

# IMPLEMENTATION REPORT FOR THE EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION GOAL

## PART A

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL/FINAL 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.**

2016 was a significant year for preparing and ensuring successful implementation of the Programme in the years to come. More specifically, significant challenges were responded with the following results:

1. A major project development exercise resulting in consent to set up a strategic project for the joint monitoring and prevention of floods in the cross-border area was finalised between the competent national authorities of Greece and Bulgaria with the support of the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat.
2. A guidance paper on simplified cost option and procurement for beneficiaries, including methodology and practical examples was elaborated. The Project Application Guidelines manual had been modified accordingly and became available to the beneficiaries via its uploading on the Programme's website.
3. A guidance paper on state aid issues for both the JS and the beneficiaries, including criteria and practical examples was developed with the assistance of the Greek and the Bulgarian competent authorities. This is a valuable tool for identifying and announcing the state aid cases complying with the EC rules. The Project Application Guidelines manual had a dedicated section on the issue of State Aid. Furthermore, clarifications were provided to the beneficiaries during the Q&A period prior to the submission of the project proposals and before the deadline of the Call.
4. A First Level Control (FLC) Registrar within the FLC Unit of the MA was set up as part of the partial restructuring of the FLC System in Greece providing for sound verification process.
5. Adaptation of the Monitoring Information System (MIS) of the Programme was performed to ensure fulfilment of regulatory requirements and upgraded electronic management on both project and programme level.
6. Strategies to reply to demanding regulatory requirements, such as risk management and anti-fraud were developed.

The Monitoring Committee convened its 2nd meeting (18th of October 2016) approving important strategic documents and taking operational decisions obligatory needed for the proper implementation of the Programme, such as Evaluation Plan, the modifications of the Communication Strategy the establishment of the Complaint Panel and its Rules of Procedures Permitted Errors and reasons for rejection, Budget Reduction Methodology and State Aid Assessment document for the projects of the 2nd Call for proposals. During 2016, 8 written procedures were launched via which important decisions of the Monitoring Committee were taken to enhance implementation process, such as deadline extensions of 1st and 2nd Calls upon the strong request of the potential beneficiaries and to enable the development of better formulated project proposals and more efficient partnerships, adoption of the official templates of the Partnership Agreement and the Subsidy Contract and approval of the 3rd Call for Proposals under Priority Axis 2 – Investment Priority 5b.

On 16/12/2016 The European Commission approved the amendment of the Programme

encompassing allocation of the available ERDF 482.174,00 € from the INTERREG-IPA CBC “Greece-Turkey 2014-2020” Programme to the Priority Axis 3.

The 1st restricted Call for strategic projects (3rd Priority Axis “A Better Interconnected Cross-Border Area”, thematic objective 07: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures) closed on 31/3/2016. One strategic project proposal was submitted within the set deadline with the acronym “CrossBo” and with Lead Beneficiary the Egnatia Odos S.A. The Joint Secretariat proceeded to the 2 phases evaluation of the proposed project, according to the relevant approved by the MC evaluation methodology. In August 2016 the Managing Authority and the Legal Representative of the Lead Beneficiary proceeded to the signing of the Subsidy Contract. The project has a target value of 3.8 kilometres in the output indicator of “Total length of newly built roads of which TEN-T”. The programme’s indicators will be achieved with the contribution of the current project and by mobilizing additional European and national funding sources. The proposal is to produce significant, long-term and permanent effects in the cross border area. The operation of the cross border point will establish a continuous cooperation between the respective bodies from both participating countries.

The 2nd Call for project proposals (P.A.2, T.O.06: and P.A.4, T.O. 09) closed on 22/4/2016. 211 project proposals were submitted in total, with the following attribution to the Investment Priorities: 6c – 67 proposals – total submitted budget € 71,131,250.57; 6d – 27 proposals – total submitted budget € 27,639,703.35; 6f – 29 proposals – total submitted budget € 22,022,642.33; 9a – 40 proposals – total submitted budget € 50,624,905.91 and 9c – 48 proposals – total submitted budget € 29,620,108.54. The sheer volume of the number of the submitted proposals and the total submitted budget (above M€ 201) to a Call that had a budget of M€ 35 is a very strong indication of the interest of the potential beneficiaries in the cross border area for the Programme and the need for utilizing it in the best possible way, in order to cover the significant needs for development of the area.

After the completion and approval of the results of the 1st phase of the evaluation, the JS announced them to the Lead Beneficiaries, along with the information of the complaint submission procedures, as these have been approved by the Monitoring Committee. At this point, 18 out of the 38 project proposals that were excluded from the 2nd phase of the evaluation each submitted a complaint. All complaints were submitted according to the procedures and the deadline set by the Rules of Procedure of the Complaint Panel. The complaints were registered, collected and examined by the appointed members of the Complaint Panel, which, in turn, submitted their verdict to the Monitoring Committee for its approval. The verdict of the Complaint was approved by the Monitoring without any changes the 9th written procedure. This resulted to the final number of 176 project proposals proceeding to the 2nd phase of the evaluation.

