

Annex I

Cross-border cooperation programme

**INTERREG IPA CBC Romania - Serbia Programme**  
under the Instrument for Pre-accession assistance  
(IPA II)  
- Final DRAFT -

**March 2015**

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### Programme draft

CCI	
Title	Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020
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First year	2014
Last year	2023
Eligible from	01.01.2014
Eligible until	31.12.2022
EC decision number	
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NUTS level III regions (or equivalent regions in the non-MS) covered by the cross-border cooperation programme	<b>Romania:</b> Timiș, Caraș-Severin, Mehedinți <b>Serbia:</b> Severnbanatski, Srednjebanatski, Južnbanatski, Braničevski, Borski, Podunavski

1. **SECTION 1 - STRATEGY FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SELECTED THEMATIC PRIORITIES AND THE RELEVANT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND COUNTRY STRATEGIC PAPER(S)**
- 1.1. Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the selected thematic priorities and the relevant Partnership Agreement and Country Strategic Paper(s)
- 1.1.1. Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the selected thematic priorities and the relevant Partnership Agreement and Country Strategic Paper(s)

### **Strategic Policy context**

The INTERREG IPA CBC Romania - Serbia Programme (hereinafter referred to as the "Programme") is designed in the framework of the European Strategy for a smart inclusive and sustainable growth. Below are summarized the main policy frameworks at European, national and regional level.

The consultation process led to the finalisation of the 2014-2020 Cross-Border Cooperation Programme between Romania and Serbia which is the result of a joint programming effort of the relevant Romanian and Serbian authorities, represented in the National Group for Programming, Joint Working Group for Strategic Planning and Programming and in the Joint Monitoring Committee. The composition of all these bodies is annexed to the SEA statement.

The programming process was launched on 16th of May 2013, when the first meeting of the Joint Working Group for Planning and Programming for Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 was held. The programming process continued with the meetings from 10th of December 2013, in Bor, Serbia when the first discussion on the draft Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis was held. On 03rd of March 2014, in Reșița, Romania, the final versions of Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis were discussed and the JWG members were invited to submit any other additional comments until 14th of March. The documents included the comments and proposals received from the stakeholders during the workshops. Also the first draft of programme strategy was discussed. On 31st of March 2014, in Vrsac, Serbia, the

Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis were approved, including the thematic priorities to be financed through the Programme. On 29th of May 2014, in Baile Herculane, the priority axes were approved and also the JWG took the decision that strategic projects will be financed within the limit of 30% from the total IPA funds allocated to the programme. On 8th of July 2014, in Veliko Gradiste, Serbia, the Joint Working Group approved the thematic areas and indicative actions.

In addition to these meetings a wider partnership consultation took place. The consultations used multiple instruments and methodologies: workshops, collection of project ideas from the potential beneficiaries, publication of the programme draft on the programme web site, with invitation to the submission of comments and proposals. The participation to all three parallel stages of consultation was large, and active, from all counties and districts of the eligible area. More than 50% of the participants to the survey are partners of projects financed by the current programme, and among them were included representatives of NGO, educational and university institutions, local administrations. The qualitative feedback, proposals of new items for the SWOT, critics to others, were considered for the revision of the SWOT, and are incorporated in the new draft proposed to the partners also the quantitative evaluation produced very positive results. A second round of consultations was held after the approval of the selection of the priority axes themes. The aim of this second round was that of the collection of feedback from stakeholders on the expected results per each investment priority, the potential actions and project examples.

The workshops with the stakeholders were held on both sides of the borders, as follows:

20-21 February 2014: In Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Romania and Pancevo, Serbia the draft Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis were discussed with the stakeholders. Also the potential beneficiaries were invited to present their proposals for the improvement of the programme implementation system.

18-19 June 2014: In Reșița, Romania and Smederevo, Serbia, the first programme draft was discussed together with the strategic projects proposals. Once more the potential beneficiaries were invited to present their proposals for the improvement of the programme implementation system

The total number of participants in these workshops was higher than 60 per event, with representatives from all target groups and stakeholders.



The consultations via internet produced a rich set of comments and proposals for the improvement of programming documents (Territorial Analysis, SWOT Analysis, Draft Programme). Moreover, the potential beneficiaries were invited to fill in questionnaires with their project ideas that were used by the MA and the programming team to revise and improve the priority axes/ thematic areas content.

Also, the stakeholders will be properly represented within the Monitoring Committee of the Programme and be part of the decision making process at the Programme level.

Consultations will be held regarding Applicant`s Guide, eligibility rules, Application Form, financing and co-financing contract template, Partnership Agreement.

### **The Europe 2020 strategy**

Europe 2020 strategy puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy and
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

It also sets focus on five overarching headline targets that have to be reached by 2020.

These targets require a mixture of national and EU actions, utilising the full range of policies and instruments available. The same principle applies for the seven underpinning flagship initiatives.

In the context of the Programme, synergies with the aforementioned national and EU actions are to be sought. Two European Commission (EC) communications were released in 2010 and 2011 on smart and sustainable growth respectively, outlining the relevance of CBC programmes.

The European Territorial Agenda 2020 is paramount in defining the importance of CBC claiming that “territorial integration....is a key factor in global competition facilitating better utilisation of development potentials and the protection of natural environment” aiming at integrating the territorial dimension within different policies at all levels of governance.

Additionally the European Territorial Agenda 2020 identifies some key challenges and potentials for territorial development. These include increased exposure to

globalisation, demographic changes, social and economic exclusion, climate change, and loss of biodiversity, all relevant to the Programme area.

### **Role of the Cross Border Cooperation in the European strategy**

The European Territorial Agenda describes the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) and CBC Programmes, as “.... a key factor in global competition... facilitating better utilisation of development potentials and the protection of natural environment”<sup>1</sup>.

A typology of results of ETC programmes, which reveals some crucial aspects of the ETC approach, is the following<sup>2</sup>:

- Integration related results, i.e. the establishment and implementation of joint territorial governance mechanisms for common assets;
- Investment related results, i.e. delivering socio-economic benefits similar to mainstream programmes either by direct investments or by preparing such investments and
- Performance related results, i.e. inducing improvements of organisational and individual performance.

While these three categories provide a starting point, the “*Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020*” suggests in Annex II a number of other characteristics of cross-border cooperation:

- Support the joint management and promotion of the shared major geographic features;
- Achieving a critical mass for success, especially in the field of innovation and ICT;
- Achieving economies of scale for more efficient investments in services and infrastructure;
- Providing support for the coherent planning of transport infrastructure (including TEN-T) and the development of environmentally friendly and interoperable transport modes in larger geographical areas.

The present Programme is characterised by some additional features, which can be summarised as:

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<sup>1</sup> While many definitions are attempted to explain European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) and CBC Programmes, most of them end up being very broad or indistinguishable from other forms of ETC like cross-border cooperation (e.g. addressing challenges beyond national borders or actions of common planning and management).

<sup>2</sup> INTERACT, working documents.

- Coverage of a large area with a high diversity of regions and often conflicting interests;
- Full Integration into a Macro Region framework, the Danube Macro Region, which generates substantial challenges and opportunities of coordination and synergies.

### **The EU Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR)**

The Programme contributes to and interacts with, the Macro Regional Strategy that the EU has devised for the countries and regions that share common needs and objectives in the Danube Region.

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) provides an overall framework for parts of Central and South East Europe area aiming at fostering integration and integrative development. The Danube Region covers 14 countries (Germany, Austria, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Thus, the Danube Region encompasses the entire Programme area.

The Strategy includes four pillars:

- (1) Connecting the Danube Region,
- (2) Protecting the environment in the Danube Region,
- (3) Building prosperity in the Danube Region and
- (4) Strengthening the Danube Region.

It is accompanied by a “rolling” Action Plan breaking down eleven Priority Areas into actions and project examples. The proposed list of the strategic actions were taken into account in the Programme strategy.

### **The Romanian EU Partnership Agreement**

The Romanian Partnership Agreement highlights the central role of the CBC programmes in which Romania participates, for the contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Partnership Agreement emphasizes the importance of promoting the EUSDR, as macroeconomic strategies offer a new, more substantial and consistent cooperation platform that can be financed not only from dedicated funds.

The planned interventions related to the EUSDR include five different areas, namely transport (e.g.: development of bridges and port infrastructure), network of settlements (e.g.: connecting Bucharest and the Danube river), environment (e.g.: protection of the Danube Delta), society (e.g.: improvement of social infrastructure) and economy (e.g.: exploiting the agricultural, energy and tourism potential of the Danube area).

According to the Partnership Agreement, CBC programmes should also emphasize the importance of promoting employment, improving tourism and promoting cultural heritage while enhancing the connection between the communities of the border areas. Improvement of the transport and environmental system is also promoted. Romania is committed to remove the existing bottlenecks concerning the cross-border transport flows and to strengthen cooperation especially in the energy sector, in order to raise energy efficiency, decrease pollution and to widen the production, distribution and consumption of renewable energy sources.

### **The National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis - NPAA (2014-2018) of the Republic of Serbia**

According to the National plan, the Republic of Serbia is highly motivated to develop relations with immediate neighbours and countries in the region of South-East Europe, thus affirming one of the priorities of its foreign policy - improvement of regional cooperation. In the strategy of Serbia, regional cooperation, especially through regional fora and initiatives, although not replacing the process of integration to the EU, represents a central contribution to strengthening of bilateral relations with the neighbours and the states from the South - East Europe region.

The Republic of Serbia is actively contributing specially to the EUDRS, thus assigning a special role to the CBC Programme with Romania, for the contribution to the wider strategy, and the creation of an integrated framework for the achievement of the Strategy objectives.

### **Regional Development Strategy Republic of Serbia**

The last regional development strategy of Serbia, designed in 2006 for the period 2007-2012, identified some key objectives that are still relevant and coherent to the strategy of the Programme:

- ✓ Sustainable Development
- ✓ Enhancing regional competitiveness
- ✓ Alleviation of regional disparities and poverty

- ✓ Curbing negative population trends
- ✓ Continuing decentralization and approximation of the European NUTS system

The results of the Territorial Analysis prove that several of these objectives are still relevant and applicable in the eligible area, especially: sustainable development, alleviation of regional disparities, curbing negative population trends.

### **CBC and Interregional Programmes accessible in the programme area**

The Programme Area partially overlaps (e.g. CBC HU-RS) or is contained (e.g. South East Europe or the future Danube Programme) to a number of other Territorial Cooperation Programmes. Many of these Programmes follow similar objectives and have relevant thematic orientations. The evaluation of the current programme signalled the need to improve coordination and to exploit synergies. In all cases, they contribute to the development of capacity and know-how among the administration and stakeholders of the region about the *modus operandi* of Territorial Cooperation. The table below gives an overview of the current programmes 2007-2013, the perspective asset for the next 2014-2020 programming period, and the common eligible territories.

Programme Strategic Objectives in the current programme period Budget	Priority Axes <sup>3</sup>	Shared Eligible Area in RO-RS	Planned 2014-2020 programme	Relevance and potential interaction with CBC RO -RS Programme
<b>INTERREG- IV</b>  Improve, by means of interregional cooperation, the effectiveness of regional development policies in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention as well as to contribute to economic modernisation and increased competitiveness of Europe. Budget 420 MEuro	PA1: Innovation and knowledge economy PA2: Environment and risk prevention	<b>Serbia:</b> Non eligible  <b>Romania:</b> whole area	Confirmed INTERREG EUROPE	Low Transnational European cooperation, not specifically targeting the regional needs and challenges. Potential synergies from the cooperation between local bodies and European most advanced regions, leading to possible transfer of good practices, innovation in development policies.
<b>SEE</b>  Improvement of the territorial, economic and social integration process and contribution to cohesion, stability and competitiveness through the development of transnational partnerships and joint action on	PA1:Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship PA2: Environment PA3: Accessibility PA4:Transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas	<b>Whole area</b>	Split in two programmes :Danube (including the whole programme area) and Adriatic	Medium  Strong interaction with Danube region programme. Strong need of coordination of investments and actions, to avoid duplications and maximize synergies.

<sup>3</sup> Excluding Technical Assistance

<p>matters of strategic importance.</p> <p>Budget 246 Meuro</p>				<p>Lower relevance for the Adriatic Ionian programme.</p>
<p>IPA CBC Hungary Serbia</p> <p>Facilitation of a harmonic and cooperating region with a sustainable and safe environment.</p> <p>Budget 21,7 MEuro</p>	<p>PA1: Infrastructure and Environment</p> <p>PA2: Economy, Education and Culture</p>	<p>Serbia North and Central Banat</p>	<p>Confirmed</p>	<p>Medium to High</p> <p>Strong interaction for the implementation of the Danube strategy, same eligible partners can lead to competition for projects and/ or duplication. Coordination needed. Current experience proves that the strong links with Hungarian communities can attract beneficiaries in this programme, reducing interest for RO-RS Programme.</p>
<p>IPA CBC Bulgaria Serbia</p> <p>Strengthen territorial cohesion of the Bulgarian-Serbian cross-border region, its competitiveness and sustainability of its development through co-operation in the economic, social and environmental area</p>	<p>PA1: Development of small-scale infrastructure</p> <p>PA2: Enhancing capacity for joint planning, problem solving and development</p>	<p>Serbia Borski</p>	<p>Confirmed</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Strong interaction for the implementation of the Danube strategy, same eligible partners can lead to competition for projects and/ or duplication. Coordination needed. Potential</p>

over the administrative borders. Budget 13,5 Meuro				synergies in the actions for cross border integration
ERDF CBC Hungary Romania  Bring the people, communities and economic actors of the border area closer to each other in order to facilitate the joint development of the co- operation area, building upon the key strengths of the border region. Budget 275 MEuro	PA1: Improvement of the key conditions of joint, sustainable development in the co-operation area PA2: Strengthen social and economic cohesion of the border area	<b>Romania</b> Timiș	Confirmed	Medium to high  Strong interaction for the implementation of the Danube strategy, same eligible partners can lead to competition for projects and/ or duplication. Coordination needed. Potential synergies in the actions for cross border integration
ERDF CBC Bulgaria Romania  Bring together the people, communities and economies of the Romania-Bulgaria border area to participate in the joint development of a cooperative area, using its human, natural and environmental resources and advantages. Budget 262 Meuro	PA1: Improved mobility information and communication PA2: Sustainable use and protection of natural, risk management PA3: Economic development and social cohesion	<b>Romania</b> Mehedinți	Confirmed	Medium to high  Strong interaction for the implementation of the Danube strategy, same eligible partners can lead to competition for projects and/ or duplication. Coordination needed. Potential synergies in the actions for cross border integration



# Interreg - IPA CBC Romania - Serbia



Apart from those programmes, various international, bilateral and European programmes have supported interventions for a various number of topics, ranging from environmental infrastructure and urban rehabilitation up to economic development and civil society environment. Romania after accession to the EU in 2007 has been able to use Structural Funds to its avail, building on the rich experience accumulated through PHARE. In Serbia CARDS and IPA efforts have been accompanied by numerous projects e.g. through GTZ, World Bank and other donors. The 2014-2020 Programme should build on past experiences and projects from different frameworks.

Last but not least, a number of euro regions are active in the area, the most important being the “Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa Regional Cooperation” (DKMT) established in 1997 with the aim to develop and broaden relationships among local communities and local governments in the field of economy, education, culture, science and sports - and help the region to maintain the process of the European integration.

The Euroregion maintains a number of workgroups in the domains:

- Economy, infrastructure and tourism workgroup
- Urbanism, nature and environmental protection workgroup
- Culture, sports, non-governmental organisations and social issues workgroup
- International relations, information and mass communication workgroup
- Catastrophe prevention workgroup
- National health workgroup
- Healthcare workgroup
- Industrial park workgroup
- Tourism workgroup
- Agricultural workgroup

The DKMT demonstrates an example of bottom up engagement and also a platform for sustainable project results, acting as a show case of cross border governance and integration and as a framework to refer to.

