



Del.5.2.3 Preparation of EGTC cooperation framework

PB_2 Municipality of Haskovo

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FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HALO Foundation

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FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Haskovo Municipality



HALO Foundation 2019

2020

The present framework for European territorial cooperation on social entrepreneurship has been prepared at the request of the Municipality of Haskovo by Kristina Yordanova, manager of the HALO Foundation 2019. The document has been elaborated in the framework of the project "Enhancing the Social-Entrepreneurial Spirit by Creating Innovative Supporting Structures in the Cross-border Region (SOCIAL FORCES)", funded by the Interreg VA Greece Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cross-border Cooperation Program. The overall objective of the project is to expand social entrepreneurship and to increase employment levels in the cross-border area, as well as to create new knowledge to raise awareness that will enable people in the region to fully understand the conditions under which social entrepreneurship starts, grows and contributes to effectively and efficiently addressing of social challenges in a sustainable way. The opinions and attitudes expressed in the document are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Municipality of Haskovo or the Managing Authority of the Cross-border Cooperation Program Interreg VA Greece Bulgaria 2014 - 2020. The framework for European territorial cooperation on social entrepreneurship should be cited for any reissue of the material - all or part of it.

FRAMEWORK

FOR EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abbreviations used

EU	European union
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ENI	European Neighborhood Instrument
PAA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NGO	Non-government organization
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CB	Cross- border
SE	Social enterprise/ social entrepreneur

Introduction

Undoubtedly, social entrepreneurship is one of the proven successful approaches to overcoming social inequalities. Combining a business approach with the achievement of social goals has many advantages over providing social assistance for vulnerable groups. Employment of disadvantaged people not only contributes to the financial independence of these persons, but also helps them to integrate into society, by acquiring new knowledge and skills related to the profession they practice by acquiring communication and work skills in the team, by creating a

sense of usefulness (satisfaction with the work done), which in turn leads to greater motivation for development and improvement.

Social entrepreneurship in Europe exists in many and various forms. In some countries, there are laws that regulate it, while in others it is a practice that has been established over the years, which is governed by various laws and regulations. Social enterprises at the level of EU policies have been identified as a key tool for innovation and tackling the problems of poverty and social exclusion. As part of the policy to promote the social economy and social innovation, social enterprise has been identified as a tool to achieve the strategic goals set out in Europe 2020. The role of social enterprises is recognized as a bridge through which active integration is encouraged and vulnerable groups can reach (and stabilize their position) in the areas from which they have dropped out (education, health services, the labor market). In the last 15 years there are no strategic European social documents (and not only) that do not prioritize social enterprises as a tool for social policy.

For the purposes of different programs or policy areas, the EU places emphasis on different elements of the definition of social enterprise. For example, in Regulation (EU) 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Program for Employment and Social Innovation and amending Decision 283/2010 / EU establishing a European Microfinance Facility for Employment and Social Inclusion “Progress”, focuses on the social goals, reinvesting profits to achieve them, managing the enterprise in an entrepreneurial, accountable and transparent manner.

In connection with the implementation of the Employment and Social Innovation Program, a definition of a social enterprise has been given, which simultaneously has the following characteristics:



- on the basis of its constituent documents, its primary purpose is to achieve "measurable, positive social impact" and not to generate profit for its owners, members and shareholders;
- provides services or goods that generate 'social return' or uses a method to produce goods or services that reflects its social purpose;
- make the most of its profits to achieve the main social objective, by introducing internal rules to ensure this;
- be managed in an entrepreneurial, accountable and transparent manner, and in particular by involving employed vulnerable groups, clients and other stakeholders in their management.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in social enterprises in Europe, strongly driven by the growing recognition of the role that social enterprise can play in addressing societal and environmental challenges and promoting inclusive growth. Social entrepreneurship has proven itself at European level, both in overcoming barriers to entry into the labor market and in obstacles to the provision of social services to special populations and others. Specific measures are needed to encourage and promote opportunities for solving social problems through social enterprises. And this can best be done by presenting good practices from already operating social enterprises and the structures or initiatives that support them. That is precisely the purpose of the current framework: to present the initiatives undertaken so far to support social entrepreneurship in the cross-border region and to propose measures to multiply good practices and transfer them to other cross-border regions and at European level as a whole.

European territorial cooperation

European territorial cooperation¹ is essential for the creation of a common European area and is at the heart of European integration. It has a clear added value for Europe: it prevents borders from becoming barriers, brings European citizens closer together, helps solve common problems, facilitates the exchange of ideas and assets and promotes strategic efforts to achieve common goals.

European territorial cooperation is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and is intended to support harmonious and balanced integration across the EU by supporting cooperation in areas that are important for the community of cross-border, transnational and interregional level.



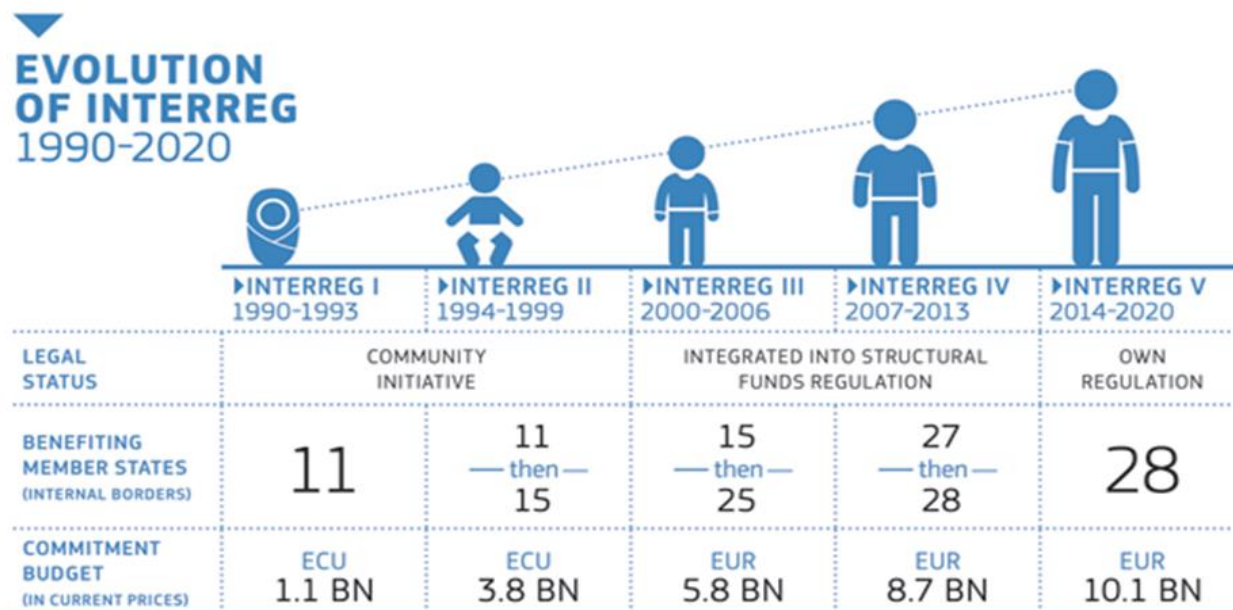
European territorial cooperation² is an instrument of cohesion policy aimed at solving cross-border problems and jointly developing the potential of different territories. Cooperation actions are supported by the European Regional Development Fund through three main components: cross-border cooperation, transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation.