In parallel, the JS prepared a list of project proposals where specific expertise contribution would be required and together with the MA and the NA a final list of 21 project proposals was agreed and distributed to 6 external experts in the fields of infrastructure, telemedicine, GIS databases and environment actions. The experts completed reports on a previously prepared and agreed between the MA and the NA template, putting accent on the technical compliance, consistency, maturity, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the identified specific activity as compared with the national legislation requirements and common good practices. Experts’ opinion was taken into consideration in the evaluation procedure that was completed in 2017.



### 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	A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area	<p>The scope of the forthcoming Call for Project Proposals related to entrepreneurship (Investment Priorities 3a &amp; 3b) was discussed during the 2nd Monitoring Committee meeting and via written correspondence between the Managing Authority, the Bulgarian National Authority and the Greek Ministry for Economy, Development and Tourism.</p> <p>The initial proposal was to support the SMEs indirectly through their umbrella structures (chambers, employers' associations, etc.)</p> <p>The Bulgarian National Authority initiated a proposal regarding the inclusion of SMEs as direct beneficiaries.</p> <p>As a result a Synthesis Report of the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat was sent to the Bulgarian National Authority as a basis for discussion between the two countries. Furthermore the elaboration of a study will be contracted and elaborated in 2017 supporting the Synthesis Report and including more information on the direct support of SMEs, citing both effective examples and cases where the implementation was problematic and the results were unsatisfactory.</p> <p>A Call for proposals under this PA is planned to be launched in 2017 as soon as the bilateral consultations are successfully finalized.</p>
2	A Sustainable and Climate adaptable	<p>The approved PA2 projects were to be selected by restricted call for IP 5b and open calls for the remaining IPs. During 2016 the following actions related to PA2 implementation were</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
	Cross-Border area	<p>performed:The 3rd Restricted Call for Strategic Project Proposal under the Investment priority 5b was launched on 22/12/2016 with the Specific Objective to improve CB cooperation on flood risk management plans at river basin level. The budget was M€ 11.500, (M€ 9.775 ERDF and M€ 1.725 National co-financing). The First phase of evaluation ended with the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6c: 57 out of 67 submitted proposals qualified for the 2nd phase of evaluation. The amount of the successful proposals (before budget revision) was M€ 61.58;</li> <li>• 6d: 23 out of 27 submitted proposals qualified for the 2nd phase of evaluation. The amount of the successful proposals (before budget revision) was M€ 24.23;</li> <li>• 6f : 21 out of 29 submitted proposals qualified for the 2nd phase of evaluation. The amount of the successful proposals (before budget revision) was M€ 17.53.</li> </ul> <p>The available PA2 budget in the 2nd call was M€ 19,500. At the same time the projects for the total amount of M€ 103,340 complied with the administrative requirements and were approved to continue to the 2nd evaluation phase.</p>
3	A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area	<p>As a result of the 1st restricted call under the Investment priority 7b the project Aiming at Improving Cross - Border Accessibility (CrossBo) was approved for the amount of M€ 38,235,295.00. The Subsidy contract was signed on the 17/08/2016 with duration of 36 months. The project encompasses construction of a new 3.8 km road section, upgrading of 41.786 km road and construction of a new border cross check point at the GR-BG border. Actually, the new built Dimario – GR/BG Border road section comprises a total of 8 km, the remaining kms funded by the Regional Development Programme of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the Transport, Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development Operational Programme of Greece. A single tender for the whole section is being prepared and each Managing Authority will declare separately the relevant expenses. Tender procedures for construction works and supervision for upgrading the Road II 86 Srednogortsi - Rudozem from km 125+727.46 to km 126+600 and from km 126+750 to km 132+920 started. All preparation activities related to the construction of the</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>Cross border Point and the Road to “BCCP Rudozem - Xanthi” from km 134 +000 to km 135 + 066.40 were performed including the cost benefit analysis, master plan, technical design and building permits. No funds were allocated yet to the Greek beneficiary Egnatia Odos S.A. However, the Bulgarian beneficiaries, Road Infrastructure Agency and Regional Administration of Smolyan, received as advance payment 80% of the national co-financing percentage of their budgets. The latter beneficiary already spent M€ 174,317.56. No verifications took place in 2016.</p>
4	A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	<p>The First phase of evaluation of the project proposals within the 2 Call under this PA ended with the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9a – Investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services and the specific objective: ‘To improve access to primary and emergency health care (at isolated and deprived communities) in the cross border area – 34 out of 40 submitted proposals qualified for the 2nd phase of evaluation. The amount of the successful proposals (before budget revision) was M€ 43.35;</li> <li>• 9c – Providing support for social enterprises and the specific objective “To expand social entrepreneurship in the cross border area” – 41 out of 48 submitted proposals qualified for the 2nd phase of evaluation. The amount of the successful proposals (before budget revision) was M€ 24.4.</li> </ul> <p>The available PA4 budget in the 2nd call was M€ 15,700. At the same time the projects for the total amount of M€ 67.75 complied with the administrative requirements and were approved to continue to the 2nd evaluation phase.</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
5	Technical Assistance	<p>Under the TA project for the MA, amounting to € 5.819.706,00, three Info days for the 2nd Call for Projects in Serres, Haskovo and Blagoevgrad were successfully organized as well as the 2nd Monitoring Committee meeting, technical meetings with stakeholders and the European Court of Auditors and participation in promotional events. The total amount spent for these was M€ 44,632.00.</p> <p>Design of corporate identity of the Programme was finalized with a total cost of € 2,230 while some promotional items were produced (power-banks and puzzles) which costed € 4,317.</p> <p>Total amount of the staff costs spent for the salaries of the Joint Secretariat was € 261,293.25.</p> <p>By means of the TA project for the NA, amounting to € 945,000.00 the NA participated in the above events as well as in the Complaint Committee and a technical meeting on the results after the 1st phase of evaluation of the 2nd call. The total amount spent was € 4,770.52 for travel and accommodation, office and administrative expenditure and event organisation.</p> <p>Total amount of the staff costs spent for the salaries of the Info point for the period September – December 2016 was € 7,273.55.</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 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	275.00	0.00	
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	275.00	0.00	
F	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	275.00	0.00	
S	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	275.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	0.00	0.00
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	0.00	0.00