## **The Romania-Serbia Cross Border Cooperation area**

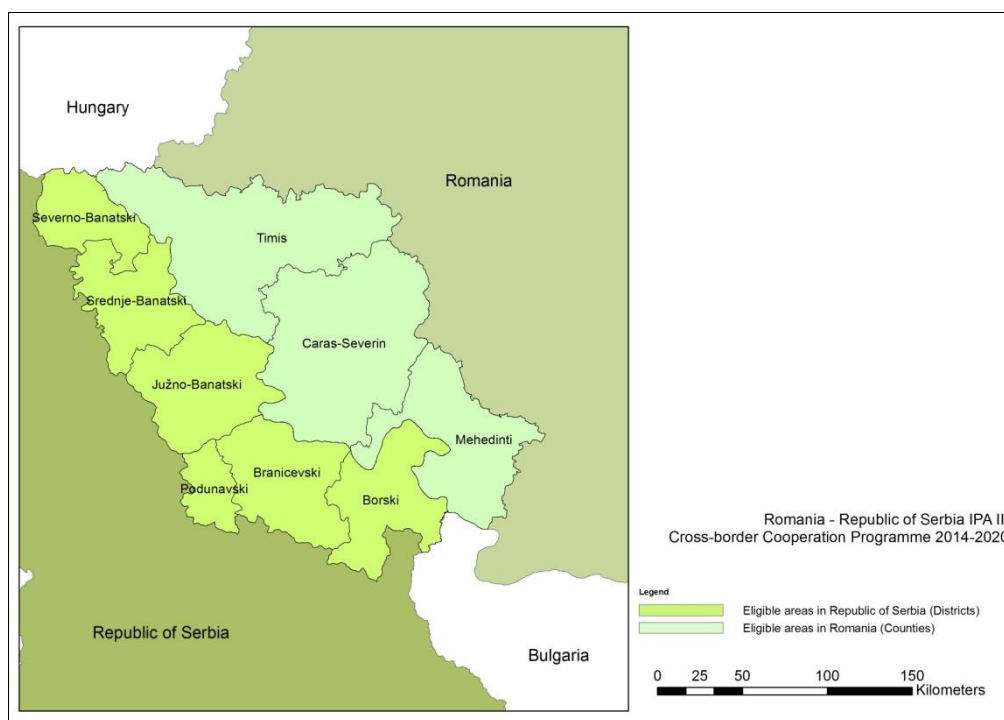
The eligible area for the programming period 2014-2020 under the Programme will include three counties of Romania, and six districts of the Republic of Serbia<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> DG Regio: draft implementing acts. list of ETC programmes: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/experts\\_documents\\_en.cfm#2](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/experts_documents_en.cfm#2)

The programme area is at the centre of the European Danube Macro Region. The two partner countries contain a large share of the river basin, their total surface representing 10% of the basin in Serbia and 29% in Romania<sup>5</sup>.

The total area is 40.596 sqkm (53,1 % in Romania/ 46,9% in Serbia), including the Romanian counties Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Mehedinți, and the Serbian districts (Severnobanatski, Srednjebanatski, Južnobanatski, Braničevski, Borski, Podunavski).



**Map 1 The eligible area of the Romania Serbia IPA CBC Programme**

The eligible area is split in two NUTS2 regions in Romania, and two NUTS2 regions in Serbia.

In Serbia, the three Banat districts belong to the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, an administrative entity classified as NUTS2 statistical region according to the law 46/2010, which has revised the territorial statistical units in Serbia according to the EU criteria. The Braničevski, Borski and Podunavski districts belong to the NUTS2 statistical region of Southern and Eastern Serbia.

In Romania, Mehedinți County belongs to the Development Region South West. The two counties of Caraș-Severin and Timiș belong to the Development Region West.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-basin/countries-danube-river-basin>

Country	NUTS 3 units or equivalent:	Administrative status	Capital city / Seats of districts
România	Timiș	County	Timișoara
	Caraș-Severin	County	Reșița
	Mehedinți	County	Drobeta Turnu-Severin
Republic of Serbia	Severnobanatski	District	Kikinda
	Srednjobanatski	District	Zrenjanin
	Južnbanatski	District	Pančevo
	Braničevski	District	Požarevac
	Borski	District	Bor
	Podunavski	District	Smederevo

### Eligible areas

The eligible territory in Republic of Serbia represents 20.8% of the country, a larger share than in Romania, where the three eligible counties represent just 9% of the national territory.

The length of the border in the eligible territories between Romania and the Republic of Serbia is 548 km, out of which 235 km (42,8%) on the Danube River. The length of the border in the programme area represents 26% of the external borders of Republic of Serbia, and 17% of the external borders of Romania.”. Along this common border there are 5 constantly operating road border crossings and 2 constantly operating railroad crossings. Also, there are 6 fluvial ports in Serbia, and 3 on the Romanian shore.

According to the 2011 census<sup>6</sup>, a population of roughly 2.4 million lives in the eligible area, that represents roughly 9% of the total combined national populations of Romania and Republic of Serbia. Based on the most recent estimations, in the eligible area roughly 7% of the GDP of the combined national GDP of the two countries is produced.

The geography of the region is complex and heterogeneous.

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<sup>6</sup> NIS Serbian Census 2011.

The Banat Plains extend in the North in the Serbian Districts and Timiș County. Moving to South East, transition hills between the plains and mountains lead to the centre occupied by the Southern Carpathians range, with Banat Mountains, Țarcu-Godeanu Mountains and Cernei Mountains and elevations between 600 and 2100 meters in Caraș Severin district. The Danube flows in the South Banat plains, at the border with the Braničevski district, and it reaches the border between Romania and Serbia in the vicinity of Baziaș in Romania. In Romania, Timiș, Cerna, Caraș and Nera rivers cross the counties, some of them through spectacular valleys and gorges. Also is worth to mention the Bega channel, connected to the Rhine - Danube network.

Between the southern Carpathian Mountains and the north-western foothills of the Balkan Mountains, the Danube flows through the Iron Gates gorges (Iron Gates is another name of Đerdapska klisura and it is stretching from Golubac to Simska klisura, 98 km. The Đerdap / Portile de Fier water gate is half on Romanian and half on Serbian side). The Romanian side of the gorge constitutes the Portile de Fier natural park, whereas the Serbian part constitutes the Đerdap national park. In the South East is the Western end of the Southern Carpathians. In the Borski district there are Veliki Krš, Mali Krš and Stol mountains, dominated by karst formations, and are collectively known as "Gornjanski kras". In Romania there are the Mehedinți Mountains with heights of up to 1500 m. The heights decrease towards the South East, passing through the hills to a high plain to the Western end of the Romanian Plain.

The relations between the eligible area and the Danube Region can be analysed in the following main fields: socio-economic development, mobility, energy, natural and cultural resources, risks of environmental catastrophes.

In all these fields of interaction challenges and opportunities can be identified, according to the scale of the phenomena, local, regional or international, and according to the main driving factors, like the global environmental changes or the international tourism markets.

In some areas a strong interdependency between the eligible area and the larger Danube region can be identified. These areas are dominated by international and interregional factors, with impact that largely overcome the regional dimension. Some examples: reduction and prevention of pollution of land, water and air by industrial and urban sources, control and mitigation of environmental risks, development of the integration of the European Transport Networks. In these areas the action of the Programme partners should be focused on the integration of the local with the global strategies at the level of Danube region.

In other areas there is always strong interaction, but the main driving factors depend at list in part on local factors, therefore the local stakeholders can benefit of some autonomy, planning interventions that do not entirely depend, but can benefit, from cooperation at the larger Danube regional level.

Among these areas can be mentioned the preservation of environmental resources, biodiversity, landscape; development of renewable energy sources, increase of accessibility and connectivity, reduction of localized pollution sources, promotion of smart innovation initiatives.

Last, there are areas of competitive interaction, where the single territories in the Danube regions are at least in part “in competition” among them, because the local actors aim to the same markets niches or to the same global partners.

Two examples of this type of interaction can be those of: the attraction of thematic tourism (cultural tourism, natural tourism), the attraction of foreign direct investments.

In the eligible area the main potentials of action can be identified in the fields of environment protection, SMART innovation, accessibility, renewable energy. Most of these areas can aim to a synergic interaction within the Danube Region.

In some other areas, especially the promotion of tourism along the Danube River, the development of transport services, multimodal hubs the promotion of innovation and research clusters, a cooperative action should be established, in order to maximize synergy and avoid negative impact of competition.

The main results of the territorial analysis are summarized below:

### **Social and demographic structure and dynamics**

- Similar number of inhabitants on the two sides of the border;
- Population unequally distributed, with low density in rural areas and in the mountains, higher density in plains in the North and West Banat Plains;
- Decline of population main structural process in the whole eligible area, all Serbian territories and most of Romanian losing population, often more than 10% in a decade;
- Serious aging of the population as a consequence of emigration and natural decline, especially in the rural areas, and in the South East;
- Just one large urban pole, Timișoara, inside the area. Two urban poles in Serbia very close to the edge of the eligible area (Novi Sad and Belgrade);
- Most of the regions predominantly rural, in the South East remote rural, especially considering the limited access to large urban poles;
- Numerous ethnic minorities in the area, large communities of Hungarians in the North, Roma communities present in all areas. Romanian, communities especially in the Centre and South of eligible area in Serbia, and Serbian communities in Timiș and Caraș Severin counties;
- Natural demographic trend is negative in most areas, with limited positive trends in Timiș county;

- Most of the migration flows of job seekers are directed outside of the eligible area, limited share of migration is directed to metropolitan areas in the eligible area in Romania.

### **Economic structure and dynamic**

- The economic development of the whole area, measured with the GDP per capita, is close to the national levels, but the average is the result of strong dualism, especially between North and South East, on both sides of the border;
- In Romania, in Timiș the GDP/pc is almost double than the national average, in Caraș Severin and Mehedinți GDP /pc is 30% lower;
- In Serbia, in the Vojvodina autonomous province the level of GDP is almost at the level of Serbia average, while in Braničevski and Borski 40% lower. Among the Banat districts in Voivodina, the North lags behind the others in terms of GDP per capita;
- In the North, the growth pole of Timiș county generates an impact that extends beyond the borders, producing a potential for cross border interactions;
- In the centre, and south east, the comparable level of GDP and the similar structure more bilateral partnership than unilateral flows.

### **Regarding the economic sectors:**

- Agriculture presents a very dualistic quality and quantity distribution of resources, and levels of productivity, between the plains of Banat and Timiș and Carpathian Mountains area;
- Mining: in metals, oil represents a historical specialization in the area, it experienced a sharp decline in the last decades because of structural factors, quality and quantity of reserves, and international competition of new producers;
- Energy: very large hydro electrical power capacity on the Danube centrals, and some small plants in the other rivers, some potential of development in renewable resources, in particular biomass in the central and south eastern areas.
- Manufacture: traditional productions in large part of the eligible area; Strong growth of innovative sectors in recent years, due also to strong FDI flows both in Serbian and Romanian regions.
- Services: Basic services in health, education, utilities commerce, transport, present in the area. Advanced services strongly concentrated in the urban poles in Timiș County in Romania, smaller centres, often connected to the leading institutions in Serbia

## **The labour market**

- Activity rate per sector: Strong dualism between North eligible area (labour concentrated in manufacturing, lower agricultural activity) and the Centre East (labour concentrated in agriculture);
- In the eligible area lower employment rate than in the national average; lower rate of activity;
- Strong disparities inside the eligible area, between Timiș County, with very low unemployment and high activity rates, and other counties and districts, with higher unemployment in the South-East;
- Strong dualism across the border in the north, with full employment in Romania, and high unemployment in the neighbour district;
- In the labour market limited differences among women and men unemployment rate.

## **Social inclusion and poverty:**

- The area is affected by poverty and social exclusion of large shares of the population, concentrated in the rural areas, and in the mountainous areas.
- Main factors of social exclusion and poverty risk seem unemployment, and capacity to access basic services due to remoteness.
- Significant higher unemployment rates among young active population in the rural areas, and among Roma minorities.

## **Health care services**

- In the eligible area the availability of health care services is relatively homogenous, with one exception that is that of Timisoara, where the concentration of health care service centres is close to the double than in the rest of the eligible area.
- University centres of Medicine are located In Timisoara, inside the eligible area, and in Novi Sad, Belgrade, Niš at the edge of the eligible area in Serbia.
- In recent years an intensive growth of private centres for health care services, including private hospitals, have been developing all over the eligible area, in particular in the main urban centres.
- This process could lead to a larger disparity in the accessibility of health care services among urban and rural population, and active and non-active groups (elders, disadvantaged groups).

## **Public Transport and ICT infrastructures**

- Eligible area well connected to main European Networks, central position in the Rhine-Danube TEN-T European core network corridor;
- Disparities in the accessibility of international network among the eligible area;
- Areas close to Belgrade and to Timiș much better accessible from international networks than the others;
- Areas in the plains are better connected than those peripheral and in the mountain area; density and quality of the local transport network lower than the national average;
- Low speed of public transport services reduces accessibility of rural and remote areas;
- Accessibility of border crossings sufficient, but poor quality of infrastructure;
- Interconnection of eligible area is limited by infrastructure quality and distances;

## **Environmental resources and infrastructure**

- Divide of land use and land cover with agriculture dominating in the North-West and mountain and forested areas dominating in the South-East, with punctual foci of human activity (e.g. mines);
- Rich natural environment and cultural heritage with many small and dispersed attractions which is at pressure either by abandonment in peripheral areas or by overexploitation in the plains;
- Large number of NATURA 2000 and Natural Protected Areas covering a large part of the programme area;
- Rivers and water bodies mostly heavily modified and with weak ecological potential burdened by agricultural, industrial and municipal discharges;
- Relative low level of service of water supply and sewage treatment especially in the rural areas and difficulties to overcome this by conventional approaches;
- Environmental Infrastructure, is often obsolete, underperforming and with limited perspective for financing beyond rudimentary operation and maintenance;
- Municipal waste treatment is nascent and is relying in simple landfills or uncontrolled dumps;
- Air pollution in the urban centres as a consequence of traffic and poor industrial emissions standards;



- Environmental hotspots and risks, especially due to past and present mining and industrial activity, in many cases in remote areas with poor civil protection mechanisms;
- Flood risks (fluvial and flash floods) in different parts of the Programme area;
- Flood awareness systems and disaster protection improving and connecting to European networks but still poor at the local level.

## **Tourism**

- Relevant potential for various types of tourism on both sides of the border, based on natural and historical resources, and on business and cultural activities that attract tourism demand;
- Ecotourism in the protected areas, cultural tourism attracted by historical heritage, business tourism generated by growing international integration of industrial clusters and business poles, present the highest potential;
- Resources are sparse on the territory, producing a potential for integrated tourism networks, more than for spot tourism attractions. All tourism attractors present a potential for integration in cross border networks;
- Accommodation infrastructure is underexploited, signalling the need for soft investments in coordinated actions for increasing attractiveness and national and international demand;
- International connections are adequate for tourism travels to the area, but the quality of local transport infrastructure and services is poor, constraining the development of coordinated offers and cross border initiatives;

## **Education, research and innovation**

- The educational system is experiencing intensive structural changes in both countries;
- Basic primary and secondary education quantitatively adequate in the eligible area, limited differences in pre-primary education, more developed in Romania;
- The eligible area presents an unequal distribution of higher education and research poles;
- Private schools are growing in both countries;
- In the North of the eligible area, in Romania counties, are located many university poles, with a national and international potential;
- In Serbia there are no large university poles in the eligible area, but many are located close to the edge in the main urban poles, accessible to the local population;
- Many research centres in the Romanian area, fewer on the Serbian side.