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as Interreg, is one of the two objectives of cohesion policy and provides a framework for joint action and policy exchange between national, regional and local actors from different Member States. The overall objective of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) is to promote the harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the Union as a whole. Interreg is built around three areas of cooperation: cross-border (Interreg A), transnational (Interreg B) and interregional (Interreg C).

The five Interreg programming periods build on each other:

INTERREG I (1990-1993) - INTERREG II (1994-1999) - INTERREG III (2000-2006) - INTERREG IV (2007-2013) - INTERREG V (2014-2020)

In 1990, Interreg was developed as a Community initiative with a budget of only € 1 billion, covering exceptional cross-border cooperation. Later, Interreg expanded to transnational and interregional cooperation. For 2014-2020, European territorial cooperation is one of the two objectives of cohesion policy, apart from investment for growth and jobs.



Legal basis and general provisions

European territorial cooperation is governed by Article 178 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Regulation (EU) No 299/2013 of 17 December 2013. It has been part of cohesion policy since 1990. For the first time in the history of European cohesion policy, a specific regulation was adopted for the 2014-2020 programming period, covering actions under European territorial cooperation, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). European territorial cooperation is an instrument of cohesion policy designed to solve problems that go beyond national borders and require a common solution, and to develop jointly the potential of the various territories.

Article 176 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides that the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is intended to help bridge the gap between the regions of the Union. In accordance with that Article and with the first and second subparagraphs of Article 174 TFEU, the ERDF must contribute to reducing inequalities between the levels of development of the various regions and to reducing the backwardness of the most disadvantaged regions, among which special attention should be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions affected by severe and persistent natural or demographic handicaps, such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and island, transboundary and mountain regions.

Cross-border cooperation aims to address common challenges identified jointly in border regions, such as: difficult access, in particular in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), interconnection and transport infrastructure, the decline of local industries, inappropriate business environments, lack of network structures between local and regional administration, low level of research, innovation and ICT penetration, environmental pollution, prevention of negative attitudes towards citizens of neighboring countries as goals and the exploitation of untapped growth potential in border areas (development of cross-border bases and research and innovation groups, cross-border integration of the labor market,



cooperation between educational institutions, including universities or between health centers) through an enhanced cooperation process for the Union's overall harmonious development.

The amount allocated to European Territorial Cooperation for the 2014-2020 budgetary period amounts to EUR 9.3 billion. These resources are allocated as follows:

- 74.05% for cross-border cooperation. These programs aim to bring together the efforts of regions or local governments, sharing a common border (land or sea) with a view to the development of border areas, the exploitation of their untapped growth potential and the joint action on of the common challenges identified. These common challenges include issues such as: poor access to information and communication technologies (ICTs); poor transport infrastructure; local industrial sectors in decline; unsuitable business environment; lack of networks between local and regional administrations; low level of research and innovation and ICT deployment; environmental pollution; risk prevention; negative attitudes towards citizens of neighboring countries, etc.;
- 20.36% for transnational cooperation. These programs cover larger transnational territories and aim to deepen cooperation through actions that promote integrated territorial development between national, regional and local structures in large geographical areas in Europe. They also cover maritime cross-border cooperation, where it is not covered by cross-border cooperation programs;
- 5.59% for interregional cooperation. These programs aim to increase the effectiveness of cohesion policy through actions that promote the exchange of experience between regions on issues such as program development and implementation, sustainable urban development and the analysis of development trends within the territory of the Union. The exchange of experience may include the promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation between innovative intensive research teams and the exchange of researchers and research institutions.

Geographic scope

Generally, all EU external and internal land borders, as well as maritime borders (regions with a maximum distance of 150 km from each other, or in the outermost regions, more than 150 km) can be supported through the component for cross-border cooperation. The Commission determines which areas are covered by transnational cooperation, taking into account macro-regional and sea basin strategies, and the possibility for Member States to add adjacent territories. Interregional cooperation covers the entire territory of the European Union. For the outermost regions, a combination of actions for cross-border and transnational cooperation can be implemented within a single cooperation program.



Third countries may also participate in cooperation programs. In such cases, the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (PAA II) can also be used to finance cooperation actions.

The operational programs for territorial cooperation concerning Bulgaria are:

- Cross-border cooperation programs at the European Union's internal borders with ERDF funding: Bulgaria - Greece and Bulgaria - Romania;

- Cross-border cooperation programs at the European Union's external borders: Bulgaria - Turkey, Bulgaria - Republic of Northern Macedonia, Bulgaria - Serbia. These three programs are funded by both the ERDF and the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance;
- the Black Sea Basin Program, funded both by the ERDF and the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI);
- the Transnational Cooperation Program in the South East European Space;
- INTERREG IVC Interregional Cooperation Program;
- INTERACT II Operational Assistance Program;
- Operational Program ESPON 2013 (European Territorial Planning Observation Network);
- URBACT II Operational Program.

Within Objective 3 "European Territorial Cooperation", Bulgaria is developing cooperation in the following general areas:

- promoting entrepreneurship, in particular SME development, tourism, culture and cross-border trade;
- promoting and improving the joint conservation and management of natural and cultural resources, as well as the prevention of natural and technological risks;
- support for links between urban and rural areas;
- reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services, and transboundary systems, facilities for water, waste and energy;
- developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures in particular in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education;
- stimulating the development of cross-border labor markets, local employment initiatives, gender equality and equal opportunities, training and social inclusion;
- development of institutional and administrative capacity at regional and local level and provision of technical assistance for the preparation of new projects.

Thematic concentration

In order to maximize the impact of cohesion policy and to contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, ERDF support for European territorial cooperation programs addresses a limited number of thematic objectives that are directly linked with the priorities of this strategy. The ERDF Regulation sets out a list of investment priorities for each thematic objective. They are also complemented by additional priorities tailored to the specific needs of actions under European territorial cooperation.

Cross-border and transnational programs should target a maximum of four thematic objectives, while there is no such constraint for interregional cooperation. Here are examples of priority support areas specific to European territorial cooperation programs:

1. Cross-border cooperation: promoting sustainable and quality jobs and supporting labor mobility by integrating cross-border labor markets, promoting social inclusion and community integration across borders, developing and implementing joint education, vocational and training programs and training schemes, etc.
2. Transnational cooperation: enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders as well as the efficiency of public administration by developing and coordinating macro-regional and sea basin strategies;
3. Interregional cooperation: increasing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders, as well as the efficiency of public administration, through the dissemination of good practices and know-how, promoting the exchange of experience, etc.

European Regional Development Fund

ERDF aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by restoring the disturbed equilibrium between its regions. ERDF focuses its investments on several key priority areas. This is called "thematic concentration":

- innovation and research;
- digital agenda;
- support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- a low carbon economy.



The ERDF resources allocated to these priorities depend on the category of regions. In more developed regions, at least 80% of the funds should focus on at least two of these priorities. For regions in transition, such a concentration requires 60% of the funding. For less developed regions, the value is 50%.

In addition, some ERDF resources need to be targeted specifically at projects in the low carbon economy:

- in more developed regions: 20%;
- in transition regions: 15%;
- in less developed regions: 12%.

For European Territorial Cooperation programs, at least 80% of the funding should focus on the four priority areas listed above.