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	0.00	0.00
S	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	0.00	0.00

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
Specific objective	1 - To Improve entrepreneurship SME support systems

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0201	Entrepreneurial business support environment	entrepreneurs hip barometer – composite index in 1-10 scale	5.34	2015	5.90	5.34		

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0201	Entrepreneurial business support environment	5.34		5.34	

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	330.00	0.00	
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	330.00	0.00	
F	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	330.00	0.00	
S	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	330.00	0.00	
F	O0201	Number of clusters and other collaborative schemes composed of stakeholders/enterprises from both sides of border	collaborative schemes	4.00	0.00	
S	O0201	Number of clusters and other collaborative schemes composed of stakeholders/enterprises from both sides of border	collaborative schemes	4.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	0.00	0.00
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	0.00	0.00

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	0.00	0.00
S	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	0.00	0.00
F	O0201	Number of clusters and other collaborative schemes composed of stakeholders/enterprises from both sides of border	0.00	0.00
S	O0201	Number of clusters and other collaborative schemes composed of stakeholders/enterprises from both sides of border	0.00	0.00

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
Specific objective	2 - To improve SME capacity to expand beyond local markets

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0202	Total Value of Annual CB Area Exports	meuros	4,407.47	2013	4,540.00			

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0202	Total Value of Annual CB Area Exports	4,407.47		4,407.47	

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	747,000.00	0.00	
S	CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	747,000.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	0.00	0.00
S	CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	0.00	0.00

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	5b - Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems
Specific objective	3 - To improve CB cooperation on flood risk management plans at river basin level.

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0203	Number of international river basin districts with jointly coordinated flood risks management plans in compliance with Directive 2007/60/EC	number	0.00	2014	3.00	0.00		

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0203	Number of international river basin districts with jointly coordinated flood risks management plans in compliance with Directive 2007/60/EC	0.00		0.00	



Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	CO09	Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year	140,000.00	0.00	
S	CO09	Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year	140,000.00	0.00	
F	O0202	Number of cultural and/or natural assets rehabilitated/protected	number	10.00	0.00	
S	O0202	Number of cultural and/or natural assets rehabilitated/protected	number	10.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO09	Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	0.00	0.00
S	CO09	Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	0.00	0.00
F	O0202	Number of cultural and/or natural assets rehabilitated/protected	0.00	0.00
S	O0202	Number of cultural and/or natural assets rehabilitated/protected	0.00	0.00



Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
Specific objective	4 - To valorise CB area cultural and natural heritage for tourist purposes

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0204	Annual tourist overnight stays at accommodation establishments	Millions	5.80	2013	7.40	5.80		

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0204	Annual tourist overnight stays at accommodation establishments	5.80		5.80	

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	CO23	Nature and biodiversity: Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	Hectares	356,000.00	0.00	
S	CO23	Nature and biodiversity: Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	Hectares	356,000.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO23	Nature and biodiversity: Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	0.00	0.00
S	CO23	Nature and biodiversity: Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	0.00	0.00