- Common needs of improvement of the effectiveness and quality results of education;
- Common needs of improvement of the access to education for disadvantaged groups;

### **Lessons learned in the former programme period**

The specific objectives of the former programme are addressed through 3 thematic Priority Axes:

- PA 1 “Economic and Social Development” is directly linked to Specific Objective 1;
- PA 2 “Environment and Emergency Preparedness” is directly linked to Specific Objective 2;
- PA 3 “Promoting People to People Exchanges”

According to the feedback from the stakeholders, the Programme’s Strategy is still consistent with the socio-economic environment of the cross-border area and both the logic of intervention and needs remain valid. After the assessment considering the structural and economic changes happened in the programme implementation period, the assumptions of the SWOT analysis have largely remained the same, marked by the economic downturn.

However, according to the survey carried out during the Programme evaluation exercise, the programme stakeholders consider the strategy too broadly defined, lacking of focus on specific development priorities for the area.

Programme Stakeholders also pointed out the need of stronger coordination with the central administrative level in each country and with the MAs of other IPA Programmes covering overlapping eligible regions (Romania - Serbia, Hungary - Serbia and Bulgaria - Serbia) and with the European macro-regional strategies relevant to the cross-border area<sup>7</sup>.

The territorial distribution of projects shows that all counties and districts have been involved, in both countries at least one application was submitted from most of the municipalities.

A concentration of project applications in Timiș County and in Centre and South Banat, can be observed, both in terms of number of applications and in terms of total cost of projects. However, the relative distribution of project applications, compared to the population, proves that the Caraș Severin and Mehedinți counties have been even more active than the Timiș County, and the Borski district, has been more active than the two Banat districts.

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<sup>7</sup> Evaluation Report Romania-Republic of Serbia Programme 2012

The results of the two calls for projects carried out during the 2007-2013 programme implementation proved that the target groups generated a large number of projects addressing all priorities.

A slightly lower performance has been observed for the priority 2, for Environment and Emergency Preparedness. According to the stakeholders, the main reason is due to the difficulty of NGOs to access this priority.

The second call, dedicated to the priority 2 dedicated to EUSDR, led to the approval of 6 projects on environmental protection and emergency management. However, the implementation of these projects is experiencing some difficulties, due to the administrative complexity associated to the large budget and the technical content.

On the basis of the lessons learned in the current period, the partners expect a confirmation of most of the objectives of the current period and an effective generation of joint projects. Most stakeholders do expect a stronger focus on concrete results, and the identification of actions capable to generate a permanent impact in the eligible area.

The common aim for the simplification of management procedures also emerged, in particular for shortening the time length of the evaluation, selection and contracting procedures.

More detailed notes on the current programming experience are presented below, in the framework of the identification of strategic options.

### **The SWOT analysis**

Based on the Territorial Analysis (TA) and the consultation among potential beneficiaries and stakeholders, a SWOT analysis of the area has been developed. The SWOT focuses on those issues that are relevant for the identification of the development challenges that can be addressed by the CBC programme. It is clustered in 6 main areas in accordance to the Territorial Analysis.

Sector	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Social and demographic structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Presence of urban poles accessible to a significant part of the population</li> <li>➤ Equal number of population on the two sides of the border in the eligible area, facilitating balanced partnership</li> <li>➤ Long history of Romanian-Serbian cooperation</li> <li>➤ Tradition of respect and coexistence among ethnic groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Large part of population living in small settlements scattered in remote rural areas, which not being able to compete with the larger urban poles, lose population</li> <li>➤ High share of population at risk of poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ EU support for social inclusive growth</li> <li>➤ Growing social and cultural ties between RO and RS</li> <li>➤ Integration in the macro regional framework of EUSDR.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continuing aging of population</li> <li>➤ Relative attractiveness of metropolitan areas, also due to EU integration, pulling out emigration and accelerating marginalization of rural areas</li> <li>➤ Declining population, especially of young active people</li> </ul>
<b>Economy, SMEs development,</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Presence of dynamic economic poles in the area</li> <li>➤ Traditional industrial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong dualism in economic development, between more advanced districts (Timiș, Banat) and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Growth of industrial and business clusters inside the eligible area and at the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Uncertainties in the global and national economic scenario leading to decline of investments</li> </ul>

Sector	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Labor Market</b>	<p>presence with local “ecosystems” operating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attractiveness and capacity for FDIs, continuing after global crisis</li> <li>➤ Large availability of local resources, in agricultural land, mineral reserves, renewable energy resources</li> </ul>	<p>others, in industrial sectors, SMEs development, services,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Low access to basic services in rural and remote areas</li> <li>➤ High level of unemployment in lagging behind districts and counties</li> </ul>	<p>edge, promoting business and facilitating access to services and jobs of resident population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investments supported by IPA II strategy in Serbia and Cohesion Policy in Romania offering potential synergies with cross border initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>(national and FDI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Persistence of high unemployment rates, due to weak economic growth at national level</li> </ul>
<b>Transport infrastructure , Accessibility, CBC connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strategic location on the Trans-European Transport Network and its core network corridors.</li> <li>➤ Good accessibility from larger centers to national and international destinations, due to adjacent national roads, rail and airport connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poor quality of local and intraregional transport infrastructures for moving within the eligible area</li> <li>➤ Severe limitations to accessibility in rural and mountainous areas</li> <li>➤ Heterogeneous service level of border crossing points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New infrastructure and services developed in the EU corridors network</li> <li>➤ Soft technologies for the development, operating and monitoring of more efficient transport services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Financial crisis limiting capacity of local administration to maintain local transport infrastructure</li> <li>➤ Risks for security from increasing illegal traffic flows (illegal migration, smuggling, especially along the fluvial routes)</li> </ul>

Sector	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good availability of border crossings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poor efficiency of local transport services</li> <li>➤ Poor development of common transport monitoring systems on the Danube</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Advanced transport monitoring infrastructure on the Danube on the Romanian side</li> </ul>	
<b>Environment, Natural and cultural resources, Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Low levels of pollution in peripheral areas of scenic beauty</li> <li>➤ Major natural resources for tourism development: national and natural parks, thermal springs, forests and areas of outstanding natural beauty</li> <li>➤ Striking cultural, ethnic and natural diversity, generating attractiveness for business and tourism</li> <li>➤ Low population density and low pressure in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Environmental hotspots and risks, especially due to past and present mining and industrial activity</li> <li>➤ Obsolete environmental infrastructure</li> <li>➤ Disaster protection and preparedness systems improving but are still weak especially at the local level.</li> <li>➤ Flood risks (fluvial and flash floods) in various parts of the eligible area</li> <li>➤ Dispersion of tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ European strategies for environmental protection in macro regions, offering additional support to local strategies (Danube region)</li> <li>➤ International proofed models of voluntary local disaster response and preparedness systems with low overall costs available Europe-wide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Demographic decline of marginal areas increasing risk of environmental degradation due to abandonment of settlements and industrial areas</li> <li>➤ Climate change leading to increased extreme events: floods, forest fires, droughts etc</li> <li>➤ Risks emerging outside of the eligible area, e.g. pollution upstream in Danube, which can have severe impacts in the area</li> </ul>

Sector	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
	naturally attractive and remote areas	<p>attractors in small poles in a large territory, limiting the capacity to attract international demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Insufficient exploitation of existing tourism infrastructure, leading to low productivity and non-sustainability of private investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Growth of new models of tourisms attracted by local resources. (Eco tourism, rural tourism, business tourism, etc.).</li> <li>➤ International networks promoting integrated offers (e.g. Green ways along Danube)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Shrinkage of public budgets and lack of funds for environmental infrastructure renewal and reclamation of brown-fields</li> <li>➤ Increasing competition by National and European touristic destinations</li> </ul>
<b>Education, R&amp;D, Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poles of advanced research institutes and Universities in the eligible area and at the edge of the eligible area(e.g. Timis, Belgrade)</li> <li>➤ Existence of poles of excellence and success stories, (e.g.Timiş, Vršac) in area of RTD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Low rates of university education attainments among adult population in some districts.</li> <li>➤ Weak performance of primary and secondary educational systems which impacts on the quality of education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Involvement of Vojvodina and Timiş in European strategies for smart specialization</li> <li>➤ Danube region strategy generating opportunities of partnerships for innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Declining student population due to negative demographic trends, reducing availability of educational services, especially in remote areas.</li> <li>➤ Financial crisis leading to reduction of investments in public education in remote areas which are not</li> </ul>

Sector	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unequal access to ICT, digital divide in remote rural areas</li> <li>➤ Poor availability of educational services, especially in remote areas</li> </ul>		attractive for private entities
<b>Local institutions and civil society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong involvement of civil society groups in cross border partnerships</li> <li>➤ Existing private and public networks, offering the possibility of cooperation in several thematic areas, education and culture, etc.)</li> <li>➤ Tradition of cross border exchanges in the past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Administrative burdens and limited capacities in public institutions limiting cross border interactions</li> <li>➤ Difficulties and delays in implementation of projects under the current programming period, creating obstacles for new partnerships and project generation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improving economic ties between Romania and Republic of Serbia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Low level of support from the national authorities or no national policies to support the creation of cross-border partnerships</li> </ul>



## Identification of the main challenges and untapped potentials

Based on the findings of the SWOT several strategic responses were formulated using the “forward linkages” method. This method identifies four types of responses as outlined below:

- **growth accelerating/expansionary responses**, combining strengths and opportunities and aiming e.g. at socio-economic growth acceleration and the exploitation of comparative advantages;
- **structures adjustment responses**, combining weaknesses and opportunities, aiming at the engagement of structural deficits and the sustainability of socio-economic growth;
- **stabilization responses**, combining strengths and threats, aiming at neutralizing or compensating negative trends and processes beyond the control of the region;
- **preventive responses**, combining threats and weaknesses, aiming at the precaution and mitigation of negative developments which affect economic growth.

### Basic policy formulation based on the SWOT findings

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Growth accelerating/ expansionary responses	Adjustment responses
Threats	Stabilization responses	Preventive responses

Source: own illustration

CBC programmes, being territorial and integrative, usually embraces a combination of responses. However the method described above has been used for the systemic definition and delimitation of main challenges and untapped potentials used as a basis for the strategy to be defined.

### 1.1.2. Justification for the selection of thematic priorities

Table 1

Selected thematic priority	Analysis of relevance for the programme and Justification for selection
a. Promoting Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border	The Thematic Priority is highly relevant since it combines important conditions for the stabilisation of the population and the realisation of sustainable development by addressing attractive employment opportunities, provision of health and social services and inclusive society. Cross-border activity in these fields has been increasing in the last years and this trend is expected to accelerate.
b. Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	<p>The Thematic Priority is highly relevant since the protection of the environment and the elimination and mitigation of existing environmental hotspots and hazards and the adaptation for new risks is considered an absolute prerequisite for any development plan.</p> <p>Environmental protection and risk management are by definition cross-border.</p>
c. Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructure	The Thematic Priority is highly relevant since functioning, efficient and environmental friendly mobility and transport infrastructure as well as public utility infrastructure are absolute prerequisites for an inclusive, attractive and balanced programme area. The CBC dimension is underlined by the need for improved cross-border concentricity and by the need to adjust infrastructure to performance standards, available funds and demographic change.
d. Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	The Thematic Priority is highly relevant since the natural and cultural potential of the area is a significant comparative advantage of the area and an important development asset stretching across the border. CBC projects can help achieve critical mass

<b>Selected thematic priority</b>	<b>Analysis of relevance for the programme and Justification for selection</b>
	and demonstrate immediate effects.

#### **The priorities of the programme:**

According to the results of the analysis and the identified needs and challenges, and based on the lesson learned from the current programme, four priorities have been established, each of one connected to one thematic objective:

- 1- Employment promotion and basic services strengthening for an inclusive growth (thematic objective a)**
- 2- Environmental protection and risk management (thematic objective b)**
- 3- Sustainable mobility and accessibility (thematic objective c)**
- 4- Attractiveness for sustainable tourism (thematic objective d)**

**Expected contribution of the chosen priorities to the objectives of EU 2020 Agenda.**

## Appraisal of relation between challenges and needs and objectives for smart, sustainable and integrative growth

European targets	Current progress in RO	Current progress in RS <sup>8</sup>	Current status in the RO -RS programme area	Contribution by the strategy of the programme
75% of the population aged 20-64 to be employed	63.8%, (2012)	45,3 <sup>9</sup> (2012)	Overall the situation is similar to the national levels in the eligible area. At county/district level there are big inequalities between Timis county and Mehedinti in RO and Branicevski and South Banat in RS.	Significant.  Priority 1 promotes employment, joint actions for the efficiency and access to labour market by disadvantaged groups
3% of GDP to be invested in R&D	0.48% (2011)	0,73 % <sup>10</sup>	In the eligible area the situation is similar to the national levels, lower in the districts/ counties lagging behind, stronger in Timis county, with the highest concentration of research centres	Indirect but significant.  Priority 2 and 3 environment and mobility promote innovation projects that will catalyze investments in R& D.
Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with 20% (compared to 1990 level) <sup>11</sup>	51.84%	22.19% (1990-1998)	Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced on the one side based on the population and economic activities trends. However major contributors such obsolete industrial complexes and intense agriculture are operating.	Indirect but significant.  Priority 3 promotes innovation for sustainable transport systems, in particular water ways in the Danube system

<sup>8</sup> Serbia, as candidate country has not established quantitative targets, current progress in the strategic areas are described according to available information, with direct and secondary, indirect indicators.

<sup>9</sup> NIS Labour Force Survey 2012 published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia page 15

<sup>10</sup> World bank Data <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GB.XPD.RSDV.GD.ZS>

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, (2014), SERBIA 2013 PROGRESS REPORT Accompanying the document COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014, Brussels Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, (2010), Initial National Communication of the Republic of Serbia under the United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change, Belgrade

European targets	Current progress in RO	Current progress in RS <sup>8</sup>	Current status in the RO -RS programme area	Contribution by the strategy of the programme
20% of total energy consumption from renewable energy sources (RES)	20.79% (2012)	26.5% (2011)	Large hydro-electric power units exist on the Danube, shared between the two countries and produce a significant share of the total production from renewable sources, and of the total electricity production. The Romanian units produce 35%-40% of Romania's RES; the Serbian units produce 20-25% of total Serbian electricity).	Significant.  Direct effects due to priority 2 actions, in Energy efficiency, usage of geothermal hot springs, water, sun and wind power.
Reduction of 10 Mtoe (20%) in the primary energy consumption	16.6% (2012)	-15% (1990-1998), stabilised trend	Primary energy consumption partially reduced due to population trends and sporadic building and industry energy efficiency measures. However new lifestyles increase the per capita consumption.	Indirect effect.  Projects under priority 2 and 4 dedicated to improvement of energy efficiency
Less than 10% of children should leave school at an early age	17.4% (2012)	According to UN surveys 91% of children attended primary schools in Serbia in 2007, 78% attended secondary schools.	In the eligible area the access to primary schools is similar to what observed at national level, in both countries. A significantly lower percentage could be observed among Roma children <sup>12</sup> .	Direct effects due to the impact on disadvantaged groups and poverty of projects under priority 1.
At least 40% of 30-34-year-olds	21.8% (2012)	6.5% of the total population has a third grade, 4.5%	In the eligible area the situation is relatively worse than the national average, especially in the most lagging behind areas and for Roma minority.	Indirect effects due to the increase of demand of high profile jobs in innovative sectors: environmental technologies, cultural services.