Territorial characteristics

The ERDF also pays special attention to territorial features. ERDF actions aim to alleviate economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas, with particular emphasis on sustainable urban development. At least 5% of ERDF resources are earmarked for this area through "urban-managed" integrated actions.

Areas with unfavorable geographic features (remote, mountainous or sparsely populated areas) are privileged. Lastly, the outermost regions also receive special ERDF assistance to overcome any shortcomings arising from their remoteness.

Proposals for EU cohesion policy beyond 2020

In May 2018, the Commission tabled proposals for new regulations on EU cohesion policy beyond 2020. These include a regulation on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation objective (Interreg). In the future, European territorial cooperation is likely to cover five components:

- cross border cooperation;
- transnational and maritime cooperation;
- cooperation in the outermost regions;
- interregional cooperation;
- interregional innovation investments.

The proposed regulation also sets two specific objectives for Interreg:

- better management of Interreg;
- a safer and more secure Europe.

The Commission proposes to allocate EUR 8.4 billion for European territorial cooperation in the period 2021-2027.

This regulation is covered by the ordinary legislative procedure in which the European Parliament has the same powers as the Council. This means that by the end of 2020, the two institutions will have to reach a consensus on future rules for European territorial cooperation. In March 2019, Parliament closed its first reading.

Europe 2020 Strategy

The objective of the Europe 2020 strategy³ is to ensure that the economic recovery of the European Union (EU) after the economic and financial crisis is supported by a series of reforms to build solid foundations for growth and job creation by 2020. The strategy addresses the structural weaknesses of the EU economy and economic and social problems, taking into account the longer-term challenges of globalization, the scarcity of resources and the aging of the population.

The Europe 2020 strategy should enable the EU to achieve growth that is:

- smart - through the development of knowledge and innovation;
- sustainable - based on a greener and more competitive economy with more efficient use of resources;
- inclusive - aimed at promoting employment and social and territorial cohesion.

The European Union has set itself five major goals for achieving this ambitious vision by 2020:

- raising the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to 75%;
- investing 3% of GDP in research and development;
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20%, increasing the share of renewable energies by up to 20% and increasing energy efficiency by 20%;
- reducing the proportion of early school leavers to less than 10% and increasing the proportion of graduates to at least 40%;
- reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 20 million.



The objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy are also supported by 7 flagship initiatives at EU and EU level:

1. **Innovation Union:** aims to improve framework conditions and access to finance for research and innovation so as to strengthen the innovation chain and boost levels of investment throughout the Union.
2. **Youth on the move:** aims to enhance the performance of education systems and to reinforce the international attractiveness of Europe's higher education.

3. **A digital agenda for Europe:** aims to speed up the roll-out of high-speed internet and reap the benefits of a Digital Single Market for households and firms. The Digital Agenda for Europe originated from the Germany Digital Agenda-led Federal Minister of Economy & Technology.

4. **Resource efficient Europe:** aims to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, by decarbonising the economy, increasing the use of renewable sources, modernising the transport sector and promoting efficient energy use.

5. **An industrial policy for the globalisation era:** aims to improve the business environment, especially for SMEs, and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally.

6. **An agenda for new skills and jobs:** aims to modernise labour markets by facilitating labour mobility and the development of skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increasing labour participation and better matching labour supply and demand.

7. **European platform against poverty:** aims to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society.

At EU level, the Single Market, the EU budget and European foreign policy are additional levers to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives.

Implementation of the strategy within the European Semester ¹

- The strategy "Europe 2020" is implemented through common guidelines for the economic policies of EU countries and the European Union (Recommendation (EU) 2015/1184 of the Council) and employment guidelines of the EU (Commission Decision (EU) 2015/1848 of the Council)
- EU countries have been called upon to turn the Europe 2020 targets into national targets. Each year, in April, they publish their national reform programs, setting out the actions that must be taken to achieve national targets.
- The European Commission is responsible for monitoring progress. It presents an annual review of growth, evaluates EU reform programs and sends specific recommendations for each Member.

Cross-border Cooperation Program INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020

The Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”⁴ was created within the framework of the European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The eligible area of the Programme consists of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Prefectures of Evros, Kavala, Xanthi, Rodopi and Drama) and the Region of Central Macedonia (Prefectures of Thessaloniki and Serres) in Greece and the South-



¹ The European Semester provides a framework for coordinating the economic policies of EU countries. It enables Member States to discuss their economic and budgetary plans and to monitor progress at certain times during the year.

Central Planning Region and South-West Planning Region (Districts of Blagoevgrad, Smolyan, Kardjali and Haskovo) in Bulgaria.

The total budget (ERDF and national contribution) for the European Territorial Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013” is €130 262 835. The total financing consists of €110 723 408 (85%) ERDF funding and €19 539 425 (15%) national contribution.

The program funds projects under four priority axes:

- A Competitive and Entrepreneurship Promoting Cross-Border Area;
- A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area;
- A better interconnected Cross-Border Area;
- A socially inclusive Cross-Border area.

The target groups and main types of beneficiaries are national, regional and local authorities as well as non-governmental organizations.

Greece and Bulgaria, two neighboring countries with a rich past, since the end of the 1990s have entered an era of closer co-operation, due to the INTERREG Programme “Greece-Bulgaria”.

The main idea behind “INTERREG” is that countries have issues which can be better solved if they work together with their neighbors than if each one remains confined within its borders. The program promotes activities that bring the peoples of the two countries closer together.



The Greece-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation area for the programming period 2014-2020 extends to 40.202 km² and has a total population of 2.7 million inhabitants. It covers four territorial units at NUTS II level (Regions), and 11 territorial units at NUTS III level (Districts). The eligible area extends across the entire Greek-Bulgarian border and is neighbouring with Turkey (east) and Republic of Northern Macedonia (west), both countries aspiring to access to the EU. It is part of the most south-eastern non-insular area of EU, and it is situated between three seas: the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Ionian-Adriatic Sea. Finally, it sits at the crossroad of strategic fossil fuel pipelines supplying the EU market and TEN transport axes.

The settlement structure of the area is characterized by the presence of 10 medium-large cities (>50.000 inhabitants) which accumulate 38,2% of total population, and 25 small cities (10.000-50.000 inhabitants).

Despite the historically relatively small amounts of funds allocated, there is a long history of cooperation in the eligible area, which started with Community initiative INTERREG I (1989-1993).

SOCIAL FORCES



SOCIAL FORCES or “ReinFORCE SOCIAL Entrepreneurial Spirit through setting up Innovative Support Structures in the cross-border Territory” is a project funded by the Interreg VA Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cross-border Cooperation Program. This is the project within which the present framework for cooperation has been drawn up.