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	6d - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure
Specific objective	5 - To enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0205	% of Natura areas reporting excellent or good degree of conservation	%	54.00	2015	60.00	54.00		(According to the approved programming document frequency of reporting the achievement of all result indicators is in 2018, 2020 and 2023)

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0205	% of Natura areas reporting excellent or good degree of conservation	54.00		54.00	

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	O0203	Surface water resources under joint monitoring	hm3	7,500.00	0.00	
S	O0203	Surface water resources under joint monitoring	hm3	7,500.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	O0203	Surface water resources under joint monitoring	0.00	0.00
S	O0203	Surface water resources under joint monitoring	0.00	0.00

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
Investment priority	6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution
Specific objective	6 - To enhance water management

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0206	% of characterized surface water bodies in GES	%	43.88	2014	55.00	43.88		

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0206	% of characterized surface water bodies in GES	43.88		43.88	

Priority axis	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	CO13a	Roads: Total length of newly built roads, of which: TEN-T	km	8.00	3.80	The value to be achieved by the funds of the Programme is 3.8, however the target value will be reached by additional funding from 2 other programmes: The Regional Development Programme of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the Transport, Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development Operational Programme
S	CO13a	Roads: Total length of newly built roads, of which: TEN-T	km	8.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO13a	Roads: Total length of newly built roads, of which: TEN-T	0.00	0.00
S	CO13a	Roads: Total length of newly built roads, of which: TEN-T	0.00	0.00



Priority axis	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	7b - Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes
Specific objective	7 - Improve cross-border accessibility

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0207	Number of operating border crossings	number	6.00	2014	7.00	6.00		

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0207	Number of operating border crossings	6.00		6.00	

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	632,000.00	0.00	
S	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	632,000.00	0.00	
F	O0204	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	number	12.00	0.00	
S	O0204	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	number	12.00	0.00	
F	O0205	Number of health ICT systems developed	Number	3.00	0.00	
S	O0205	Number of health ICT systems developed	Number	3.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	0.00	0.00
S	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	0.00	0.00
F	O0204	Number of health care institutions reorganized,	0.00	0.00

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
		modernized or reequipped		
S	O0204	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	0.00	0.00
F	O0205	Number of health ICT systems developed	0.00	0.00
S	O0205	Number of health ICT systems developed	0.00	0.00

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services
Specific objective	8 - To improve access to primary and emergency health care (at isolated and deprived communities) in the CB area

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0208	Annual visits to primary healthcare	visits	1,123,561.00	2013	1,235,917.00	1,123,561.00		
R0209	Annual visits to secondary/tertiary healthcare	visits	477,275.00	2013	421,097.00	477,275.00		

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0208	Annual visits to primary healthcare	1,123,561.00		1,123,561.00	
R0209	Annual visits to secondary/tertiary healthcare	477,275.00		477,275.00	

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	O0206	Number of participants in social entrepreneurship projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders.	number	50.00	0.00	
S	O0206	Number of participants in social entrepreneurship projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders.	number	50.00	0.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	O0206	Number of participants in social entrepreneurship projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders.	0.00	0.00
S	O0206	Number of participants in social entrepreneurship projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders.	0.00	0.00

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priority	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Specific objective	9 - To expand social entrepreneurship in the CB area

Table 1: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	Observations
R0210	Social enterprise employees in the CB area	employees	954.00	2014	1,004.00	954.00		

ID	Indicator	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
R0210	Social enterprise employees in the CB area	954.00		954.00	

## Priority axes for technical assistance

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
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Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2016	Observations
F	O0207	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	employees	12.00	12.00	
S	O0207	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	employees	12.00	12.00	10 JS employees in Greece, 2 employees in InfoPoint in BG
F	O0208	Number of publicity and outreach events organized	Events	15.00	5.00	
S	O0208	Number of publicity and outreach events organized	Events	15.00	5.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2015	2014
F	O0207	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	11.00	11.00
S	O0207	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	11.00	11.00
F	O0208	Number of publicity and outreach events organized	3.00	0.00
S	O0208	Number of publicity and outreach events organized	3.00	0.00

**3.3 Table 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework**

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	2016 Final target (2023) total	2016	Observations
1	F	F0201	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	1,011,765	20,235,295.00		
1	I	K0201	Selection of enterprises	Number	6	9.00		
1	O	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	0	275.00		
2	F	F0202	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	4,328,824	42,882,353.00		
2	I	K0202	Selected projects CO20 (Decision of approval)	Projects	2	3.00		
2	O	CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	0	747,000.00		
2	O	O0202	Number of cultural and/or natural assets rehabilitated/protected	number	3	10.00		
3	F	F0203	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	8,602,941.00	38,802,558.00		
3	I	K0203	Projects with at least one signed Contract of technical - construction works sub-projects	number	2	4.00		
3	O	CO13a	Roads: Total length of newly built roads, of which: TEN-T	km	0	8.00		
4	F	F0204	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro	1,078,896	21,577,923.00		



Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	2016 Final target (2023) total	2016	Observations
4	I	K0204	Projects with at least one signed Contract of (technical - construction works or other) sub-projects	Number	8	12.00		
4	O	O0204	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	number	0	12.00		

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	2015	2014
1	F	F0201	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro		
1	I	K0201	Selection of enterprises	Number		
1	O	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises		
2	F	F0202	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro		
2	I	K0202	Selected projects CO20 (Decision of approval)	Projects		
2	O	CO20	Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons		
2	O	O0202	Number of cultural and/or natural assets rehabilitated/protected	number		
3	F	F0203	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro		

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	2015	2014
3	I	K0203	Projects with at least one signed Contract of technical - construction works sub-projects	number		
3	O	CO13a	Roads: Total length of newly built roads, of which: TEN-T	km		
4	F	F0204	Eligible verified (certified) Expenditure of the Axis	Euro		
4	I	K0204	Projects with at least one signed Contract of (technical - construction works or other) sub-projects	Number		
4	O	O0204	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	number		

### 3.4. Financial data

**Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level**

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Priority axis	Fund	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	ERDF	Public	20,235,295.00	85.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0
2	ERDF	Public	42,882,353.00	85.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0
3	ERDF	Public	38,802,558.00	85.00	38,235,295.00	98.54%	38,235,295.00	0.00	0.00%	1
4	ERDF	Public	21,577,923.00	85.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0
5	ERDF	Public	6,764,706.00	85.00	6,764,706.00	100.00%	6,764,706.00	0.00	0.00%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>ERDF</b>		<b>130,262,835.00</b>	<b>85.00</b>	<b>45,000,001.00</b>	<b>34.55%</b>	<b>45,000,001.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>130,262,835.00</b>	<b>85.00</b>	<b>45,000,001.00</b>	<b>34.55%</b>	<b>45,000,001.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>3</b>

**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)**

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**Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention**

As set out in Table 2 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 (Model for transmission of financial data) and tables 6-9 of Model for cooperation programmes

Priority axis	Fund	Intervention field	Form of finance	Territorial dimension	Territorial delivery mechanism	Thematic objective dimension	ESF secondary theme	Economic dimension	Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	The total eligible expenditure declared by eneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
1	ERDF												
2	ERDF												
3	ERDF	029	01	03						22,235,295.00	22,235,295.00		1
3	ERDF	034	01	03						16,000,000.00	16,000,000.00		1
4	ERDF												
5	ERDF	121	01	07						4,166,000.00	4,166,000.00		2
5	ERDF	122	01	07						1,570,000.00	1,570,000.00		2
5	ERDF	123	01	07						1,028,706.00	1,028,706.00		2

**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 ERDF 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 ERDF at programme level *100)	4. Eligible expenditure of ERDF 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 ERDF at programme level *100)
All or part of an operation outside the Union part of the programme area	2,992,000.00	2.70%	0.00	

**(1) ERDF 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**

No evaluations on the implementation of the Programme have been performed during the reporting period.

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

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

In 2016 two project officers and the communication officer from the Joint Secretariat resigned that lead to overloading of the remaining staff also involved in the closure of the previous Programming period. Maintaining the Joint Secretariat capacity was an issue adequately addressed by performing evaluation of the existing staff which had been initially recruited for the Programme 2007-2013, in order to re-confirm extension of their recruitment for the “Greece-Bulgaria” Programme 2014-2020, in line with the initial approval provided by the Monitoring Committee. Recruitment procedure for the vacancies was prepared and will be realized in 2017. Moreover, a procedure for adopting a reasonable expatriation allowance for the BG JS staff started with a decision of the Monitoring Committee in 2016, officially completed in 2017.

In accordance with the Internal Rules of Procedure of the Joint Secretariat, in September 2016 the Info Point of INTERREG V - A Cooperation Programme Greece - Bulgaria 2014 – 2020 has been set up. Following a competitive selection procedure the National Authority appointed 2 successful candidates for the vacant positions: Expert “Projects and Co-financing” in the NA’s office in Sofia and Expert “Projects and Publicity” in the regional office of the Info Point in Smolyan.

Along with the staffing process relevant measures were taken in the organization of the working process providing for proper start of Programme implementation, such as targeted info campaigns, questions and answers platform and adequate evaluation procedure, supported also by external experts for specific projects. All these lead to no significant delays in Programme’s work plan.

