoevgrad for the Population and the Authorities.
- Integrated Strategy for Management and Protection of Biodiversity in Cross-border Area.





Project Acronym: HealthCare Centre

Thematic Area: Social Inclusion

Finalized: 9/04/2021

Objective: Improve the accessibility and quality of medical services to the population in the region, including vulnerable groups. Increase the capacity and effectiveness of the primary healthcare system. Increase cross-border connectivity and mobility.

Beneficiaries

1. Regional Health Inspectorate, Blagoevgrad;
2. Papageorgiou Hospital, Thessaloniki;
3. Center for Emergency Medical Care, Blagoevgrad;
4. Organization of Social Protection and Solidarity, Municipality of Chalkidona;
5. Service for Social protection, Solidarity, Sports and Education, Municipality of Lagkada

Deliverables

- Supply of medical equipment: 1 ambulance and 2 cars for special purposes; laboratory equipment for detecting virus diseases, etc.; telemedicine equipment and software; information kiosks.
- Trainings on Telemedicine and Emergency Response Plan and Protocols in Crisis Situation.
- Exchange of experience/exchange of on the spot visits between Papageorgiou Hospital - Center for Emergency Medical Care and Regional Health Inspectorate



For further information

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