ReinFORCE SOCIAL Entrepreneurial Spirit through setting up Innovative Support Structures in the cross-border Territory⁵	
Acronym	SOCIAL FORCES
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Regional Development Agency of Rodopi S.A.
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Haskovo; • Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Xanthi; • Chamber of Drama; • Municipality of Haskovo; • NGO "Gnossi Anaptyxiaki"; • Reconstruction and Development Union; • University of Macedonia, Department of Educational and Social Policy; • University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" , Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences.
Start Date	Oct 18, 2017
End Date	Apr 17, 2020
Budget	563.589,10 €
Website	http://socialforces.eu
Project information	<p>There is a common need for local actions and initiatives for the provision of opportunities for social entrepreneurs to enter the market and search for market niches and trade possibilities. An overall objective is to produce new knowledge and raise the awareness enabling people in the CB area, to fully understand the conditions under which social entrepreneurship starts, develops and can contribute effectively and efficiently to solving societal challenges in a sustainable way. Also the project aims to enforce the effectiveness of the regional policies and local initiatives in promoting and supporting social entrepreneurship through the designing of common activities fostering awareness of social economy and cooperation for setting up an innovative support structure acting as Social Entrepreneurship E- Help Desk in Greece and Bulgaria, as an asset for local economic development and territorial competitiveness.</p> <p>Also, will encourage knowledge transfer for the social enterprises, in order to familiarize themselves with good management and marketing, examples and exchange of information, having knowledge of the specifics of other social enterprises. Expected results of the project also refer to an increased capacity of the policy makers and stakeholders in detecting the needs of social enterprises in their territories, thus favoring a local sustainable development. The main outputs of the operation are a catalogue of the identified and selected good practices on regional public instruments to support social enterprises together with a roadmap and joint guidelines for setting up and running an innovative social enterprise.</p>

	<p>Starting from different level of competences and experiences, the partners intend to exchange experiences, methods and tools which have proved successful in strengthening the economic viability and entrepreneurial spirit of the social enterprises, and undertake actions to foster social enterprises networking and internationalisation across the border area.</p> <p>The main outputs of the project which consist the its innovative character are a roadmap and joint guidelines for setting up and running an innovative social enterprise, the identification of the common profile framework for SE's Manager and Entrepreneur and the development of a multifunctional WebPlatform which will operate as the joint E-Help Desk for SEs. Starting from different level of competences and experiences, the partners intend to exchange experiences, methods and tools which have proved successful in strengthening the economic viability and entrepreneurial spirit of the SEs, and undertake actions to foster SEs networking across the border area.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of a research and need analysis of the SE sector and its impact and opportunities in CB area; • 5 local roundtables with stakeholders from CB area; • Report for existing financial tools and coding of the legislation for the two countries; • Design and Development of the common Professional Profile for SE Manager; • 4 courses in SE management, behavior, Marketing and Exports; • 5 training seminars (100 trainees); • Development of 25 business plans; • WebPlatform/E- Help Desk for SEs; • Policy Paper with policy recommendations.
<p>Results</p>	<p>The results which are expected during the project and on its completion could summarized as:</p> <p>Identification and analysis the regional needs in the field of social entrepreneurship</p> <p>Creation and implementation of an ICT tool to improve the level of entrepreneurial skills, to foster the entrepreneurial attitudes and transversal skills of individuals interested in setting up social-economy enterprise or individuals running social-economy enterprise, through exposure to business and real-life situation in the safety way</p> <p>Identification and analysis the regional needs in the field of social entrepreneurship</p> <p>Increasing the awareness of benefits from the social entrepreneurship sector for society and economy</p> <p>Supplying the existing and perspective social entrepreneurs with a training programme, training material focused on development of entrepreneur's competencies to start and run social-economy enterprise;</p>

Good practices

1. Conducting round tables, workshops and seminars aimed at social entrepreneurs, NGO representatives and the administration in the cross-border region in order to exchange experience and good practices
2. Providing support to social enterprises through ICT tools
3. Conducting trainings and assistance in developing business plans for social entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurship support projects in the cross-border region

Under the Cross Border Cooperation Program INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria during the 2014-2020 programming period are contracted 12 projects to support social entrepreneurship. Some of them have been completed and others are in the final stages of implementation. It is important to examine what activities were planned in the project proposals, how many of them were implemented and how successful they were. It is also important to examine the good practices identified in the implementation of all these projects so that efforts can be made to promote them and apply them in other regions. But most important of all is to investigate how these projects have

affected the development of social entrepreneurship and have they solved social problems by supporting vulnerable groups in the cross-border region.

Of course, given that a large number of projects are still in the implementation phase, it is not possible to make a detailed assessment of their results. However, the following 11 tables provide information for each of them, and information on the twelfth project (SOCIAL FORCES) is available above in this document. The information on the funded projects presented in the tables below is collected from the website of the Cross-border Cooperation Program INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020, as well as from the websites of the individual projects (those which have websites).

Integrated approach for social inclusion in BG – GR region by supporting employability and by developing social entrepreneurship⁶	
Acronym	ACCESS FOR ALL
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Municipality of Krumovgrad
Beneficiaries	Municipality of Topeiros
Start Date	Aug 31, 2017
End Date	Feb 29, 2020
Budget	498.584,03 €
Website	https://access4allgr-bgcenter.eu
Project information	The project provides actions for establishment of 1 new social enterprise in Krumovgrad, a center for temporary housing for people in need, which will provide services to local community benefiting from exchange of experience with the Greek beneficiary. In addition, a common tool will be created to promote social entrepreneurship in the cross-border region - 2 offices for supporting social entrepreneurship - one in Krumovgrad, Bulgaria and one in Topeiros, Greece.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for housing and services from daily life for people in need in Krumovgrad through the establishment and operation of a Temporary Accommodation Centre in Krumovgrad for 21 people. • Provide an additional opportunity for professionally and financially disadvantaged vulnerable groups to enter the labour market through the development of social entrepreneurship skills; • Building capacity for the provision of services for temporary housing and for the development of social entrepreneurship in the region through training; • Promotion of social entrepreneurship through the establishment of 2 offices in the cross-border region.

Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Center for Temporary Accommodation of People in Need as a New Social Enterprise was established in Krumovgrad. • 1 office for support of social entrepreneurship was established in the Krumovgrad municipal administration building. • 1 office for support of social entrepreneurship has been set up in the building of Topiros Municipality.
Good practices	Social entrepreneurship support offices managed by local authorities have been set up.

ACTions for the SuppOrt and enhancement of SOcIAL entrepreneurship at Local level⁷	
Acronym	ACT SOCIAL
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Municipality of Thermi
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association of South-Western Municipalities; • Sdruzhenie Yuni Partners.
Start Date	Oct 03, 2017
End Date	Oct 02, 2019
Budget	540.833,90 euro
Website	https://act-social.eu
Project information	The project aims to detect and determine the social impact of social enterprises measured in terms of employment integration in the cross border area and develop support structures and tools. Support Structures of Social Innovative Entrepreneurship will be developed with the form of one stop shop Help Desks. These Structures along with the tools provided will be commonly designed and developed and will implement a cross border network of cooperation and exchanges. The structures aim to support social entrepreneurship through: consulting, training, business development services, networking of social enterprises, as well as the promotion and dissemination of the idea of social entrepreneurship.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating one stop shop Help Desks - structures that support social entrepreneurship; • Creating a cross-border network of social enterprises for cooperation and exchange; • Consulting, training, business development services; • Promoting and disseminating the idea of social entrepreneurship.