The approval of the Management and Control System (MCS) was not a fact in 2016 as the regulatory requirements for programme management remain quite heavy. The whole procedure included necessarily, among other issues, consultations with competent authorities of the two cooperating countries, including extensive cooperation on the FLC level and taking on board some re-structuring and/or set up of services in both countries. Therefore no verifications of expenditure under the Technical Assistance PA and the PA3 project took place in 2016, however this fact did not affect the implementation of the planned activities. Submission of the MCS description to the Audit Authority is going to be officially completed in 2017 and the approval is expected before the signature of the majority of the 2nd call projects.

The adaptation of the Monitoring Information System (MIS) of the Programme to the regulatory requirements of the 2014-2020 period and the programme/project management needs was extensively performed in 2016 in cooperation with the competent authorities of both countries. Full adaptation of the MIS is estimated in 2017.

The design of the website of the Programme was developed and it will be fully operational by June 2017 due to the complexity of requirements to comply to. It is intended to be accessible and usable by a wider range of users, including users with disabilities. It will be mobile-friendly with a new, user-friendly and innovative design thus being a valuable tool in the communication strategy of the MA and of the JS. The contractor has finished with the design and programming aspects of the site. The site is operating now as beta version to eliminate any possible bugs, unworkable links and so



forth.

(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.

Not applicable for the 2016 report.

## **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

You can upload/find the Citizen's summary under General > Documents

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

**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**

Table 7: Major projects

Project	CCI	Status of MP	Total investments	Total costs eligible	Planned notification/submission date	Date of tacit agreement/approval by Commission	Planned start of implementation	Planned completion date	Priority Investment priorities	Axis/	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	Ma

(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

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





## 8.2. Joint action plans

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

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**Table 8: Joint action plans (JAP)**

Title of the JAP	CCI	Stage of implementation of JAP	Total eligible costs	Total public support	OP contribution to JAP	Priority axis	Type of JAP	[Planned] submission to the Commission	[Planned] start of implementation	[Planned] completion	Main outputs and results	Total eligible expenditure certified to the Commission	Observations
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**Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them**

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**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)**

Priority axis	1 - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
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No call was launched under **PA 1** in 2016 under Investment Priority 3a and 3d for promoting entrepreneurship and supporting the capacity of SMEs, however the discussions between the authorities from both countries continue and a Call is provisioned for 2017.

Priority axis	2 - A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area
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3rd and 2nd Calls practically cover most of **PA 2** budget. The applied evaluation criteria for the 2nd Call projects provide for achieving the Specific Objectives of Investment Priorities 6c, 6d, 6f and all the relevant output indicators are expected to be achieved.

Priority axis	3 - A Better interconnected Cross-Border Area
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The whole budget of **PA 3**, Investment priority 7b was contracted (the additional funds from GR-Turkey programme are to be contracted in 2017) partially contributing to the achievement of the output indicator (3.8 out of the targeted 8 km new built roads).

However commitments are taken to reach the goal with additional funding.

Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
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2nd Call practically cover most of **PA 4** budget. The applied evaluation criteria for the 2nd Call projects provide for achieving the Specific Objectives of Investment Priorities 9a and 9c and all the relevant output indicators are expected to be achieved.

Priority axis

5 - Technical Assistance

The budget of **PA5** Technical Assistance was fully committed where 2 projects were approved respectively for the Managing Authority and for the Bulgarian National Authority. The approved projects already started being implemented each contributing for the achievement of Programme's objectives.

**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

Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities are leading principles in the Programme document as well as in its implementation. The measures being taken for the promotion of equality and non-discrimination include:

- participation of the National Confederation of People with Disabilities of Greece and the Bulgarian Commission for Protection against Discrimination in the Monitoring Committee with voting rights, where they actively contribute in all matters of equality and non-discrimination of vulnerable social groups. During the preparation of the Calls a special meeting was performed with representatives of the Greek organization who described their specific requirements to be considered in the projects' selection procedure;
- specific project selection procedures, where only proposals covering equality and non-discrimination requirements could be approved for implementation - In the Project Application Guidelines of the Calls for Proposals it is explicitly stated that 'All project proposals should meet the requirements of the General Regulation (Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the EAFRD and the article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non-discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities'. The Application Form has a special sub-section 8.1 on equal opportunities and non-discrimination where the applicants are required to provide a justification on the compliance with the policy in question. A special sub-criterion to check whether the project is consistent with the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination (including provision of accessibility for persons with disabilities) is a part of the 2nd Phase – Quality Assessment of the 2nd Call for Proposals to be completed in 2017. Meeting the criterion is obligatory requirement and no project could be approved if non-compliant;
- The CrossBo approved Application Form states that the 'LB & Partners will promote equal opportunities in all stages of project implementation, and will prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Particular attention will be given to requirements for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities. The principle regarding equal opportunities and non-discrimination will be applied for all the project activities. The project implementation will have both economic and social effect, promoting employment and labor mobility and foster the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination among the target

groups’;

- promotion of the Programme and its activities in a manner that outmost access is safeguarded – a special application on the web site of the Programme is being developed to be accessible to users with impaired vision. The 2017 calendar notebooks produced with a contribution of the TA project (MA) contained special information sheets in Braille.