<sup>12</sup> World data on Education UN International bureau of education. 2014. <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/services/online-materials/world-data-on-education.html>

European targets	Current progress in RO	Current progress in RS <sup>8</sup>	Current status in the RO -RS programme area	Contribution by the strategy of the programme
should complete third level education.EU average 24.285% in 2008. <sup>13</sup>		have higher schools degree population aged 25-64, with tertiary ed.: 12.47%		
20 Million (580,000 in RO) less people should be at risk of poverty or exclusion (compared to 2008 levels)	240,000 (2011)	People at risk of poverty 17.9% in 2008 to 24.6% in 2012. Poverty risk rate in 2008 (17.9% vs 23.4%) in 2012 (24.6% vs 22.6%). <sup>14</sup>	The problem of poverty and social exclusion intensified in Serbia in the last years influenced by the world economic crisis. The situation in the eligible area is similar to the national situation. The majority of poor citizens is concentrated in rural areas. A reduction of poverty rates in Central Serbia between 2007 and 2010 can be observed, partially due to revision of meta data definition	Indirect effects due to the improvement of living conditions and job opportunities created in priority axes 1, 3, 4

<sup>13</sup> ERAWATCH Platform on Research and Innovation policies and systems  
[http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country\\_pages/rs/country?section=ResearchPerformers&subsection=HigherEducationInstitutions](http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/rs/country?section=ResearchPerformers&subsection=HigherEducationInstitutions)

<sup>14</sup> [http://silk.stat.rs/Documents/PD10\\_366\\_engl.pdf](http://silk.stat.rs/Documents/PD10_366_engl.pdf) and Government of the Republic of Serbia

“Monitoring Social Inclusion in Serbia” <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Monitoring-Social-Inclusion-in-Serbia-Aug-2012-ENG-revizija.pdf>

## 1.2. Justification for the financial allocation

The financial allocation to each Priority was defined taking into consideration some basic criteria, and using the information and feedback received from the consultation with the stakeholders:

- The proportionality to the challenges and needs emerged in the analysis of the eligible area and addressed by each priority;
- The project generation potential, estimated on the basis of the lessons learned from the previous programming period;
- The expected financial size of the operations proposed, taking into account the technical content, the physical size, the territory targeted, the number and/ or the typology of target groups considered;
- The project ideas and proposals collected during the consultations for programming with stakeholders and programme partners, especially for strategic projects;

The financial allocation per Priority Axis is as follows:

- **Priority Axis 1 (TP a) Employment promotion and services for an inclusive growth** - the planned IPA allocation to Priority Axis 1 is € 15.460.624 EUR, corresponding to 20,64% of the total IPA funds.

The allocation is based on three main justifications:

- The local stakeholders proved a strong capacity to generate projects during the previous programming period, in the fields of the cooperation for social inclusion projects, health care services, cultural cooperation, and the experiences will be surely capitalized in the next programming period;
- Some of the actions proposed may include investments in infrastructure and equipment, with costs larger than those for soft actions;
- The actions proposed can produce relevant impact in all communities in the eligible areas, and the number of projects proposals expected is very large;

The financial allocation to this priority is in line with the emphasis given within the eligible area and also with the demand from the base as expressed during the period 2007-2013 and within the consultations during programming.

- **Priority Axis 2 (TP b): Environmental protection and risk management** the planned IPA allocation to Priority Axis 2 is € 17.977.500 EUR, corresponding to 24% of the total IPA funds.

The allocation is based on three main justifications:

- Some of the actions proposed may include investments in infrastructure and equipment, with costs larger than those for soft actions;
- The partners have already produced a large portfolio of strategic projects ideas which include investments in infrastructure and technologies;
- The Priority Axis can support some strategic actions that will be particularly relevant for the coordination with the EUSDR;

The financial allocation within this Priority Axis is justified by the actions envisaged in the pursuit of Specific Objective and also by the potentially cost-intensive outputs under Specific Objective.

- **Priority Axis 3 (TP c): Sustainable mobility and accessibility** the planned IPA allocation to Priority Axis 3 is € 17.977.500 EUR, corresponding to 24% of the total IPA funds.

The allocation is based on three main justifications:

- During the previous programming period the number of projects implemented in these fields was relatively lower than in other areas.
- However, the partners have produced a large portfolio of strategic projects ideas, which include investments in infrastructures, project designs for large infrastructures, regeneration of existing infrastructures.
- The Priority can support some strategic actions that will be particularly relevant for the coordination with the EUSDR strategy.

This financial allocation reflects the expected size of actions facing the needs to support

- **Priority Axis 4 (TP d) Attractiveness for sustainable tourism:** the planned IPA allocation to Priority Axis 4 is € 16.000.000 EUR, corresponding to 21,36% of the total IPA funds.

The allocation is lower than the average of the 4 priorities, based on three main justifications, that lead to the expectation of a large number of projects with a lower average cost than in other areas:

- During the previous programming period a significant number of projects were implemented in these fields, but the average costs of these projects was smaller than in other areas, especially because most of the projects consisted of “soft” activities.
- The Priority can support some actions that will be particularly relevant for the coordination with the EUSDR, but these actions most probably will consist of “soft” activities, rather than investments in infrastructure.



- **Priority Axis 5: technical assistance.** The allocation for technical assistance corresponds to the 10% of the total allocation.

The allocation is based on two main justifications:

- The experience of the current programming period, which proves that programme partners and potential beneficiaries need a strong support for the generation and implementation of projects, in order to avoid ineligible costs and to increase the overall absorption rate.
- The strategy for the new programme has identified ambitious objectives, including strategic projects and a strong coordination with regional and EU strategies (EUSDR).

The overall Programme budget comprises of **74.906.248** EUR (IPA contribution), respectively **88.124.996** EUR (total budget) as described in section 3.

**Table 1 Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme**

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>Union support (in EUR)</b>	<b>Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme</b>	<b>Thematic priorities</b>	<b>Result indicators corresponding to the thematic priority</b>
1	15,460,624	20.64	A	PA1-RI1, PA1-RI2, PA1-RI3
2	17,977,500	24	B	PA2-RI1, PA2-RI2, , PA2-RI3
3	17,977,500	24	C	PA3-RI1, PA3-RI2, PA3-RI3
4	16,000,000	21.36	D	PA4-RI1, PA4-RI2, PA4-RI3
5	7,490,624	10	TA	PA5-RI1, PA5-RI2

## 2. SECTION 2 - PRIORITY AXES

### SECTION 2.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES (OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE)

#### 2.1. Priority Axis 1

##### 2.1.1. Title and funding source

<i>ID of the priority axis</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Title of the priority axis</i>	<b>Employment promotion and basic services strengthening for an inclusive growth</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	

##### 2.1.2. Fund, calculation basis for Union support and justification of the calculation basis choice

<i>Fund</i>	IPA
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or</i>	Total eligible expenditure.

<i>public eligible expenditure)</i>	
<i>Justification of the calculation basis choice</i>	In order to promote and equally finance the non-public eligible sector.

### 2.1.3. The specific objectives of the thematic priority and expected results

<i>ID</i>	<b>1-1 "Employment and labour mobility"</b>
<i>Specific objective</i>	To enhance the potential of the programme area for an inclusive growth, improving across border access to the labour market and employment opportunities in the programme eligible area.
<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>The expected results from action of promotion of an efficient and inclusive labour market are the following:</p> <p>The active population will experience better access to the labour market, receiving more information on job opportunities.</p> <p>Adult training opportunities and assistance from professional associations will be offered in coordinated cross border networks. Tailored assistance for the access to job opportunities offered to young people completing educational cycle, young people not employed, not involved in training or educational activities.</p> <p>Disadvantaged groups (health and social disadvantage, ethnic minorities), isolated communities in marginal areas will be offered support for the access to the labour market.</p> <p>Promotional actions for the access to the labour market among young active population, disadvantaged groups, unemployed, returning migrants from western countries due to the global crisis will be available.</p> <p>Cooperation across the border will be established among public services, NGOs, local administrations for joint actions in support of the labour market.</p>

<b>ID</b>	<b>1-2 "Health and social infrastructure"</b>
<i>Specific objective</i>	To enhance the potential of the programme area for an inclusive growth, based on the improvement of quality of life to all residents on the two sides of the border through joint cross border actions for the access to modern and efficient health care services, social services, services supporting access to primary education.
<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>Improvement of quality and accessibility of basic services, exploiting cross-border synergies and removing bottlenecks and constraints generated by remoteness and technological gaps.</p> <p>The resident population will have access to improved services, with more efficient structures and more accessible networks of services in the sectors of health care, and social services, including cultural and sport facilities. Vulnerable communities, due to remoteness or demographic structure will have ensured new services adapted to their specific needs.</p> <p>Disadvantaged groups will experience improved access to social services with specific actions of information and assistance. Cross border networks and platforms will be established in order to exploit synergies, and to share strategies for common needs of social inclusion. Cross border mobility of active population will be facilitated, with shared benefits to the local economic systems.</p>

<b>ID</b>	<b>1-3 "Social and cultural inclusion"</b>
<i>Specific objective</i>	To enhance the potential of the programme area for an inclusive growth, increasing cultural and social integration in the cross-border area and reducing the impact of constraints due to remoteness and marginalisation of border areas.
<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with</i>	<p>The expected results from the actions for the creation of infrastructure and networks for social and cultural inclusion are the following:</p> <p>Creation of infrastructures for social and cultural inclusion.</p> <p>Establishment of partnerships for the promotion of a lively cultural environment, integrated across the border, ensuring integration of ethnic groups and inclusion of minorities and disadvantaged groups.</p>

<i>Union support</i>	<p>Support to the access to tertiary education offered to young population by networks of tertiary education centres established across the border.</p> <p>Resident population will have access to cultural and social services integrated in cross border networks, facilitating cultural integration of ethnic groups, and cross border interaction.</p> <p>Disadvantaged groups will have opportunities to experience cultural services, with the support of innovative instruments, like social enterprises, non-profit groups. NGOs and non-profit local bodies active in cultural services on the two sides of the border will share good practices and innovative solutions for the improvement of the quality of cultural environment.</p>
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#### **2.1.4. Elements of other thematic priorities added to the priority axis**

Not applicable

#### **2.1.5. Actions to be supported under the thematic priority (by thematic priority)**

2.1.5.1. A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

<i>Thematic Priority</i>	<p>Promoting Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of returning migrants' communities and vulnerable groups; investments for public employment services; support investments in public health and social services.</p>
<p>The indicative actions to be supported under the thematic priority a), Priority Axis 1:</p> <p><b>Employment and labour mobility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up of joint initiatives and smart growth mechanisms including</li> </ul>	

cross border networks for the identification of potentials of employment, including in the innovative sectors and the removal of obstacles to the access to adequate education, training and ultimately to the labor market by the target group including disadvantaged groups.

- Set up of joint initiatives, including integrated services targeting young people, to promote their access to the labour market;
- Set up of cross border initiatives for the capitalization of potentials and facilitation of cross border mobility in the local labor markets.
- Joint initiatives, cooperation, exchange of information/experience, coordination of activities and services among professional associations for the promotion of employment, vocational training and entrepreneurial initiatives, especially among young unemployed, women, disadvantaged groups.
- Development of cross-border services for adult trainings, assistance to job seekers, assistance to returning emigrants for the re-integration in the local labour market.

#### **Health and social infrastructure:**

- Set up of cross-border platforms and networks for planning and provision of health and social services, targeting also remote communities and disadvantaged groups.
- Joint studies and researches for the identification of innovative technological solutions for the organization of effective networks for basic services provision
- Set up of monitoring services for the identification of needs and the quantification of demands for new social and health services generated by demographic and social dynamics, like aging, and internal migration flows and returning migrants.
- Development and modernization (including procurement of equipment) of public social services and centres;
- Construction, rehabilitation, modernization (including procurement of equipment) of health centres, hospitals and health services improvement;

**Social and cultural inclusion:**

- Set up of cross-border frameworks, and networks for the strengthening of the cross-border cultural exchange;
- Design cross-border actions for social, educational and cultural inclusion through innovative solutions such as social enterprises, voluntary organisations, special interest groups etc.
- Creation of partnerships for joint actions for the promotion of access to tertiary education, through information, mentoring and tutoring services offered specially to students completing secondary education.
- Investments in infrastructure and equipment for cross-border actions for sport, education and cultural activities, to facilitate and promote social inclusion.
- Joint actions for a better participation of all social groups, actors and users in the design and delivery of cultural services, educational services, childhood education, and services of general interest.
- Set up models and test pilot actions for the prevention of early school leaving, including among disadvantaged groups.
- Set-up of joint planning groups for cooperation between public services organizations;

**Target groups of the Priority Axis:**

- Population living in the eligible area;
- Unemployed, especially young people and women;
- Children and youth living in the eligible area;
- Disadvantaged groups.

**Indicative types of beneficiaries**

- Regional and local public authorities (County Councils, Local Councils/ Municipalities, etc.) and other public bodies;
- Offices - branches of National/Regional Public Authorities active on the themes of the priority in the eligible area (registered and functioning in the eligible area);
- Health care institutions;
- Educational institutions;



- Non - profit bodies and NGOs;
- Religious organizations, legally established according to the national legislation in force;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Museums, cultural, sports, touristic institutions, etc;

#### 2.1.5.2. Guiding principles for the selection of operations

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Promoting Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of migrants' communities and vulnerable groups (economic, health, social factors); investments for public employment services; support investments in public health and social services.
<p>The selection of projects will be carried out following a standardized assessment procedure using the following sets of criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic coherence:</b> this criterion examines the coherence and contribution of each project proposal to the relevant Specific Objective addressed the contribution to the envisaged results and the overall coherence of planned activities with the indicative types of actions.</li> </ul> <p>Further the cross-border added value of the operation, its territorial dimension and the relevance of the partnership will also be assessed in this context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coherence with state aid rules:</b> any state aid that might be provided under this programme shall comply with the procedural and substantive State aid rules applicable at the time when the public support is granted.</li> <li>• </li> <li>• <b>Operational quality:</b> this criterion examines the design of the project proposal in relation to clarity and coherence of the operational objectives, activities and means, feasibility, efficiency, communication about the project and its results, potential for uptake and embedment into operative procedures of the partners involved.</li> </ul>	

- **Compliance with horizontal principles:** this criterion examines the consideration from the side of the project of the Programme horizontal principles and the demonstration of their integration and advancement within the project proposal intervention logic. The strategic coherence criterion basically examines the relevance of the project proposal, hence it retains primacy over the other two criteria.

**Strategic projects (submitted):** strategic projects will be selected through an open transparent procedure, based on specific selection criteria that will be defined according to the priority objectives.

The detailed assessment criteria will be laid down and made available to potential applicants in the calls for proposals documentation that will be approved by the programme bodies.

#### 2.1.5.3. Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Promoting Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of spec' communities and vulnerable groups; investments for public employment services; support investments in public health and social services.
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	Not applicable
No financial instruments will be used	

### 2.1.6. Common and programme specific indicators

(point (b) (ii) and (b) (iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and Article 2(2) of the Regulation (EU) 231/2014.)

#### 2.1.6.1. Priority axis result indicators (programme specific)

**Table 1: Programme specific result indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) <sup>15</sup>	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
PA1-RI1	Active population more satisfied of the access to labour market. (Innovative services assisting job seekers permanently established, information on job opportunities available in marginal areas, disadvantaged groups receiving assistance and information about job opportunities through information points and dedicated tutors.)	Ranking on qualitative scale (1-7)	3.4	2015	4.25	Survey among stakeholders. Association of entrepreneurs, local administrators, NGOs, educational organizations	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Indicators Targets may be qualitative or quantitative.