Good practices	<p>1. Structures have been created to support social entrepreneurship, in which social entrepreneurs can undergo appropriate training, receive information on specific issues, and benefit from business development services.</p> <p>2. A cross-border network for cooperation and exchange of social enterprises has been established</p>
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Cross border Action Plan for the Development and Operation of an Executive Mechanism for the Support and Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in the context of the Social Economy and Social Innovation⁸

Acronym	Action Plan for Social Entrepreneurship
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Region of Central Macedonia
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democritus University of Thrace - Department of Economics; • Municipality of Yakoruda; • South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Faculty of Arts; • University of Macedonia, Department of Business Administration.
Start Date	Oct 02, 2017
End Date	Dec 31, 2019
Budget	569.105,29 euro
Website	http://apfse.gr/en/
Project information	<p>The main objective of the project is to establish a mechanism for measurable empowerment of the social economy or support for social enterprises by:</p> <p>a) increasing the number of users of services and products and the turnover of existing social services;</p> <p>b) the creation of new social enterprises.</p> <p>The need for an organized support for existing and established social enterprises is not fulfilled, in order to:</p> <p>a) improve their administrative capacity, promote their services / products to a wider public, and</p>

	<p>b) enhance professional their members' skills through networking and exchanging experiences with other social enterprises, educational and research centers active in the border area.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Initially, the project produces Social Economy Products, such as Databases and Social Business Characteristics registration tools, Diagnostic Tools for Social Business Needs and also tools for monitoring and evaluating the social and economic performance of social enterprises.</p> <p>In addition, Products related to the business development support structure are produced, such as Training Tools and consulting templates, Guides to public procurement, utilization of financial tools, social franchising etc, as well as Models and networking workshops for existing and established social businesses.</p> <p>At the same time, Products of pilot applications are produced such as Training and support services for social business executives, Social economy interconnections with the education system as well as Actions promoting social business and social economy products in conjunction with local development initiatives.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quality of the overall organization and hence the effectiveness of policies and measures for the development of the social economy. • Collected information on the main characteristics of social enterprises in the region as a prerequisite for the rational development of social economy policy. • Supported social entrepreneurship and strengthened social enterprises as a result of the services provided by the Social Entrepreneurship Support Structure created through the project as well as through the implementation of the pilot applications. • Improved quality parameters of managers and members of social enterprises, incl. and organizational capacity, which contributes to increasing employment in social enterprises. • Created networking conditions through the pilot application structure (training of trainers / consultants / multipliers, training of social business executives in providing personalized counseling. • Contribution to linking the social economy with the education system through the development of educational programs that contribute to better linking the economy with education, improving the quality of human resources of social enterprises, developing and distributing innovative products by social enterprises.
<p>Good practices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A structure has been created to support social enterprises; 2. Trainings for social entrepreneurs, managers and employees of social enterprises are organized; 3. Educational programs have been developed to contribute to better linking the economy with education, improving the quality of human

resources of social enterprises, developing and disseminating innovative products from social enterprises.

Social agri-entrepreneurship for people with disabilities in the crossborder area	
Acronym	AGRI-ABILITY
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Association for People with Mobility Problems and Friends in the Prefecture of Rhodope "PERPATO"
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulgarian Paralympic Association; • Democritus University of Thrace, Department of Agricultural Development; • European Integration Agency; • South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Faculty of Law and History.
Start Date	Oct 06, 2017
End Date	Mar 31, 2020
Budget	550.879,35 €
Project information	The project aims at the engagement of disabled people in agricultural and rural entrepreneurship. It includes a toolbox that may support a broad range of social enterprises (SE), trainings, ready to use business templates for SE, on-line incubator of SE as one-stop-shop of support, entrepreneurship tools for disabled people, entrepreneurship guidelines, funding opportunities manual, business plans development guide, marketing, promotion and management manual, improvement of practical knowledge and skills, through field labs of capacity building in agriculture/gardening, in agro-tourism and outdoor sporting activities in coastal and inland areas.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting trainings and providing business templates to persons with disabilities who plan to develop as social entrepreneurs; • Creating an online incubator for social enterprises; • Creating handbooks and guides with useful information for social enterprises and entrepreneurs; • Establishment of field laboratories for capacity building in agriculture / horticulture, agritourism and outdoor sports activities in coastal and inland areas.
Good practices	1. Trainings for social entrepreneurs have been conducted;

2. Many manuals, guides, etc. with useful information to support social entrepreneurs have been created.

“Green” employment in the management of biowastes⁹	
Acronym	GREEN CREW
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Municipality of Serres
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Department of Chemistry; • Municipality of Blagoevgrad; • Municipality of Nestos.
Start Date	Oct 06, 2017
End Date	Apr 05, 2020
Budget	542.466,70
Website	https://www.serres.gr/greencrew/
Project information	<p>The main priority of the project is to support and develop social and cooperative entrepreneurship in the wider region of both Bulgaria and Greece, by creating the prerequisites for promoting and enforcing alternative types of entrepreneurship, along with local growth. The “eco-innovation” leads to cost reduction, contributes to utilizing of new opportunities for growth, and focuses on quality so that it is promoted as the most suitable choice for customers. Thus, this program will be an original example of “eco-innovation” (collection and composting of organic waste).</p> <p>The project is going to try and act as a means of accelerating social entrepreneurship in the field of “eco-innovation”, in the broad area of Bulgaria-Greece through the creation of certain conditions concerning the aid of certain types of entrepreneurship, along with rural development. An example of the application of this cooperative entrepreneurship is the creation of Social Cooperative Enterprises.</p> <p>The main target of this project will be the strengthening of the social economy, with a focus on the social enterprises through “Green Qualifications” and encourage the creation “green” employment opportunities. The programme will contribute to the growth, organization, consulting support and guidance of the social enterprises in the field of waste management.</p>
Activities	During the project a study will be conducted. The main outputs of the study will be:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprising business incubator centre (BIC) • Strategic guidelines for the future creation of a successful BIC with social and "green" contribution • Education skills to beneficiaries through smart education practices. <p>A social enterprise has been established, which is an original example of "eco-innovation" and its field of activity is the collection and composting of organic waste.</p>
Results	<p>The objectives of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of already existing enterprises and the creation of new social enterprises; • Promotion of alternative management of waste through new measures and infrastructures concerning the collection and composting of "green" waste; • Raising citizens' awareness concerning solidarity and collegiality; • Environmental benefits.
Good practices	Established structure for support of social entrepreneurship - Social enterprising business incubator centre

Enhancement of social entrepreneurship through the establishment of support structures in the CB area¹⁰	
Acronym	GROWING SOCIAL
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Municipality of Pilea-Hortiatis
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local active group Zlatograd – Nedelino; • Management and Administration Authority Technopolis Thessalonikis SA; • Municipality of Rudozem.
Start Date	Oct 31, 2017
End Date	Apr 30, 2020
Budget	475.573,76 €
Website	http://growing-social.eu/
Project information	The project follows a holistic approach for supporting and promoting Social Entrepreneurship in the CB area. Social Growing will achieve the establishment of fully functional support mechanisms for SE which can

lead to an increase of SEs and to a public discussion on the issue in the CB area. During the implementation period, two SEs will be established and receive incubator services such as consultancy (at least 5 members in each SE), coaching and mentoring, while more than 100 will receive training. Beneficiaries involved in these actions will have a better chance of running a successful SE since they will gain a fundamental insight in operating a SE and the necessary knowhow. In the long term, the project will contribute to boosting the local economy and increasing social inclusion and cohesion through services provided by the new SEs that will be established with support received by the project. PB1 have also decided to support the new SEs that will be developed in the frame of the project by outsourcing some of its activities (with its own resources) after the end of the project.