### **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

Sustainable development was a part of an obligatory evaluation criterion for all project proposals. 1st and 2nd Calls (Investment priorities 3d, 6c, 6f and 6d put a special accent on environment protection measures, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystems, disaster resilience, risk prevention and management. Environment national authorities from both countries actively participate in the Monitoring committee's discussions with opinion on the relevance of the proposed eligible activities in the call and the proposals, moreover local environment protection authorities participate as project beneficiaries in several proposals.

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

Calculated amount of support to be used for climate change objectives based on the cumulative financial data by category of intervention in Table 7

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>Amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)</b>	<b>Proportion of total allocation to the operational programme (%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

Figures calculated automatically by the SFC2014 based on categorisation data.



### **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

The members of the Monitoring Committee were selected in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The Greek members' appointment was based on a principle that a wide pool of active stakeholders should be formulated, representing as many social partners as possible. For this reason the Regions and the Union of Municipalities were invited to represent the Local Self Government, as well as representatives from civil society organizations such as the National Federation of Disabled People, the Social and Economic Committee (representing the employees), the Association of Greek Enterprises & Industries, the National Federation of NGO's and the Central Union of Chambers in Greece. Moreover Ministries associated with the Thematic Objectives of the Programme participate without voting rights.

The BG members of the Monitoring Committee were selected in accordance with the Councils of Ministers Decree No 5/18.01.2012. The main functions of the Monitoring Committee such as supervision of the Programme implementation for achieving its objectives, approval of the methodology and criteria used for selection of operations, approval of the annual and final implementation reports and selection of operations, were taken into consideration. Also the main principles of partnership, coordination and multilevel governance were respected. As a result representatives of national, regional and local institutions, non-governmental organizations, social-economic partners, academic institutions which responsibilities and activities concern the Programme eligible area were included in the Monitoring Committee.

**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**

The preparation of the procedures for contracting evaluators started according to the Evaluation plan approved during the 2nd Monitoring Committee meeting.

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

The requested assessment comes at the point, where the Programme has recently started being implemented for the current programming period of 2014-2020, with the approval of the projects, with the aim of assessing information and publicity measures taken and delivering recommendations aimed at improving the Communication Strategy. It should be noted that the assessment covers the period from the approval of the Communication Strategy by the Programme's Monitoring Committee on the 2nd of March 2016 until 31/12/2016.

The Joint Secretariat (JS) opted for an "in house" evaluation with desk research and online tools and the assessment has focused on a two-fold approach:

- Assessment of messages, in order to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Programme's messages in line with the Programme's communication's objectives.
- Assessment of communication tools, in order to examine the effectiveness of the Programme's chosen communications tools, with particular focus on its main identified tools of website and promotional activities.

Moreover, the Programme's Communication Strategy clearly provides that the evaluation of the information and publicity actions "takes place based on the contribution of the actions to the achievement of the goals of the Communication Strategy and in accordance with qualitative and quantitative objectives according to the nature of the actions". In particular, indicators for evaluation are broken down into Output Indicator, which record publicity actions, and Result Indicators, which record the result of the actions. In the Output indicator we have the following:

Indicator: Number of publicity and outreach events organized

Indicative target value: 15

Value achieved in 2016: 5

Comment: 3 Infoday events in Serres, Blagoevgrad and Haskovo, 1 EC Day (featuring Blood donation events in Smolyan-Xanthi) and the participation in the Thessaloniki's Interantional Trade Fair of 2016.

The cumulative number of events since Programme's start is 8 and the foreseen in the coming years provide for expectations of substantially exceeding this indicator target.

The Result indicators are monitored in an on-going procedure with an online questionnaire which is for the evaluation of the Programme's Communication Strategy.

Indicatively the results demonstrate an overall positive evaluation of the information provided within the Programme. Statistics calculate: 33,3 % Very Good, 50% Good, 16,7 Fair

On another note, the level of knowledge on the Programme has improved over the last two years: 16,6% much more knowledgable, 66,7% somewhat more knowledgable, 16,7% same level of knowledge, while the overall evaluation of the Programme is moving in a positive manner as well: 50% very good, 33.3% good and 16,7% fair.

In that sense, the first implementation stage of the Communication Strategy has been almost implemented, while the second implementation stage is still ongoing.