PA1-RI2	<p>Population experiencing access to improved basic services in health care and education.</p> <p>Innovative, high quality services permanently created and available in marginal areas, preventive care, cultural activities and services, sport activities.</p>	Ranking on qualitative scale (1-7)	3.28	2015	4.92	Survey among stakeholders. Local administrators, NGOs, health care centres, educational organizations.	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.
PA1-RI3	<p>Population experiencing lively cultural life in a cross border setting.</p> <p>Population, especially in marginal areas, accessing various opportunities for cultural and social activities, permanently offered in joint initiatives across the border.</p>	Ranking on qualitative scale (1-7)	4.45	2015	5.56	Survey among target groups. Students, Cultural Organizations, NGOs, Sport Associations.	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.

2.1.6.2. Priority axis output indicators (common or programme specific)

**Table 2 Common and programme specific output indicators**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Indicator (<i>name of indicator</i>)</b>	<b>Measurement unit</b>	<b>Target value (2023)</b>	<b>Source of data</b>	<b>Frequency of reporting</b>
<b>PA1.OI1</b>	Citizens involved in project activities in cultural, social health care services.	Units	at least 3000 <sup>16</sup>	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA1.OI2</b>	Cross border cooperation structures supported in the field of labour market.	Units	at least 20	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA1.OI3</b>	Investment in health care and social services infrastructure.	Units	at least 5	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA1.OI4</b>	Disadvantaged persons involved in projects activities.	Units	at least 2000	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA1.OI5</b>	Joint actions targeting vulnerable groups (youth, women, disabled, ethnic minorities) established for the prevention of early school leaving, for cultural inclusion	Units	at least 20	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA1.OI6</b>	Joint actions targeting smart	Units	At least 10	Monitoring system and	Annual

<sup>16</sup> To be defined in detail after final decision on financial al location and project types.

	(green) growth opportunities			projects reports	
COI_1	Population covered by improved health services	Persons	10.000	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
COI_2	Number of participants in projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders	Persons	2.000	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual

### 2.1.7. Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

**Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention**

**Table 3: Dimension 1 Intervention field**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority axis 1 - Employment promotion and services for an inclusive growth	102 Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	3,865,000
	053 Health Infrastructures	7,730,624
	109 Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	1,546,000
	116 Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups	1,546,000

	113 Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment	773,000




**Table 4: Dimension 2 Form of finance**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority 1	01 Non Repayable grant	74,906,248

**Table 5 : Dimension 3 Territory type**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

**Table 6: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

**2.1.8. A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes**

and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

<i>Priority axis</i>	Employment promotion and basic services strengthening for an inclusive growth
<p>Capacity building initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For project generation, assisting potential beneficiaries for the identification of needs among target groups, coordination of administrative activities for establishment of partnerships</li> <li>• Procedures for the establishment of cross border partnerships;</li> <li>• For procurement procedures management;</li> </ul> <p>Promotion initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To activate participation among local administrations in remote areas, NGOs;</li> <li>• To inform the potential beneficiaries on the financing opportunities from the Programme;</li> <li>• To inform target groups on outputs of the programme;</li> </ul> <p>Surveys and evaluation activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys among target groups to set baseline for the indicators and to monitor the impact of priority;</li> <li>• Programme evaluations.</li> </ul>	

## 2.2. Priority Axis 2

### 2.2.1. Title and funding source

<i>ID of the priority axis</i>	2
<i>Title of the priority axis</i>	Environmental protection and risk management

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	

### 2.2.2. Fund, calculation basis for Union support and justification of the calculation basis choice

<i>Fund</i>	IPA
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)</i>	Total eligible expenditure
<i>Justification of the calculation</i>	In order to promote and equally finance the non-public eligible sector.

<i>basis choice</i>	
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### 2.2.3. The specific objectives of the thematic priority and expected results

<i>ID</i>	<b>2-1 "Environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources"</b>
<i>Specific objective</i>	Enhancing protection and sustainable use of natural resources, with the improvement of capacities of competent bodies and promotion of cross border networks for education and studies on environmental resources.
<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>Public organizations of the two sides of the border establishing permanent networks and partnerships for the monitoring and management of protection of nature and biodiversity in order to fulfill the EU/ international legislation and obligations as concerns protection nature and biodiversity, in particular Natura 2000 network in Romania and the Emerald network in Serbia.</p> <p>Inhabitants, better informed on the quality and vulnerability of natural resources, becoming proactive subjects in the field of environmental protection.</p> <p>Education on environmental protection actions and methodologies improved, with the establishment of cross-border initiatives. Knowledge on environmental resources improved with cross border partnerships.</p> <p>Managerial and technological innovations for the environmental protection tailored to the local needs, with the exchange of knowledge and experiences in the two sides of the border and transferred to the local administrations.</p> <p>Local and national bodies actively integrated in the strategies for the protection and promotion of environmental resources in the Danube Basin Macro Region in line with the EUSDR and EU legislation</p> <p>Enhancement of the capacity of local institutions to protect and promote natural resources, through the creation or the rehabilitation of infrastructures and equipment for the provision</p>

	of innovative services in the field.
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<i>ID</i>	<b>2-2 "Environmental risks management and emergency preparedness"</b>
<i>Specific objective</i>	Enhancing preparedness and awareness to face environmental risks and emergencies, enabling cross-border interoperability and joint actions for innovative systems of environmental protection, mitigation and prevention of environmental accidents and disasters and emergency reaction.
<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>Environmental risks assessment management and emergency preparedness (e.g. related to mining and industrial activity, agricultural, industrial and municipal discharges, obsolete environmental infrastructure, uncontrolled landfills, air pollution, floods and poor civil protection).</p> <p>Improvement of cross-border interoperability of organisations and bodies involved in disaster resilience and disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.</p> <p>Increase of the capacity of local administrations and public bodies competent for early cross-border identification and assessment of the situation in case of environmental accidents and natural disasters, and joint environmental protective actions.</p> <p>Local and national bodies active in the area better integrated in the Danube Basin International systems and organizations for the management of environmental risks and emergencies.</p> <p>Improvement of the capacity of local institutions to play an active and efficient role in interventions for environmental emergencies, due to natural events or industrial accidents, through the creation or rehabilitation of infrastructure and equipment.</p>

#### 2.2.4. Elements of other thematic priorities added to the priority axis

Not applicable

## 2.2.5. Actions to be supported under the thematic priority (by thematic priority)

2.2.5.1. *A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries*

<i>Thematic Priority</i>	Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a low-carbon economy; promoting investments to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.
<p>The indicative actions to be supported under the thematic priority b), Priority Axis 2:</p> <p><b>Environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up of cross-border frameworks, platforms and networks for the exchange of experience, and the identification of needs and the joint implementation of conservation and restoration actions for entities involved or interested in environmental protection and especially in implementation of Natura 2000 and Emerald networks;</li> <li>• Development of joint training and actions, including awareness programmes and capacity and institutional development for relevant organisations and the general public, including educational institutions in the field of waste management, environmental protection and use of natural resources;</li> <li>• Establishment and enhancement of cross border partnerships and networks in the field of natural resources and especially water protection and water management, waste management, ecosystems and biodiversity, technologies for environmental protection, for the identification and transfer of innovations tailored to the local needs;</li> <li>• Establishment and enhancement of cross border partnerships and networks in the field of energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources (such as geothermal hot springs, water, sun and wind power),</li> </ul>	

including investments in infrastructure and equipment based on common and tailored technical solutions;

- Investment in infrastructure and equipment for environmental protection, particularly public waste and water management infrastructure, as well as "hard" conservation and restoration actions in order to fulfil local, national and international biodiversity goals;
- Establishment of networks and partnerships for joint training actions for public entities and local communities in the field of environmental protection, enhancement of environmental monitoring strategies and systems; conduction of joint trainings and maintenance of interoperability including the purchase of compatible equipment;
- 
- Restoration of natural areas (e.g. woods and river banks) to prevent floods and land slides;
- Joint activities for the protection of endangered species.

#### **Environmental risks management and emergency preparedness.**

- Development of joint structures and partnerships for the integration of the involved entities on initiatives in relation to the EUSDR (Danube River Basin Management, ICPDR initiatives, European Floods Alert System etc.) and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, including investments in infrastructure and equipment;
- Establishment and enhancement of cross border liaison in the environmental planning of the involved entities including joint risk mapping of accident risk spots, risk assessment and evaluation exercises;
- Ensuring and promotion of data availability and the integration of management approaches in national and international networks;
- Establishment of networks and partnerships for joint training actions for public entities and local communities in the field of management of environmental emergencies; joint trainings and maintenance of interoperability including the purchase of compatible equipment;
- Establishment of joint services for the management and control of risks generated by hazardous activities which may cause industrial accidents with possible transboundary effects;
- Joint initiatives and investments in infrastructure and equipment for the implementation of technologies for the control of pollution and

rehabilitation of rivers and brown fields and industrial areas with common problems on the two sides of the border;

- Joint actions dedicated to preparing children/ youth to respond to emergency situations, including i.e. school camps, trainings;
- Capacity and institutional development support for organizations, authorities and networks involved in Environmental risks management and emergency preparedness;
- Investments in infrastructure and equipment for risk management and emergency preparedness.

#### **Target groups of the Priority Axis:**

- Population living in the eligible area
- Unemployed, especially young people and women
- Children and youth living in the eligible area
- Disadvantaged groups.

#### **Indicative types of beneficiaries**

- Regional local and public authorities (County Councils, Local Councils/ Municipalities, etc.) and other public bodies;
- Offices - branches of National/Regional Public Authorities active on the themes of the priority in the eligible area (registered and functioning in the eligible area);
- Health care institutions;
- Educational institutions;
- Non - profit bodies and NGOs;
- Religious organizations, legally established according to the national legislation in force;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Museums, cultural, sports, touristic institutions;

#### **2.2.5.2. Guiding principles for the selection of operations**

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for
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	<p>environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a low-carbon economy; promoting investments to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.</p>
<p>The selection of projects will be carried out following a standardized assessment procedure using the following sets of criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic coherence:</b> this criterion examines the coherence and contribution of each project proposal to the relevant Specific Objective addressed the contribution to the envisaged results and the overall coherence of planned activities with the indicative types of actions.</li> </ul> <p>Further the cross-border added value of the operation, its territorial dimension and the relevance of the partnership will also be assessed in this context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coherence with state aid rules:</b> any state aid that might be provided under this programme shall comply with the procedural and substantive State aid rules applicable at the time when the public support is granted.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Operative quality:</b> this criterion examines the design of the project proposal in relation to clarity and coherence of the operational objectives, activities and means, feasibility, efficiency, communication about the project and its results, potential for uptake and embedment into operative procedures of the partners involved.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Compliance with horizontal principles:</b> this criterion examines the consideration from the side of the project of the Programme horizontal principles and the demonstration of their integration and advancement within the project proposal intervention logic. The strategic coherence criterion basically examines the relevance of the project proposal, hence it retains primacy over the other two criteria.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic projects (submitted):</b> strategic projects will be selected through an open transparent procedure, based on specific selection criteria that will be defined according to the priority objectives.</p>	

The detailed assessment criteria will be laid down and made available to potential applicants in the calls for proposals documentation that will be approved by the programme bodies.

#### 2.2.5.3. Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a low-carbon economy; promoting investments to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	Not applicable
No financial instruments will be used	

## 2.2.6. Common and programme specific indicators

### 2.2.6.1. Priority axis result indicators (programme specific)

**Table 7: Programme specific result indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) <sup>17</sup>	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
PA2-RI 1	Awareness on the potential of environmental resources and the benefits of protection.  Resident population informed on quality and quantity of environmental resources in the eligible area, and on the benefits of protection actions.	Qualitative indicator on Ordinal scale value (1 -7)	4.09	2015	5.31	Survey among stakeholders. Youth, residents in areas close to natural resources and environmental hotspots.	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.
PA2-RI2	Capacity for emergency interventions and management in case of natural disasters and environmental	Qualitative indicator Ordinal scale value (1-7)	3.65	2015	4.74	Survey among stakeholders. Institutions for	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

	accidents					environmental protections, NGOs, local administrations, educational institutions.	
PA2- RI3	Potential for cross-border interoperability for environmental protection and emergency interventions, based on shared procedures and technologies	Qualitative indicator Ordinal scale value (1-7)	3.88	2015	5.43	Survey among stakeholders.  Institutions for environmental protections, NGOs, local administrations, educational institutions.	2017/2018 2020/2021  2023.

## 2.2.6.2. Priority axis output indicators (common or programme specific)

**Table 8: Common and programme specific output indicators**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Indicator (<i>name of indicator</i>)</b>	<b>Measurement unit</b>	<b>Target value (2023)</b>	<b>Source of data</b>	<b>Frequency of reporting</b>
<b>PA2.OI1</b>	Infrastructure, equipment built/ installed/ modernized in the field of cross border services for environmental protection	Units (No)	at least 10 <sup>18</sup>	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA2.OI2</b>	Participants to project initiatives and events for information and awareness rising	Units (No)	at least 5.000	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA2OI3</b>	Studies in the field of environmental protection and emergency management. (technical and scientific studies, researches in the relevant	Units	at least 5	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual

<sup>18</sup> To be defined after final decision on financial allocations

	fields)				
<b>PA2.OI4</b>	Participants to capacity building initiatives	units (No)	at least 200	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>PA2.OI5</b>	Monitoring systems established/ extended/ modernized in the eligible area in the field of environmental protection and emergency management.	Units	at least 3	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual
<b>COI_3</b>	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	50.000	Monitoring system and projects reports	Annual

### 2.2.7. Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

#### Tables 12-15: Categories of intervention

Table 9: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)

Priority axis 2 - Environmental protection and risk management	085 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	5,393,500
	087 Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks e.g. erosion, fires, flooding, storms and drought, including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures	5,393,000
	088 Risk prevention and management of non-climate related risks	7,191,000




**Table 13: Dimension 2 Form of finance**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority 2	01 Non Repayable grant	74,906,248

**Table 14: Dimension 3 Territory type**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

**Table 15: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

<i>Priority axis</i>	<b>Environmental protection and risk management</b>
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Capacity building initiatives:

- For project generation, assisting potential beneficiaries for the identification of needs among target groups, coordination of administrative activities for establishment of partnerships
- Procedures for the establishment of cross border partnerships;
- For procurement procedures management;

Promotion initiatives:

- To activate participation among local administrations in remote areas, NGOs;
- To inform the potential beneficiaries on the financing opportunities from the Programme;
- To inform target groups on outputs of the programme;

Surveys and evaluation activities:

- Surveys among target groups to set baseline for the indicators and to monitor the impact of priority;
- Programme evaluations.

## 2.3. Priority Axis 3

### 2.3.1. Title and funding source

<i>ID of the priority axis</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Title of the priority axis</i>	<b>Sustainable Mobility and Accessibility</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	

### 2.3.2. Fund, calculation basis for Union support and justification of the calculation basis choice

<i>Fund</i>	IPA
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)</i>	Total eligible expenditure
<i>Justification of the calculation basis choice</i>	In order to promote and equally finance the non-public eligible sector.