The project aims at promoting social entrepreneurship through raising awareness in the CB area and establishing support mechanisms for interested parties and new social entrepreneurs. In the short run, beneficiaries will establish two Local Offices for Social Entrepreneurship (one in Greece and one in Bulgaria) and an Incubator for start-up social enterprises in Greece for two Social Enterprises, while they will develop an interactive helpdesk which will be available online.

The support mechanisms created in the frame of the project include: 1) two Local Offices for Social Entrepreneurship, whose objective is threefold: a) provide accurate information, guidance and support to potential new social entrepreneurs, b) networking between individuals and teams and promotion of social business ideas to existing non-profit and profit organizations with the aim of developing and implementing ideas, and c) networking between existing SEs who are looking for staff and unemployed or underprivileged people; and 2) an incubator for SEs that will foster SEs in their early stages, provide access to tools and resources, networking, mentoring, coaching, etc.

In addition, more than 100 participants will participate in educational activities (seminars and study visits), and outreach activities will target directly over 600 people (through conferences, open days, workshops and networking fairs).

Activities

- Creation of 2 local offices for start-up social enterprises, which will evaluate business plans for the development of social enterprises and give feedback on their applicability;
- Creating a business incubator that will support the two best business plans;
- Developing an online help desk with online tutorials and consulting tools;
- Organizing and conducting activities for exchange of experience on social entrepreneurship in the cross-border region (study visit for 20 participants, Success stories in Thessaloniki (100 participants) with speakers from the cross-border region and abroad, etc.);
- Developing good practice guides for new social entrepreneurs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing and conducting seminars in Thessaloniki and Zlatograd for new or potential social enterprises; Building a network of existing social enterprises seeking staff and the unemployed or disadvantaged.
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional mechanisms for supporting social entrepreneurship established; Incubators established to support social entrepreneurship; Two new social enterprises supported; Contribution to stimulating the local economy and enhancing social inclusion and cohesion through the services provided by new social enterprises.
Good practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Structures to support social entrepreneurship are established; Established business incubator for social enterprises; Created an online help desk with online tutorials and consulting tools; Conducted activities to exchange experience on social entrepreneurship in the cross-border region; Establishment of a network of existing social enterprises seeking staff and unemployed or disadvantaged people.

Interregional Social Enterprise Empowerment¹¹	
Acronym	I-SEE
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Citizens Partnership; Chamber of commerce and industry of Smolyan; District Administration of Smolyan; Social Solidarity Network of Xanthi “Stiriksi”.
Start Date	Oct 23, 2017
End Date	Apr 22, 2020
Budget	527.838,00 €
Website	http://www.isee-interreg.eu/

<p>Project information</p>	<p>he Eastern Macedonia - Thrace region in Greece and Smolyan region in Bulgaria are among the NUTS II regions with the lowest GDP in European Union, below than the 75% of the average GDP of EU 28. Strengthening social entrepreneurship can offer an alternative and viable solution for local development, employment of vulnerable groups as well as for tackling social problems that the two regions have (poverty, marginalization, social exclusion).</p> <p>“I see” project main objective is the Support of social entrepreneurship in Eastern Macedonia - Thrace and Smolyan CBC regions by encouragement of social entrepreneurship and social inclusion and increasing employment in social groups in risk. The project specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to establish support structures for social entrepreneurship; - to develop support mechanism and appropriate tools for social enterprises; - to build the capacity of social entrepreneurship consultants; - to raise awareness for social entrepreneurship.
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Two support structures for social entrepreneurship, one in Xanthi and one in Smolyan. The two support structures will provide support services to people that want to start their own social enterprise or to existing social enterprises that want to expand their activities (target 300 people). Each support structure will have qualified staff that will undertake to provide specialised support services.</p> <p>Studies of the contribution and role of the social economy in the two regions incl. action plan and recommendations.</p> <p>Support tools for the operation of the two support structures: a blended tool for the identification of needs and evaluation of social entrepreneurship ideas, a business guide for social entrepreneurship in the region, incl. interactive web-version, a franchising model for at least 2 good practices in BG to be multiplied in Greece and 2 good practices in GR to be applied in BG.</p> <p>Capacity building activities for the staff of the support structures. There will be two training courses, one in Xanthi and one in Smolyan and two study visits of the Greek staff to Smolyan, and Bulgarian staff in Xanthi to exchange experience and coordinate activities (target 20 staff members).</p> <p>Awareness raising activities, including networking events with other initiatives at local, regional and interregional level, thematic workshops in specific economic sectors or for specific social challenges, transnational networking between social enterprises for fostering their cooperation, training activities for beneficiaries and the organisation of an info day at the end of the project, for the promotion of social</p>

	<p>entrepreneurship and the promotion of the social enterprises that will be formed by the end of the project (target 660 people will attend networking and other raising awareness activities in the two countries).</p>
Results	<p>The project is expected to expand social entrepreneurship in the cross border area between EMTR in Greece and Smolyan region in Bulgaria, through raising awareness and capacity building activities and the support for the set-up and operation of social enterprises.</p> <p>The project will organise a series of awareness raising activities that will promote social entrepreneurship as a viable alternative for economic development, social inclusion and as a means to tackle social challenges in the cross border area. In parallel, the project will establish two support structures for social entrepreneurship, one in Xanthi and one in Smolyan and will build capacity of local experts and consultants, laying the foundations for the establishment of the regional support mechanism for social entrepreneurship in the REMTH that will continue its operation, through the new Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020.</p> <p>“I see” project will have an effect on the promotion and expansion of social entrepreneurship in cross border area and will support the establishment and operation of new social enterprises at regional and interregional level, responding to the needs of local societies. The result of the project will be new social enterprises operating at local, regional and cross border level, expansion of activities and strengthening of existing social enterprises and building of cross border synergies between social enterprises of the two regions.</p> <p>During the project a pilot social enterprise will be established, in the field of food collection and distribution to people in need. The area of activity has been chosen as a response to increased poverty rate and has been identified as a policy priority for EMTR and Smolyan regions.</p> <p>The project aims to create 8 new social enterprises in both countries and 4 cross-border social enterprises.</p>
Good practices	<p>1. Structures have been set up to support the creation of social enterprises, facilitate cooperation between social enterprises in the two regions, to develop joint projects and to promote franchising of social enterprises.</p> <p>2. Two good practices in Bulgaria are multiplied in Greece and two good practices in Greece are implemented in Bulgaria</p>

Handicrafts and social economy: A driver for socially inclusive growth in the CB region¹²	
Acronym	SOCIAL CRAFTS
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises

Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	International Initiatives for Cooperation
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association “Business Center-Maritza”; • Association Regional Center for vocational education training to CCI; • National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece; • Prefectural Association of People with disabilities of Kavala’ s Prefecture.
Start Date	Oct 31, 2017
End Date	Apr 30, 2020
Budget	551.232,50 €
Website	https://socialcraft.eu/
Project information	The main aim of the project is to establish an IT-based support mechanism, such as an incubators, to create a sustainable network of CB area artisans and to unite their efforts and create an open market where they can sell their products. The innovative way to create this network is through various social enterprises that give vulnerable groups the opportunity to be social entrepreneurs. The "Social Crafts" project aims to raise awareness of the enormous potential of these areas, specifically that between southern Bulgaria and northern Greece. Problems with labor inequalities, poverty and high unemployment among the different types of vulnerable groups such as young people, women, Roma, elderly, long-term unemployed and disabled, gave us the idea through this program to try and bring them new ideas of self-employment using crafts and at the same time integrating themselves totally into their local community.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory studies within the CB area (focus on traditional craftsmanship, employment of disadvantaged people, social economy, etc.), study visits abroad focusing on best practices. • Awareness Sessions - activation events for all parties, training activities targeted to artisans, disadvantaged people, local authorities, sponsors, and other stakeholders. • Developing a Joint Guide for new Work Integration Social Enterprises. • Establishment of a network of two CB Employment Support Centers for inclusion in traditional handicrafts that will be responsible for operating the envisioned e-Promotion activity and delivering (in house) services to traditional artisans (act as incubators) and disadvantaged persons (acting as employment and carrier centers). • Development of a pilot insertion programme offering support to 40 artisans and 100 disadvantaged persons. • Development of mobile units that will be responsible for providing (on the user site) a number of aforementioned support services to artisans and disadvantaged persons in remote areas (another 40 artisans and 100 disadvantaged persons). • Preparation of open contest for novel business ideas in the field of traditional handicrafts, with financial prizes (3 best ideas) for

	<p>winner, plus support to prepare detailed business plans and establishment of their new social enterprises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishment of a fully accessible e-Promotion platform for handicrafts from the CB (in the form of an “online Social Mall”).• Developing a mobile app for members of the network (handicraft sellers).• The production of supported Artisans Catalogue 2018 will be created.• Organizing two traditional festivals to support structures and artisans to present their products and promote the Project, the Employment support centers and the online platform.• Networking with international organizations, educational institutions, etc.• Creating an online observatory system for impact monitoring. <p>The main activities of SocialCrafts project will be implemented in Razlog, Kavala, Blagoevgrad, Thessaloniki and Haskovo, covering 5 out of 11 NUTS III areas and all four (4) administrative regions of CB area (GR 11, 12, BG 41, 42). Partnership has been structured in such a way to maximize geographical coverage, as partners will act as regional and local antennas to spread the message to adjoining areas.</p>
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted studies in the cross-border area (focusing on traditional craftsmanship, employment, social economy, etc.), visits abroad to exchange good practices.• Conducted training aimed at disadvantaged craftsmen, local authorities, sponsors and other interested parties.• Developed a guide for new labor integration of social enterprises.• Establishment of a network of two cross-border employment centers supporting the involvement of traditional crafts, serving as an incubator and support center.• A program to support craftsmen and disadvantaged people has been developed.• Mobile support and consultation groups for craftsmen and disadvantaged people from remote areas have been developed.• Competition for new business ideas in the field of traditional handicrafts with financial awards was held; detailed information provided to support business plans for setting up new social enterprises.• An accessible electronic platform created to promote crafts from the cross-border area (in the form of an "online mall").• Mobile application developed for network members (craft sellers).• Crafts catalog developed in the cross-border region.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two traditional festivals were organized to promote the structures of the craftsmen and the possibilities for presenting their products.
Good practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Created an incubator based on Internet technologies to build a sustainable network of artisans to join their efforts to build an open market; 2. Incubator and social enterprise support center established; 3. Developed mobile groups to support and advise artisans and disadvantaged people from remote areas; 4. Conducting a competition with financial incentives for the best business ideas for social enterprises; 5. Created an accessible electronic platform (including a mobile application) that promotes crafts from the cross-border region (in the form of an "online mall"); 6. Developed catalog of craftsmen in the cross-border region; 7. Organized festivals for presenting the artisan products by social enterprises.

Supporting Social Enterprises in combating poverty and social exclusion¹³	
Acronym	SOCIAL PLATE
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Central Market of Thessaloniki
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Educational Institute "Technopolis"; • Municipality of Borino; • NGO "Active Youths".
Start Date	Sep 28, 2017
End Date	Dec 31, 2019
Budget	551.779,40 €
Website	http://www.socialplate.eu
Project information	The idea for ‘Social Plate’ was developed by TH.C.M. (Thessaloniki Central Market) S.A., as a solution to the problems of poverty and social exclusion and the need to protect the environment. The goal of the programme is to provide food for weaker social groups, to provide work to the long-term unemployed, and to limit food waste. An indispensable part of the idea is to disseminate this solution to all social strata and gain

	<p>their active participation, in order to achieve a change in course and attitude towards food waste matters.</p> <p>Every day, traders of TH.C.M. S.A. deliver non-marketable goods to the organic waste management office of the company and, under the supervision of the head of quality control, the products are separated into those that are fit for consumption and those that are not. Subsequently, with the help of volunteers from the agencies that benefit from the programme, they are repackaged. Social agencies of the region (Social Grocery Stores, Non-Governmental Organisations, Church Kitchens, Collectives, etc.) that are working with the programme receive the recovered products and distribute them, cooked or raw, to vulnerable social groups in our society. Thus, the homeless, the unemployed, refugees, and anyone in need of a plate of food, can get just that, thanks to the all the volunteers working with ‘Social Plate’.</p> <p>As food waste has multiple consequences, such an initiative is of crucial importance. The goals of the Thessaloniki Central Market and of all the people participating in the project, are to limit food waste, combat malnutrition, and recycle packaging and correctly manage organic waste.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Establishment of a social enterprise for management of food with bad commercial appearance</p> <p>Creating an online platform for food donors, intermediaries (who redistribute food to vulnerable groups), and representatives of vulnerable groups in need of free food.</p> <p>Recycling of food packaging</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>For a period of four months of operation, the ‘Social Plate’ team has handled more than 150,000 kilos of fruits and vegetables, from which more than 90,000 kilos were recovered and offered to our fellow people, while at the same time stopping the transformation of this quantity into organic waste. More than 35 agencies participate in the distribution (Social Grocery Stores, NGOs, Foundations, Church Kitchens) and we aim to increase that number.</p> <p>Support was provided for the creation of a new social enterprise in the form of a non-governmental organization in Greece and the promotion of this site in Bulgaria as a social franchise through the cross-border transfer of the social enterprise from one side to the other.</p> <p>Established Incubator for Social Enterprises, which encourages social entrepreneurs in the early stages, provides access to tools and resources through networking, mentoring, training, etc.</p>
<p>Good practices</p>	<p>The establishment of a social enterprise (for sorting and redistributing badly traded food to vulnerable groups) is a good practice itself as its business benefits in many aspects: jobs are created for representatives of vulnerable groups, free food is provided for representatives of vulnerable groups; the conversion of huge amounts of food into organic waste is prevented.</p>

Support of Social Enterprises and Enhancement of Employment¹⁴	
Acronym	SoSEDEE
Priority axis	4 - A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area
Investment priorities	9c - Providing support for social enterprises
Intervention fields	113. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
Lead Beneficiary	Municipality of Gotse Delchev
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology, Department of Business Administration; • SOS Children's Villages Greece.
Start Date	Sep 29, 2017
End Date	Feb 28, 2020
Budget	615.978,32 €
Website	https://www.sosedee.eu/
Project information	<p>The project aims to contribute to increasing the employment of people from vulnerable social groups living in cross-border regions through a training course, the completion of which will help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to create and manage effective social enterprises.</p> <p>The main objectives of the Project are the development of an academically recognized distance learning programme in "Social Entrepreneurship" by the Business School of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology, and the provision of specialized support for the development of two Social Enterprises. The Project addresses individuals residing in the cross-border area, with special focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployed; • Vulnerable or sensitive social groups; • Existing social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship consultants; • Potential social entrepreneurs.
Activities	<p>The main activities of the Project are carried out in two axes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and evaluation of the first distance learning program "Social Entrepreneurship" in cross-border regions under the INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020 Program;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot implementation and counseling for the beneficiaries of financial support and social integration by the Municipality of Gotse Delchev and SOS Children's Villages, Greece, through social entrepreneurship;
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted training courses for social entrepreneurs; • Certificates of social entrepreneurship recognized by the university; • Conducted e-learning, developed business plans for setting up and piloting social enterprises; • Support through infrastructure work, equipment and materials for new social enterprises; • Marketing plans and estimates for new social enterprises created; • Direct training and mentoring for new social enterprises.
Good practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developed an academically recognized distance learning program Social Entrepreneurship; 2. Conducted training courses for social entrepreneurs; 3. Two social enterprises established.