### *Corporate identity*

The Programme has opted to join the Joint Branding initiative of Interreg Programmes under one single brand name and logo. The Programme's logo and visual identity is aligned to the one commonly applied throughout Europe. The initiative is extended to Projects as well, as all Projects will be required to follow the same branding instructions, thus creating a homogenized visual identity.

### *Target audiences*

Beneficiaries are well informed about the opportunities offered by the Programme. Approaching other target groups will be a major aim for the next years.

In fact for addressing the general public the Programme has:

- participated through the Managing Authority in the International Fair of Thessaloniki,
- created a leaflet, which was jargon-free, the use of the pronoun "we" was the tool to promote "joint ownership" by the public and in addition texts in Greek, English and Bulgarian were used to make it more direct and closer to the public.

Finally a puzzle, specifically aimed for children was created with the map of the eligible area

### *Website*

The website hosts very substantial content and frequent updates. In terms of information, networking and communicating opportunities the website is clearly a very useful resource for project beneficiaries, and potential beneficiaries, as well as the media and the general public.

The website was being re-designed from scratch, in order to better accommodate the needs of the 2014-2020 Programming Period. It provides information to potential beneficiaries regarding the role of ERDF, the EU funding opportunities (e.g. Calls for Project Proposals and relevant documentation), important documentation available as downloads regarding all aspect of project implementation (including electronic templates to help beneficiaries respect the EU visibility requirements), questions and answers, information on the approved Projects in a specifically designed pages per Project, etc. An updated list with projects will be published. It also contains sections of news, events, a partner forum and a list of links to useful websites, creating a network.

The main features of the website are in line with the modern trends in web design. Moreover, they offer visual harmonisation with the Interreg family (including the Programme logo, which is fully part of Interreg joint branding initiative). Content-wise there is an effort to move from a technical terminology to a jargon-less content.

The website shall be conformed to the "WCAG, 2.0, Level AA" standards, in order to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities.

In the next year we anticipate

- to actively assist the projects' communication activities by better networking with beneficiaries from a communication perspective
- to further our message in new audiences such as media and press, mainly at local and regional level, opinion formers, decision-makers
- reinforce it to the already existing ones.

### *Conclusion*

The Assessment concluded that the Communication Strategy is being implemented in a way guided by the need for Programme activation and acceleration. Till the end of 2016 the cumulative amount of the funds spent for communication amount to M€ 68,489.37 (M€ 17,310.37 in 2015 and M€ 51,179.00 in 2016).

The high number and the quality of proposals submitted prove that the message has been delivered to the relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the production and distribution of information material on the Programme, as well as the interest of the media in the Programme shows that the general public is being at least constantly informed on the Programme's activities and its goals. However, it has to be pointed out that this stage of communication is still on-going, as the Programme's resources have not been fully activated yet.

In general, as far as the communication is concerned, the Programme is on the right track and that the communication goals will be fully achieved within the timeframe indicated in the Communication Strategy. In addition the suggestions for next year should further reinforce the information and publicity components of the Programme.

**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 implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including sustainable urban development, and community-led local development under the cooperation programme**

Though no integrated territorial development tools are envisaged in the Programme, the challenges addressed have an important territorial dimension.

The approved project CrossBo includes specific interventions which complete territorially a specific transport network thus increasing the mobility between both countries. The project ensures the connection of the Greek and Bulgarian road infrastructure networks in the specific region. The geographically targeted actions involve the completion of Rudozem –Xanthi road and construction of a new BCCP, as well as upgrading of the Bulgarian road section that connects to the existing Makaza - Komothini and Ivailovgrad - Kiprinos BCCPs.

Specific evaluation criteria were included for the 2nd Call for Proposals to encourage territorially and thematically integrated projects, such as: The ‘provision of added value to the Programme area’ was scored from 0 to 4 points which causes a considerable influence to the total ranking of the project proposal. Same approach was applied for the criterion ‘Clear demonstration of the need for cross border approach’ checking whether common cross border challenges and opportunities in the Programme area are addressed. These criteria are part of the second phase of evaluation to be performed in 2017.

## **11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the ERDF**

During 2016 3 Info days for the preparation of proposals under the 2nd Call were performed. About 500 potential beneficiaries attended the seminars and obtained knowledge on the preparation of the Application Form and all supporting documents.

### 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:

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)
- EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)
- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)
- EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)
- Atlantic Sea Basin Strategy (ATLSBS)



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

The Managing Authority, in the context of its information dissemination capacity in the synergies with the Programme Employment and Social Innovation, has published a Call in 2016, into which one of the open Specific Objectives was the expansion of social entrepreneurship in the cross border area. Furthermore, the Managing Authority expects to launch a Call open to Priority Axis 1 – A competitive and innovative cross border area.

### **13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH**

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

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**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).

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## Documents

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
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**Latest validation results**

<b>Severity</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Message</b>
Info		Implementation report version has been validated