### 2.3.3. The specific objectives of the thematic priority and expected results

<b>ID</b>	<b>3-1 "Mobility and transport infrastructure and services"</b>
<b>Specific objective</b>	Promote the achievement of improved quality standard in public transport and mobility services in the eligible area across the border and the integration in the main EU transport corridors, complying to EU Environmental legislation and sustainability principles, especially in remote and disadvantaged areas.
<b>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</b>	<p><b>Mobility and transport infrastructures and services improved and more sustainable.</b></p> <p>Improvement of cross border mobility, security and integration;</p> <p>Improvement of accessibility of remote marginal areas;</p> <p>Enhancement of integration of local transport infrastructures and services in the main European transport corridors, especially the water ways connected to the Danube corridor;</p> <p>Production of feasibility analysis on key transport infrastructures, improving regional national and international connection to transport networks, enabling the regional and national authorities to integrate CBC strategies in National, macro-regional and European transport strategies.</p> <p>Population in the area experiencing improved accessibility to local and external destinations, through improved services and or improved infrastructure, with lower environmental impact;</p> <p>Population commuting across the border for economic and social, cultural activities experiencing improved services for border crossing, due to improved technologies and infrastructure;</p> <p>Tourist mobility improved and extended in the area, based on new services, and infrastructure;</p>

<b>ID</b>	<b>3-2 "Public utilities infrastructure"</b>
<b>Specific</b>	Promote the achievement of improved and homogenous quality

<i>objective</i>	standard in public infrastructures for basic services, especially in remote areas through improved and enlarged access to modern and efficient public utilities services (incl. Internet, energy)
<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<b>Public utilities infrastructures and networks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of the improved accessibility to state-of-the-art and efficient public utilities (access to internet, utilities: waste, water, energy) in the light of technological options, economic constraints, environmental requirements and demographic changes;</li> <li>• Establishment of cross border partnerships for the implementation of innovative solutions for the access to public services, especially for remote areas and marginalized communities;</li> <li>• Population experiencing improved access to public utilities and services, based on innovative solutions shared across the border;</li> <li>• Remote areas receiving tailored assistance to facilitate removal of obstacles to the access to IT services and public utilities;</li> <li>• Disadvantaged groups enabled to easier access to utility and services, with targeted information and awareness rising actions;</li> </ul>

#### 2.3.4. Elements of other thematic priorities added to the priority axis

Not applicable

#### 2.3.5. Actions to be supported under the thematic priority (by thematic priority)

2.3.5.1. *A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries*

<i>Thematic Priority</i>	Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures by way of, inter alia: reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services; investing in cross-
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	border water, waste and energy systems and facilities.
<p>Indicative actions to be supported under thematic priority c), Priority Axis 3:</p> <p><b>Mobility and transport infrastructure and services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment and enhancement of cross-border partnerships of the relevant authorities for the planning physical infrastructure;</li> <li>• Joint studies for the preparation of cross-border infrastructure investments with emphasis on multimodal solutions;</li> <li>• Construction/ rehabilitation/ widening of the cross-border crossing points and/ or the road infrastructure leading to the cross-border crossing points, also using ICT based innovative technologies.</li> <li>• Improvement/ acceleration of procedures linked to mobility of persons and goods within the eligible area Construction/ rehabilitation/ widening of cross-border roads connecting settlements alongside the border and/or small remote villages with main road, which leads to the border;</li> <li>• Construction/ rehabilitation/ widening of roads linking to the national/ international systems as well as to economic sites of cross-border interest;</li> <li>• Construction/ rehabilitation/ widening Rehabilitation/ widening of roads connecting settlements within the eligible area;</li> <li>• Creation, rehabilitation/ modernization of information/promotion centres on cross-border economic cooperation;</li> <li>• Design / Creation of ICT based solutions for smart urban development and mobility, especially in cross border networks.</li> <li>• Development and implementation of an integrated and environmentally friendly cross-border transport connections, including the introduction of demand management, IT monitoring, control and information systems;</li> <li>• Creation of public cross-border cooperation networks;</li> <li>• Creation or modernization of cross-border logistics facilities/ centres; including the introduction of demand management, IT control and information systems</li> <li>• Development of inter-modal transport services within the eligible area;</li> <li>• Development of transport on the Danube and on other rivers within the eligible area, including investments in infrastructure and purchase of equipment for ports and water related mobility</li> <li>• Construction/ rehabilitation/ widening of the road infrastructure and</li> </ul>	

cross-border crossing points;

#### **Public utilities infrastructure**

- Set up cross-border frameworks, platforms and networks for the exchange of experience and the identification of needs for public services organizations/service providers Development and implementation of locally adapted solutions for investments in public utilities infrastructure (e.g. small-scale water treatment, access to ICT, renewable energy) within the areas facing similar challenges on both sides of the border;
- Creation of necessary internet infrastructure for cross-border cooperation networks;
- Creation of other types of ICT infrastructure/large-scale computer resources/equipment (including e-infrastructure, data centres and sensors; also where embedded in other infrastructure such as research facilities, environmental and social infrastructure)
- Studies for cooperation with the scope of better resources usage for improving public services/utility delivering;
- Support cooperation among public services organizations;

#### **Target groups of the Priority:**

- Population living in the eligible area
- Unemployed, especially young people and women
- Children and youth living in the eligible area
- Disadvantaged groups.
- Tourists and business travelers
- Enterprises located in the area.

#### **Indicative types of beneficiaries**

- Regional and local and public authorities (County Councils, Local Councils/ Municipalities, etc.) and other public bodies;
- Offices - branches of National/Regional Public Authorities active on the themes of the priority in the eligible area (registered and functioning in the eligible area);
- Health care institutions;
- Educational institutions;

- Non - profit bodies and NGOs;
- Religious organizations, legally established according to the national legislation in force;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Museums, cultural, sports, touristic institutions, etc.;

#### 2.3.5.2. *Guiding principles for the selection of operations*

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures by way of, inter alia: reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services; investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities.
<p>The selection of projects will be carried out following a standardized assessment procedure using the following sets of criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic coherence:</b> this criterion examines the coherence and contribution of each project proposal to the relevant Specific Objective addressed the contribution to the envisaged results and the overall coherence of planned activities with the indicative types of actions.</li> </ul> <p>Further the cross-border added value of the operation, its territorial dimension and the relevance of the partnership will also be assessed in this context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coherence with state aid rules:</b> any state aid that might be provided under this programme shall comply with the procedural and substantive State aid rules applicable at the time when the public support is granted. Interventions in other types of ICT infrastructure/large-scale computer resources/equipment (including e-infrastructure, data centres and sensors; also where embedded in other infrastructure such as research facilities, environmental and social infrastructure.</li> <li>• <b>Operative quality:</b> this criterion examines the design of the project proposal in relation to clarity and coherence of the operational objectives, activities and means, feasibility, efficiency, communication about the project and its results, potential for uptake and embedment into operative procedures of the partners involved.</li> </ul>	



- **Compliance with horizontal principles:** this criterion examines the consideration from the side of the project of the Programme horizontal Principles and the demonstration of their integration and advancement within the project proposal intervention logic. The strategic coherence criterion basically examines the relevance of the project proposal, hence it retains primacy over the other two criteria.

**Strategic projects (submitted):** strategic projects will be selected through an open transparent procedure, based on specific selection criteria that will be defined according to the priority objectives.

The detailed assessment criteria will be laid down and made available to potential applicants in the calls for proposals documentation that will be approved by the programme bodies.

#### 2.3.5.3. *Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)*

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures by way of, inter alia: reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services; investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities.
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	Not applicable
No financial instruments will be used	

### 2.3.6. Common and programme specific indicators

#### 2.3.6.1. Priority axis result indicators (programme specific)

**Table 10: Programme specific result indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) <sup>19</sup>	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
<b>PA3-RI1</b>	Population accessing to sustainable and efficient public mobility and transport services.  Population having access to improved local transport infrastructures, faster connections to main corridors, efficient border crossing services, transport services using innovative technologies.	Qualitative indicator described on an ordinal scale (1-7)	3.98	2015	5.17	Survey among stakeholders.	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.
<b>PA3-</b>	Vehicles crossing the border.  Traffic across the border for	Total number of vehicles per day	950	2013		NIS, Border police	2017/2018 2020/2021

<sup>19</sup> Target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) <sup>19</sup>	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI2	social, commercial and touristic activities and exchanges.				1.187	statistics. Romania and Serbia	2023.
PA3-RI3	Population accessing sustainable and efficient public utilities networks (energy, water, ICT).  Access to improved utility services based on innovative technologies, access to efficient and sustainable energy sources, especially in marginal and remote territories.	Percentage of households with access to the utility networks (Index based on arithmetic averages of indicators for the the various networks)	57%	2015	82.6%	NIS of Romania and Serbia. County and district level statistics on access to utilities	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.

2.3.6.2. *Priority axis output indicators (common or programme specific)*

**Table 11: Common and programme specific output indicators**

ID	Indicator ( <i>name of indicator</i> )	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
PA3.OI1	Cross border cooperation structures supported in the field of transport and public utilities	Units (No)	10	Monitoring	Annual
PA3.OI2	Studies related to the implementation of selected projects or the realisation of actions in the field of transport and mobility infrastructure	Units (No)	5	Monitoring	Annual
PA3.OI3	Investments in transport and utilities infrastructure, including improvement, enhancement of existing infrastructure	Units (No)	7	Monitoring	Annual
PA3.OI4	Participants to information/ training/ awareness raising initiatives in the field of transport and public utilities.	Units (No)	1000	Monitoring	Annual
PA3.OI5	Joint initiatives on improvements of public transport and intermodal connections	Units (No)	5	Monitoring	Annual

### 2.3.7. Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

**Tables 18-21: Categories of intervention**

**Table 12 Dimension 1 Intervention field**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority axis 3 - Sustainable mobility and accessibility	021 Water management and drinking water conservation (including river basin management, water supply, specific climate change adaptation measures, district and consumer metering, charging systems and leak reduction)	2,697,000
	022 Waste water treatment	2,696,600
	041 Inland waterways and ports	7,191,000
	044 Intelligent transport systems (including the introduction of demand management, tolling systems, IT monitoring, control and information systems)	4,494,000
	048 ICT: Other types of ICT infrastructure/large-scale computer resources/equipment (including e-infrastructure, data centres and sensors; also where embedded in other infrastructure such as research facilities, environmental and social infrastructure)	898,900

**Table 19: Dimension 2 Form of finance**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
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Priority 3	01 Non Repayable grant	74,906,248
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**Table 20: Dimension 3 Territory type**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

**Table 21: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

**2.3.8. A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)**

Priority axis	Sustainable Mobility and Accessibility
<p>Capacity building initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For project generation, assisting potential beneficiaries for the identification of needs among target groups, coordination of administrative activities for establishment of partnerships</li> <li>• Procedures for the establishment of cross border partnerships;</li> <li>• For procurement procedures management;</li> </ul> <p>Promotion initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To activate participation among local administrations in remote areas, NGOs;</li> <li>• To inform the potential beneficiaries on the financing opportunities</li> </ul>	

from the Programme;

- To inform target groups on outputs of the programme;

Surveys and evaluation activities:

- Surveys among target groups to set baseline for the indicators and to monitor the impact of priority;
- Programme evaluations.

## 2.4. Priority axis 4

### 2.4.1. Title and funding source

<i>ID of the priority axis</i>	4
<i>Title of the priority axis</i>	Attractiveness for sustainable tourism

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	

### 2.4.2. Fund, calculation basis for Union support and justification of the calculation basis choice

<i>Fund</i>	IPA
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)</i>	Total eligible expenditure
<i>Justification of the calculation basis choice</i>	In order to promote and equally finance the non-public eligible sector.



### 2.4.3. The specific objectives of the thematic priority and expected results

<i>ID</i>	<b>4-1 "Investments for the growth of the demand of local tourism networks and promotion of innovative tourism activities"</b>
<i>Specific objective</i>	Developing the local tourism economy across the border, based on a sustainable use of the local natural and cultural heritage, the promotion of national and international tourism demand, the creation of innovative and integrated cultural and leisure tourism attractions, the improvement of attractiveness of cross border networks and tourism trails.
<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>Increase of the national and international demand for cross border networks of tourism clusters, attracting various tourists categories, cultural business, naturalistic, especially from and international markets;</p> <p>Integration of local tourism attractions in the international networks of the Danube Basin.</p> <p>Establishment of a common brand and image for the local touristic offer attracting additional demand;</p> <p>Increase of the occupancy rate of tourist infrastructures, in all areas and for the diversified typologies of tourism;</p> <p>Establishment of touristic networks across the border, exploiting synergies and sharing innovative management and technological solutions.</p> <p>Create environment which stimulates public-private partnership initiatives and increases stakeholder's cross-border cooperation.</p>

<i>ID</i>	<b>4-2 "Capacity building initiatives for the improvement of quality and innovation of tourism services and products"</b>
<i>Specific objective</i>	Developing the local tourism economy based on the improvement of quality of tourism services, a sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage, the creation of capacities and skills for high quality tourism services, the design of innovative products in cross border networks and partnerships, the improvement of Accessibility and sustainability of tourist infrastructures.

<i>The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>Enhancement of capacities among entrepreneurs and workers of the tourist sector, for the improvement of the quality of tourists services, and the diversification of tourist products;</p> <p>Improvement of the information and knowledge on local natural and cultural resources for the creation of innovative products and the establishment of conservation strategies.</p> <p>The improvement of the quality of tourist services offered in joint networks;</p> <p>The improvement of conservation and protection strategies, based on researches and studies carried out by partnerships of research institutions and specialized agencies.</p> <p>Preservation of natural and cultural heritage, through targeted investments in rehabilitation and restoration.</p>
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#### 2.4.4. Elements of other thematic priorities added to the priority axis

Not applicable

#### 2.4.5. Actions to be supported under the thematic priority (by thematic priority)

2.4.5.1. *A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries*

<i>Thematic Priority</i>	Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.
<p>Indicative actions to be supported under thematic priority d), Priority Axis 4:</p> <p><b>Investments for the growth of the demand of local tourism networks and promotion of innovative tourism activities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization of knowledge transfer, exchange of good practice examples, networking and development of innovations for protection of natural and cultural heritage and sustainable tourism;</li> <li>• Development of a cross-border regional image, brand and joint marketing initiatives,</li> </ul>	

- Development of distinct tourism products (e.g. monasteries, Roman heritage, wine routes, etc.) and integrated tourism services;
- Joint implementation of actions recording and promoting shared traditional features (music, language, folklore, etc.) including joint cultural events (festivals conferences, etc.) in relation to the aforementioned indicative actions.
- Investments in cross-border infrastructure for tourism services (tourist centres, welcome centres, info-points, service centres in the touristic sector)
- Investments in the touristic sector for the provision of innovative services, including infrastructure, for specific forms of tourism, like cultural tourism, thematic tourism, etc.
- Promotion of tourism infrastructure and touristic objectives;
- Development and rehabilitation of specific tourism routes, including installation of road signs and bilingual tourist information signs;
- Construction/ rehabilitation/ widening of access infrastructure to tourism attractions e.g. tourist roads within tourism areas, roads providing access to these areas, walking and cycle paths, facilities for adventure tourism;
- Investments in upgrading and rehabilitation of natural and cultural sites (e.g: religious monuments, traditional buildings and settlements, historical and archaeological sites, etc).
- Development, modernization of infrastructure of tourism attractions/ objectives;

**Capacity building initiatives for the improvement of quality and innovation of tourism services and products.**

- Establishment of partnership for research and studies on natural and cultural heritage in the area;
- Support of the creation of common brand and the improvement of quality standards of the services offered'
- Support for the development of cross-border tourist offers;

- Trainings for the improvement of tourism services;
- Strategies, exchange of experience in touristic sector;

**Target groups of the Priority:**

- Population living in the eligible area
- Unemployed, especially young and women
- Children and youth living in the eligible area
- Disadvantaged groups
- SME`s in the tourism sector, Other institutions and entities related to tourism.
- Tourists and visitors.

**Indicative types of beneficiaries**

- Regional and local and public authorities (County Councils, Local Councils/ Municipalities, etc.) and other public bodies;
- Offices - branches of National/Regional Public Authorities active on the themes of the priority in the eligible area (registered and functioning in the eligible area);
- Health care institutions;
- Educational institutions;
- Non - profit bodies and NGOs;
- Religious organizations, legally established according to the national legislation in force;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Museums, cultural, sports, touristic institutions, etc.;

**2.4.5.2. Guiding principles for the selection of operations**

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.
The selection of projects will be carried out following a standardized assessment procedure using the following sets of criteria:	

- **Strategic coherence:** this criterion examines the coherence and contribution of each project proposal to the relevant Specific Objective addressed, the contribution to the envisaged results and the overall coherence of planned activities with the indicative types of actions.