Proposals for multiplication and transfer of good practices

Undoubtedly, social entrepreneurship cooperation in the cross-border region of Greece - Bulgaria has many benefits for both countries, and especially for their citizens. It is therefore important to build a framework for co-operation between Bulgaria and Greece, building on the achievements in the field of social enterprises and solidarity economy through projects implemented under the INTERREG VA Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020 Program, Priority Axis 4 A - Cross-border. high social inclusion region, Investment Priority 9c - Providing support for social enterprises, Area of intervention 113 - Promoting social entrepreneurship and professional integration in social enterprises and with the social and solidarity economy with a view to facilitating access to employment.

In the next few pages there is a list of suggestions for multiplication and transfer of good practices that can be implemented in the cross-border region of Greece - Bulgaria as well as in other parts of Europe.

Increasing the sensitivity of representatives of institutions, businesses and citizens is crucial for the development of social entrepreneurship and for achieving sustainability and independence of social enterprises. Only when society is aware of what social entrepreneurship is and the benefits it brings to local communities, can social enterprises themselves be given support and a better chance of development. In this context, measures can be taken to promote social entrepreneurship by presenting successful examples and good practices from both countries through various visits, workshops, festivals and other events.



The next step is to provide appropriate training for social entrepreneurs. Various studies conducted in the cross-border area show that one of the reasons that social enterprises are significantly more vulnerable than other businesses is the lack of proper education for their managers. Informal and distance learning, as well as the exchange of experience can be extremely useful, but in no case are they sufficient preparation for a future social entrepreneur. Therefore, academic programs in Social Entrepreneurship and Management need to be developed and accredited. Only serious university training can guarantee the acquisition of sufficient knowledge and skills to create and run a



social enterprise. Within one of the implemented under INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020 program project a program for distance learning "Social Entrepreneurship" was developed. This program can be used as a basis and can be upgraded and further developed, if necessary, by other universities in the cross-border region. Later on, various measures may be implemented, such as student exchange programs between different universities in order to acquire a broader range of



knowledge and skills, to become familiar with the social enterprise development environment in the other country, and in particular to create of friendships and partnerships with future social entrepreneurs, which will facilitate future work in cross-border networks. Another suitable measure is the development of various internship programs in already operating social enterprises, business incubators for social enterprises, etc. relevant structures in the cross-border region.

Another part of the cooperation framework could be the creation of a network of incubators or structures to support future and emerging social enterprises. There are many different possible approaches for setting up these structures - they can operate under the umbrella of regional administrations, regional structures of different ministries, municipalities, NGOs, NGO associations or social enterprises. Of course, such structures would be most useful if they are led by a mixed team of representatives from all the stakeholders listed above. The role of these incubators or structures is to:

- providing information on the nature of social enterprises, the legal and financial opportunities and restrictions associated with them;
- providing information on funding opportunities for social enterprises;
- support for developing a business plan;
- using the opportunities of mobile groups of experts to advise potential social entrepreneurs in small and / or remote settlements;
- organizing good practice meetings, exchanging experience between social enterprises and many others.



These structures can be built as additional units to existing structures, such as the Regional Information Centers, operating business incubators, and why not community centers developing various activities. In many of the projects implemented under the INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020 Program such structures have been created so efforts can be made to further develop and upgrade the activities and services they provide.

But the most important thing in this recommendation for cooperation is building a network of these structures. This means creating a framework for communication and exchange of experience between their employees. Organizing workshops and visits to incubators for social entrepreneurship in other settlements in the cross-border area will help to improve the qualifications and expertise of their employees, as well as to "set the clock" and get acquainted with the latest innovations in the sector.

A reliable element of the cooperation framework is the development of joint financing instruments for social enterprises in the cross-border region. There are several options that can be implemented:



- channeling funds to Operational and Cross-border Cooperation programs;
- creation of a common state fund to redistribute funding after applying with a project idea;
- setting up a common municipal fund to redistribute funding to social enterprises after applying a proposal;
- creation of a common fund formed by donations from individuals and businesses (corporate social responsibility) to support social enterprises;
- Creating a fund with a variety of fundraising opportunities.



If the previous cooperation measures are aimed primarily at securing the creation of social enterprises, the following ones aim at creating the conditions for achieving a sustainable model of work for the already established social enterprises.

Another element of the cooperation framework is support for social enterprises through joint participation in exhibitions, bazaars, fairs, festivals and other events. This measure is very important because many of the studies conducted show that many social enterprises find it difficult to promote the products they produce and the services they provide, and only a very small number of them dare to seek markets beyond the region borders, much less outside the borders of the state. In this context, special facilitated conditions for participation in such bazaars and events aiming at advertising and expanding the markets of social enterprises may be provided.



An important part of the cooperation framework could be the initiative to create a catalog of social enterprises in both countries and why not at European level. This catalog would have many positive effects: it would improve the visibility of social enterprises in society and in business, facilitate communication between social enterprises, and facilitate the representatives of institutions in organizing and conducting initiatives to support social enterprises.

In a world of fast-paced technology and endless online content, social enterprises need support to achieve greater visibility and network presence. There are many possibilities for cooperation in this direction:

- creating facilitated conditions for use of template websites (including those in multilingual and mobile versions) to represent the activity of the social enterprise;
- support for the creation of online shops, including common cross-border platforms for the sale of goods produced by social enterprises;
- creating common online stores with products of social enterprises operating in the same or similar fields of work;
- providing support for the international market through sales on major online platforms such as Amazon, eBay, Etsy, Aliexpress, Emag and more.



Last but not least, the creation of a network / association or other similar structure of social enterprises in the cross-border region/ should be an element of the cooperation framework. The benefits of such a network will be many and various:



- Exchange of experience and good practices;
 - Creating an opportunity for self-regulation of social enterprises;
 - Facilitating the organization and implementation of joint initiatives;
 - Better monitoring of the sector;
 - Facilitation of advocacy activities;
 - Creating an opportunity to delegate organizational and other issues to the Network;
 - Organizing and conducting various trainings, workshops, seminars and more with a view to making the sector more sustainable;
- Transfer of innovation and know-how;
 - Opportunity to set up cooperatives and associations by industry to fulfill larger orders, incl. and public procurement;
 - Better opportunity to provide timely and adequate support in the event of critical or unexpected situations;
 - Facilitated communication between social enterprises and representatives of vulnerable groups seeking employment in these enterprises and many others.



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