Further the cross-border added value of the operation, its territorial dimension and the relevance of the partnership will also be assessed in this context.

- **Coherence with state aid rules:** any state aid that might be provided under this programme shall comply with the procedural and substantive State aid rules applicable at the time when the public support is granted.
- **Operative quality:** this criterion examines the design of the project proposal in relation to clarity and coherence of the operational objectives, activities and means, feasibility, efficiency, communication about the project and its results, potential for uptake and embedment into operative procedures of the partners involved.
- **Compliance with horizontal principles:** this criterion examines the consideration from the side of the project of the Programme horizontal principles and the demonstration of their integration and advancement within the project proposal intervention logic. The strategic coherence criterion basically examines the relevance of the project proposal, hence it retains primacy over the other two criteria.

**Strategic projects (submitted):** strategic projects will be selected through an open transparent procedure, based on specific selection criteria that will be defined according to the priority objectives.

The detailed assessment criteria will be laid down and made available to potential applicants in the calls for proposals documentation that will be approved by the programme bodies.

#### 2.4.5.3. *Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)*

<i>Thematic priority</i>	Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	Not applicable
No financial instruments will be used	

## 2.4.6. Common and programme specific indicators

### 2.4.6.1. Priority axis result indicators (programme specific)

**Table 13: Programme specific result indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) <sup>20</sup>	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
PA4-RI1	Number of tourists arrivals in the eligible area. Flows of visitors in the area for all forms of tourism activities and cross border networks.	Units	600.000	2012	810.000	National statistical offices - Statistics on tourism	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.
PA4-RI2	Nights spent by tourists in the eligible area. Time spent by tourists in the cross border area, for all types of touristic activities	Units	1.600.000	2012	1.920.000	National statistical offices - Statistics on tourism	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

PA4-RI3	New “touristic products” created as a result of programme actions in the field of promotion and information on integrated touristic networks in the CBC area.	Units	Baseline measured referring to current and past cross border activities: 17	2015	24.6	Monitoring system on projects implemented	2017/2018 2020/2021 2023.
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2.4.6.2. *Priority axis output indicators (common or programme specific)*

**Table 14: Common and programme specific output indicators**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Indicator (<i>name of indicator</i>)</b>	<b>Measurement unit</b>	<b>Target value (2023)</b>	<b>Source of data</b>	<b>Frequency of reporting</b>
<b>PA4.OI1</b>	Cross border cooperation structures/ initiatives supported in the field of tourism	Units (No)	At least 20	Monitoring	Annual
<b>PA4.OI2</b>	Studies related to the implementation of selected projects or research and studies in the field of natural and cultural resources	Units (No)	At least 5	Monitoring	Annual
<b>PA4.OI3</b>	Number of participants attending training initiatives	Units (No)	At least 500	Monitoring	Annual
<b>PA4 OI4</b>	Joint actions and communication instruments created	Units (No)	At least 4	Monitoring	Annual
<b>PA4 OI5</b>	Partnerships for the exchange of good practices and the promotion of joint initiatives established	Units (No)	At least 10	Monitoring	Annual

#### 2.4.7. Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

#### Tables 24-27: Categories of intervention

**Table 15:** Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)


Priority axis 4 - Attractiveness for sustainable tourism	091 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	3,200,000
	092 Protection, development and promotion of public tourism assets	4,800,000
	093 Development and promotion of public tourism services	3,200,000
	094 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	4,800,000

**Table 25: Dimension 2 Form of finance**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority 4	01 Non Repayable grant	74,906,248

**Table 26: Dimension 3 Territory type**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

**Table 27: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	07 Not applicable	74,906,248

**2.4.8. A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the**

programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

<i>Priority axis</i>	<b>Attractiveness for sustainable tourism</b>
<p>Capacity building initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For project generation, assisting potential beneficiaries for the identification of needs among target groups, coordination of administrative activities for establishment of partnerships</li> <li>• Procedures for the establishment of cross border partnerships;</li> <li>• For procurement procedures management;</li> </ul> <p>Promotion initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To activate participation among local administrations in remote areas, NGOs;</li> <li>• To inform the potential beneficiaries on the financing opportunities from the Programme;</li> <li>• To inform target groups on outputs of the programme;</li> </ul> <p>Surveys and evaluation activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys among target groups to set baseline for the indicators and to monitor the impact of priority;</li> <li>• Programme evaluations.</li> </ul>	

## SECTION 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

### 2.5. Priority axis Technical Assistance

#### 2.5.1. Title

<i>ID</i>	5
<i>Title</i>	Technical assistance

#### 2.5.2. Fund and calculation basis for Union support

<i>Fund</i>	IPA
<i>Calculation Basis (total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)</i>	Total eligible expenditure
<i>Justification of the calculation basis choice (only if total eligible expenditure basis selected)</i>	In order to promote and equally finance the non-public sector.

#### 2.5.3. The specific objectives of the priority axis and the expected results

Specific objective (repeated for each specific objective)

<i>ID</i>	5-1
<i>Specific objective</i>	The aim of the priority is the promotion of an effective and efficient implementation of the Programme ensuring the effective functioning of the Programme bodies, and committees.

	<p>The efficient execution of all stages of the programme cycle and project implementation, starting from the project generation stage, control and audit activities, execution of programme monitoring and evaluation activities.</p> <p>The implementation of actions for the visibility of the programme strategy and results among target groups and stakeholders.</p>
<i>Results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support</i> <sup>21</sup>	Not applicable

#### 2.5.4. Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the programme implementation

<i>Priority axis</i>	Technical assistance
<p>The following actions will be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment and operation of the Joint Technical Secretariat and JTS Antenna,</li> <li>• Design and implementation of a communication and visibility strategy;</li> <li>• Management of the Programme by the Managing Authority;</li> <li>• Establishment and operation of the Programme Monitoring Committee</li> <li>• Establishment of co-operation and co-ordination networks and contacts among Programme bodies and Partner States, as well as with bodies and representatives of other relevant EU-co-funded programmes by MA, NA, JTS, FLC and for promotion and information of the programme objectives;</li> <li>• Setting up appropriate procedures, materials and actions for the selection and implementation of projects, preparation of guidelines for applicants, project proposal generation and for project implementation;</li> <li>• Establishment of a IT system for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, including data on individual participants in projects;</li> </ul>	

<sup>21</sup> Required where the Union support to technical assistance in the cooperation programme exceeds EUR 15 million.

- Creation of ICT tools for information and communication, web sites, emailing, etc.
- Design and implementation of an evaluation plan;
  - Execution of studies, analysis and surveys on the Programme activities and impact for the promotion and information;
- Setting-up of the bodies and procedures for first level control;
- Setting up and implementation of audit system with regard to the Programme management and control systems.

#### 2.5.5. Programme specific indicators<sup>22</sup>

Not applicable.

##### 2.5.5.1. Programme specific result indicators

**Table 28: Programme-specific result indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value <sup>23</sup> (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
PA5 RI 1	Effective absorption of funds Certified expenditures on planned allocation by the deadlines established	Ratio Percentage %	0	2015	80%	Monitoring system	2017 2020 2023

<sup>22</sup> Required where objectively justified by the given the content of the actions and where the Union support to technical assistance in the cooperation programme exceeds EUR 15 million.

<sup>23</sup> The target values can be qualitative or quantitative.



2.5.5.2. *Programme specific output indicators expected to contribute to results*

**Table 29: Programme specific output indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) (optional)	Source of data
PA5.OI1	Number of meetings of programme bodies	Units (No)	2 per year	Monitoring
PA5.OI2	Number of projects calls implemented	Units (No)	2	Monitoring
PA5.OI3	Number of interim programme evaluations implemented	Units (No)	2	Monitoring
PA5.OI4	Number of events for information and promotion	Units (No)	2 per year	Monitoring
PA5.OI5	Number of employees (full time equivalent) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	Units (No)	2	Monitoring

## 2.5.6. Categories of intervention

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of Union support.

**Tables 30-32: Categories of intervention**

**Table 30: Dimension 1 Intervention field**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
PA 5 - Technical assistance	120 (Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection)	5,618,000
	121 (Evaluation and studies)	749,000
	122 (Information and communication)	1,123,624

**Table 31: Dimension 2 Form of finance**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
PA 5 - Technical assistance	07 - Not applicable	

**Table 32: Dimension 3 Territory type**

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
PA 5 - Technical assistance	07 - Not applicable	



## 2.6. Section 2.6 Overview table of indicators per priority axis and thematic priority

**Table 33: Table of common and programme specific output and result indicators**

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
1 Employment promotion and services for an inclusive growth	TP a): promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders	<p>1-1 To enhance the potential of the programme area for an inclusive growth, improving availability of employment opportunities, access to the labour market and employment opportunities in the programme eligible area.</p> <p>1-2 To enhance the potential of the programme area for an inclusive growth, based on the improvement of quality of life to all residents on the two sides of the border through joint actions, especially for the improvement of the access of the population to modern and efficient health care services, social services, services supporting the access to primary education.</p> <p>1-3 To enhance the potential of the programme area for an inclusive growth, Increasing cultural and social integration in the cross-border area promoting innovative services and networks,</p>	<p>PA1RI1 Active population experiencing more satisfied of the improved access to labour market. (Innovative services assisting job seekers permanently established, information on job opportunities available in marginal areas, disadvantaged groups receiving assistance and information about job opportunities through information points and dedicated tutors.)</p> <p>PA1RI2- Population experiencing access to improved basic services in health care and education. Innovative, high quality services permanently created and</p>	<p>PA1OI1 Citizens involved in project activities in cultural, social health care services.</p> <p>PA1OI2 Cross border cooperation structures supported in the field of labour market.</p> <p>PA1OI3 Investment in health care and social services infrastructure.</p> <p>PA1OI4 Disadvantaged persons involved in projects activities.</p>

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
		reducing the impact of constraints due to remoteness and marginalisation of border areas.	<p>available in marginal areas, preventive care, cultural activities and services, sport activities.</p> <hr/> <p>PA1RI3- Population experiencing lively cultural life in a cross border setting. Population, especially in marginal areas, accessing various opportunities for cultural and social activities, permanently offered in joint initiatives across the border.</p>	<hr/> <p>PA1OI5 Joint actions targeting vulnerable groups (youth, disabled, women, ethnic minorities) established for the prevention of early school leaving, for cultural inclusion.</p> <p>PA1.OI6 Joint actions targeting smart (green) growth opportunities.</p> <p>COI_1 Population covered by improved health services</p> <p>COI_2 Number of participants in projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders</p>

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
2 Environmental protection and risk management	TP b): protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	<p>2-1 Enhancing protection and sustainable use of natural resources, the improvement of capacity and the extension of actions of organisations and bodies involved in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Promoting cross border networks for education and studies on environmental resources.</p> <p>2-2 To enhance capacity to face environmental risks, enabling cross-border interoperability and joint actions for innovative systems of environmental protection, mitigation and prevention of environmental accidents and disasters, emergency reaction, preparedness and awareness in case of environmental emergencies.</p>	<p>PA2RI1- Awareness on the potential of environmental resources and the benefits of protection. Resident population informed on quality and quantity of environmental resources in the eligible area, and on the benefits of protection actions.</p> <p>PA2RI2- Capacity for emergency interventions and management in case of natural disasters and environmental accidents</p> <p>PA2RI3- Potential for cross-border interoperability for environmental protection and emergency interventions, based on shared procedures and technologies</p>	<p>PA2OI1- Infrastructure, equipment built/ installed/modernized in the field of cross border services for environmental protection.</p> <p>PA2OI2- Participants to project initiatives and events for information and awareness rising.</p> <p>PA2OI3- Studies in the field of environmental protection and emergency management. (technical and scientific studies, researches in the relevant fields)</p> <p>PA2OI4- Participants to capacity building initiatives</p> <p>PA2OI5 Monitoring systems established/ extended/ modernized in the eligible area in the field of environmental</p>

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
				protection and emergency management. COI_3 Population benefiting from flood protection measures
3 Sustainable mobility and accessibility	TP c): promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures	<p>3-1 Promote the achievement of improved and homogenous quality standard in public transport, especially in remote areas through improved sustainability and efficiency of transport infrastructure and mobility services within the cross-border area and the area's integration in the main EU transport corridors.</p> <p>3-2 Promote the achievement of improved and homogenous quality standard in public infrastructures for basic services, especially in remote areas through improved and enlarged access to modern and efficient public utilities services (incl. Internet, energy)</p>	PA3RI1- Population accessing to sustainable and efficient public mobility and transport services. Population having access to improved local transport infrastructures, faster connections to main corridors, efficient border crossing services, transport services using innovative technologies.	PA3OI1- Cross border cooperation structures supported in the field of transport and public utilities
			PA3RI2- Vehicles crossing the border. Traffic across the border for social, commercial and touristic activities and exchanges.	PA3OI2- Studies related to the implementation of selected projects or the realisation of actions in the field of transport and mobility infrastructure
			PA3RI3 Population accessing sustainable and efficient public utilities networks (energy,	PA3OI3- Investments in transport and utilities infrastructure, including improvement, enhancement of existing infrastructure
				PA4OI4 Participants to information/ training/

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
			water, ICT). Access to improved utility services based on innovative technologies, access to efficient and sustainable energy sources, especially in marginal and remote territories.	awareness raising initiatives in the field of transport and public utilities.  PA3.OI5 Joint initiatives on improvements of public transport and intermodal connections
4 Attractiveness for sustainable tourism	TP d): encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	4-1 Developing the local tourism economy, based on the promotion of a sustainable cultural and recreational use of the natural and cultural heritage. Promoting growth of national and international demands for the tourism services and attractions in the eligible area, creating innovative cultural and leisure tourism attractions based on the common natural and cultural resources, improving attractiveness of networks and cross border tourism trails. Establishment of the cross-border touristic routes which will involve highly experienced and internationally recognized partners in order to ensure its sustainability and competitiveness in the region.	PA4RI1- Number of tourist arrivals in the eligible area. Flows of visitors in the area for all forms of tourism activities.	PA4OI1- Cross border cooperation structures/ initiatives supported in the field of tourism
			PA4RI2- Nights spent by tourists in the eligible areal. Time spent by tourists in the area, for all types of touristic activities	PA4OI2- Studies related to the implementation of selected projects or research and studies in the field of natural and cultural resources
			PA4RI 3 New “touristic products” created as a result of programme actions in the field	PA4OI3- Number of participants attending training initiatives PA4OI4- Joint actions and communication instruments created PA4OI5 Partnerships for the exchange of good



Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
		<p>4-2 Growth of the local tourism economy based on enhancement of quality of tourism services, based on a sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p>Enhancing capacities and skills for the improvement of quality and quantity of tourism services and products in common networks and partnerships on the two sided of the border.</p> <p>Improving the quality and sustainability of tourist infrastructure, and the accessibility of the aforementioned resources.</p>	of promotion and information on integrated touristic networks in the CBC area.	practices and the promotion of joint initiatives established
5 Technical assistance	N.A.	<p>The aim of the priority is the promotion of an effective and efficient implementation of the Programme ensuring the effective functioning of the Programme bodies, and committees</p> <p>The efficient execution of all stages of the programme cycle and project implementation, starting from the project generation stage, the control and audit activities, the execution of</p>	<p>PA5RI1- Effective absorption of funds</p> <p>Certified expenditures on planned allocation by the deadlines established</p>	<p>PA5.OI1 Number of meetings of programme bodies</p> <p>PA5.OI2 Number of projects calls implemented</p> <p>PA5.OI3 Number of interim programme evaluations implemented</p> <p>PA5OI4 Number of events</p>

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)	Selected results indicators	Selected output indicators
		<p>programme monitoring and evaluation activities.</p> <p>The implementation of actions for the visibility of the programme strategy and results among target groups and stakeholders.</p>		<p>for information and promotion</p> <p>PA50I5 Number of employees (full time equivalent) whose salaries are co-financed by TA</p>

## **Strategic projects**

Strategic projects might be identified through dedicated selection procedures, ensuring equal access and transparent competition, for the achievement of the programme objectives, the priorities' specific objectives and the compliance to the horizontal principles.

Strategic projects should ensure a substantial contribution to a real and strong cross-border impact of the programme and to the achievement of sustainable and long-term results. Strategic Projects outcome must produce an effective and focused answer to the eligible territory needs as envisaged by the Programme strategy, and result in a significant and long-lasting change or improvement on the whole or large parts of the programme area.

The Strategic Projects can be designed and implemented in the framework of the four priority axes of the programme.

The share of IPA resources dedicated to the strategic projects is within 30% of the IPA funds allocated to the programme

The basic principles for the eligibility of a strategic project may be the following:

- To address key specific objectives that can be achieved only through the involvement of large partnerships and /or of key stakeholders on the two sides of the border.
- To be based on a larger financial size than ordinary projects, proportionate to the relevance of the objectives and results.
- To produce lasting effects and catalyse further actions by public and private stakeholders and/or public financing and human resources;
- To promote permanent cooperation opportunities in the fields of social and cultural inclusion.

The fields of intervention in which strategic projects could be developed are those addressed by the thematic priorities selected for the programme's intervention.

Strategic projects could be especially relevant for the coordination of the programme strategy with that of the EU Strategy for Danube Region.

### 3. SECTION 3 FINANCING PLAN

#### 3.1. Financial appropriation from the IPA (in EUR)

##### 3.1.1. Total financial appropriation from the IPA per year

Table 34

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
IPA	0	5,424,998	7,747,240	17,792,098	14,358,224	14,645,390	14,938,298	74,906,248

##### 3.1.2. Total financial appropriation from the IPA and national co-financing (in EUR)

- 1. The financial table sets out the financial plan of the cooperation programme by priority axis.*
- 2. The financial table shall show for information purposes, any contribution from third countries participating in the*

*cooperation programme (other than contributions from IPA and ENI)*

*3. The EIB<sup>24</sup> contribution is presented at the level of the priority axis.*

**Table 35: Financing plan**

Priority axis	Basis for calculation of Union support	Union support (a)	National counterpart	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding	Co-financing rate	For information	
	(Total eligible cost)		(b) = (c) + (d))			(e) = (a) + (b)	(f) = (a)/(e) (2)		
				National Public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
<i>Priority axis 1 - Employment promotion and services for an inclusive growth</i>	18,188,970	15,460,624	2,728,346	2,364,566	363,780	18,188,970	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 2 - Environmental protection and risk management</i>	21,150,000	17,977,500	3,172,500	2,749,500	423,000	21,150,000	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 3 - Sustainable mobility and accessibility</i>	21,150,000	17,977,500	3,172,500	2,749,500	423,000	21,150,000	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 4 - Attractiveness for sustainable tourism</i>	18,823,530	16,000,000	2,823,530	2,447,058	376,472	18,823,530	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 5</i>	8,812,499	7,490,624	1,321,875	1,321,875	0	8,812,499	85.00%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,124,999</b>	<b>74,906,248</b>	<b>13,218,751</b>	<b>11,632,499</b>	<b>1,586,252</b>	<b>88,124,999</b>	<b>85.00%</b>		

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

### 3.1.3. Breakdown by priority axis and thematic priority

Table 36

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority axis 1 Employment promotion and services for an inclusive growth	TP a): promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders	15,460,624	2,728,346	18,188,968
<i>Priority axis 2 Environmental protection and risk management</i>	TP b): protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	17,977,500	3,172,500	21,150,000
<i>Priority axis 3 Sustainable mobility and accessibility</i>	TP c): promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures	17,977,500	3,172,500	21,150,000
<i>Priority axis 4 Attractiveness for sustainable tourism</i>	TP d): encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	16,000,000	2,823,530	18,823,529
<i>Priority axis 5 Technical assistance</i>		7,490,624	1,321,875	8,812,499
<b>Total</b>		<b>74,906,248</b>	<b>13,218,751</b>	<b>88,124,996</b>

#### 4. SECTION 4 - INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPEMENT

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development, taking into account the content and objectives of the cooperation programme and showing how it contributes to the accomplishment of the programme objectives and expected results

The programme strategy addresses territorial challenges shared across the cooperation area and leverages its development potentials. The programme strategy reflects the shared challenges, needs and potentials that can be effectively tackled through cooperation. The Strategy has been developed aligned to the Romanian Partnership Agreement, the National Plan for the Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire (2013-2016) of the Republic of Serbia, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the Europe 2020 Strategy and related Flagship initiatives.

The area is characterised by unequal distribution of population on both sides of the border, high degree of rurality with few urban poles and increased outward migration flows, low employment rates, difficult access to the labour market for the vulnerable groups (due to economic, social, ethnic factors, particularly for the Roma minority) and acute poverty problems. Environment is characterised by rich natural resources but also a number of threats such as floods, pollution from heavy industry and obsolescence of the sewage and water networks. Connectivity is affected by the proximity to two Core European Networks and the challenges regarding the low density and quality of the local transport network and interconnection limitations specific to rural areas. Tourism is a potential driver of growth for the area generated by natural and historic resources. Tourism infrastructure is underexploited and underdeveloped, signalling the need for investments to stimulate demand.

Based on the considerations above, the integrated approach to territorial development of the programme area is framed by the following conditions: the overall aim is the sustainable socioeconomic and cultural advancement of the programme area and the CBC programme's ability to address gaps that the "mainstream" programmes cannot but also the limited funds.

Thus the programme combines the following:

- Enhancing the protection of the environment and the



elimination/reduction of environmental risks is a prerequisite for any other activities and development effort in the area, (addressed in PA2);

- Subsequently the sustainable valorisation and utilisation of the environment and the natural and cultural heritage are an asset for tourism development but also as a value by itself (addressed in PA4);
- However the benefits of the development potential of the area can only be sustainably enjoyed by the development of cross border environmental-friendly transport and public utility infrastructure (addressed in PA3);
- Last but not least the local population must be able to participate in the benefits of the achievements in the above mentioned areas through employment opportunities and social and cultural inclusion (addressed in PA1).

#### **4.1. Community-led local development (where appropriate)**

Approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and principles for identifying the areas where they will be implemented

Not applicable

#### **4.2. Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)**

Approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis

Not applicable

**Table 37: Indicative financial allocation to ITI (aggregate amount)**

Priority axis	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (EUR)
	Not applicable

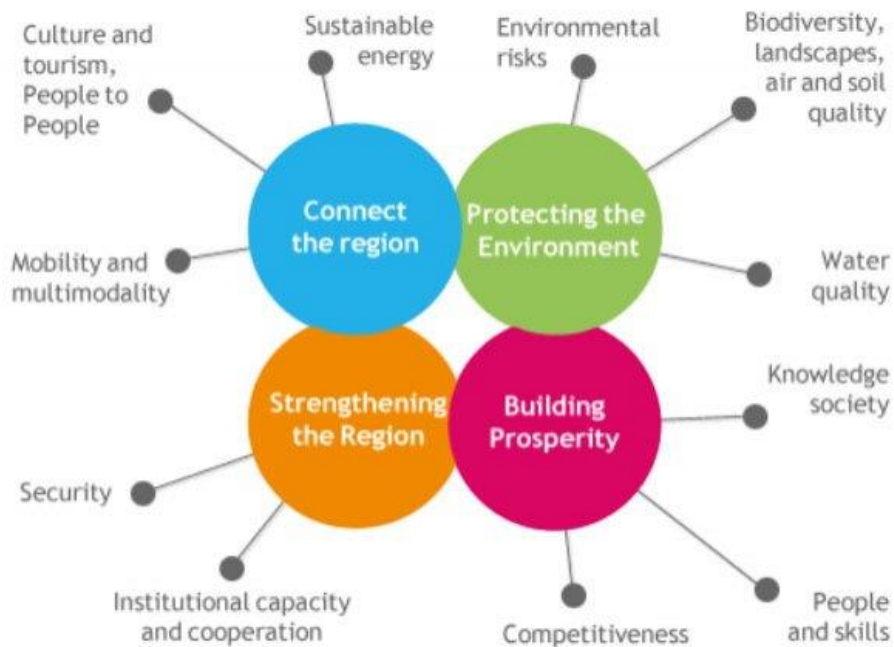
- 4.3. Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the relevant partner States and taking into account, where applicable, strategically important projects identified in those strategies (where appropriate)

(Where partner States and regions participate in macro-regional and/or sea basin strategies)

The **EU Strategy for the Danube Region** provides an overall framework for the Danube area aiming both to foster integration and integrative development. The Danube Region covers 14 countries (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine).

The Danube Region Strategy addresses a wide range of issues; these are divided among 4 pillars and 11 priority areas (see Graphic below).

Figure 1. EU Strategy for the Danube Region Structure



Source: <http://www.danube-region.eu>

The Programme demonstrates a high relevance and coherence with EUSDR initiatives. The section below gives an overview of the relevance of the Programme Priority Axes and EUSDR Priority Areas.

### **The Priority Axes of the Programme:**

#### **1- Employment promotion and basic services strengthening for an inclusive growth (thematic priority a)**

Danube strategy Priority Areas specially relevant:

- PA 9 To invest in people and skills
- PA 7 To develop the knowledge society through research, education and IT

#### **2- Environmental protection and risk management (thematic priority b)**

The Priority Axis objective is closely correlated to the **EU Danube Region Strategy**, especially to the following Priority Areas (PA):

- PA 4 “ To restore and maintain the quality of waters”,
- PA5 “To manage environmental risks” and
- PA6 “To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils”.

The CBC dimension is extremely relevant, for the integrated and interdependent environmental systems, in the Carpathian Chain, and the Danube Basin, the Banat plains and also for the common challenges generated by industrial pollution, decommissioning of obsolete industrial activities, brown fields.

#### **3- Sustainable mobility and accessibility (thematic priority c)**

The Priority Axis objective is closely correlated to the **EU Danube Region Strategy**, especially to the following Priority Areas (PA):

- PA 1 To improve mobility and multimodality
- PA7 “To develop the knowledge society through research, education and IT

The CBC dimension is present in the sense that the aforementioned weaknesses affect the attractiveness of the entire programme area, while negatively contributing to the intraregional disparities between favoured and less

favoured areas.

Due to the financial capacity of the Programme, the coordination of the projects implemented in the eligible area with those implemented the Danube Region is particularly relevant.

#### **4- Attractiveness for sustainable tourism (thematic priority d)**

The priority is coordinated to the Danube region strategy, that identifies actions for the sustainable development based on the natural and cultural resources among the main pillars of the regional strategy:

Pillar 1: connecting the Danube Region.

PA 3 To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts.

The results to be achieved by the programme are the creation of a recognizable identity for the entire area as a destination for sustainable tourism, the promotion of innovative type of tourism, the integration of the area in the touristic networks targeting the diverse environmental systems, of the Danube Basin, the Carpathian Areas, the rural areas of Banat. The increase of the capacity for joint protective actions of the natural resources.

## 5. SECTION 5 - IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

### 5.1. Relevant authorities and bodies

**Table 38: Programme authorities**

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania	Minister
Certifying authority, where applicable	Not applicable	
Audit authority	Audit Authority within the Romanian Court of Accounts	President

The body to which payments will be made by the Commission is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the managing authority	
<input type="checkbox"/> the certifying authority	

**Table 39: Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks**

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	First level control unit within Regional Office for Cross-Border Cooperation Timisoara for Romanian partners	Head of First Level Control Unit  Head of First Level

	<p>First level control unit, Ministry of Finance for Serbian partners and TA funds for Serbian National Authority</p> <p>Directorate for First Level Control, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania for TA funds for Romanian beneficiaries</p>	<p>Control Unit</p> <p>Minister</p>
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	<p>Audit Authority within the Court of Accounts, Romania,</p> <p>Audit Authority Office of EU Funds from Republic of Serbia</p>	<p>President</p> <p>Director of Audit Authority Office of EU Funds from Republic of Serbia</p>

## 5.2. Joint Monitoring Committee

**Table 40: Indicative list of Joint Monitoring Committee members**

<b>Name of authority/body and department or unit</b>	<b>Role in the programme</b>	<b>Contact details of the authority/body</b>
EU Commission	Advisory	
NIPAC	Decision	
National Authority	Decision	Nemanjina 34, 11000 Belgrade, Republic of Serbia
Macro-regional strategy representative (where the programme is	Consultative	

overlapping a macro-region covered by an EU Strategy)		
EIB	Consultative	
Relevant national, regional or local institutions responsible for investment sectors covered by PA	Decision	
Audit Authority within the Court of Accounts, Romania	Independent observer	20, General Ernest Broșteanu Street, Sector 1, 010528, Bucharest
Audit Authority Office of EU Funds from Republic of Serbia	Independent observer	Nemanjina 11, 11000 Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

### 5.3. Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

#### Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

The Joint Technical Secretariat shall be located in Timișoara and hosted by Romanian Regional Office for Cross Border Cooperation Timișoara for the 2014-2020 programming period as it was the case during the 2007-2013 Romania-Serbia IPA Cross Border Cooperation Programme, based on the following arguments:

- the experience from 2007-2013 programming period will allow a swift start of the implementation of the new Programme (launch of calls for proposals soon after the Programme's approval in order to ensure a high level of absorption);
- the Joint Technical Secretariat within the Regional Office for Cross Border Cooperation Timișoara is an already existing institution with international staff (Romanian and Serbian) with experience in programme management/ implementation;
- the management structures and the working procedures of the JTS have

been audited during 2007-2013 programming period and only minor changes are needed in order to reflect the provisions of the new EU regulations and the lessons learned;

The Programme bodies also decided to finance the Antenna of the Joint Technical Secretariat in Vršac on the Serbian side for the 2014-2020 programming period. The Antenna of the JTS functioned also during the 2007-2013 programming period and will have as a main role to disseminate information at regional level, and to support projects development in Republic of Serbia.

The JTS (JTS and JTS Antenna) and FLC staff for the 2007-2013 Romania-Serbia IPA Cross Border Cooperation Programme are already trained and experienced. Establishment of JTS (main office and antenna) will be based on already gained experience from the IPA CBC programme 2007-2013. In that way taking over of the additional responsibilities for the implementation of 2014-2020 Programme will be complete in efficient and timely manner. Bodies responsible for first level control function are already assigned in the document.

The number and qualification of JTS and JTS Antenna staff shall correspond to the tasks and shall be done through a public and transparent procedure, ensuring equal opportunities and promoting equality between men and women. Staff of the JTS shall be proficient in English and in at least one of the relevant languages Romanian or Serbian.

Both the Managing Authority and the National Authority may observe the selection process for the Joint Technical Secretariat and Antenna staff..

#### **5.4. Summary description of the management and control arrangements**

The Programme institutional structure consists of the following bodies: the Managing Authority (MA) acting also as Certifying Authority (CA), the National Authority (NA), the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), the Audit Authority (AA), the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and the first level control systems in Romania and Serbia.

The MA, Serbian NA, AA, Audit Authority Office of EU Funds from the Republic of Serbia, the JTS, the JTS Antenna, the First Level Control Unit within RO CBC Timișoara and part of the costs of the First Level Control Unit in the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia will be financed from the Technical Assistance budget.

##### **The Managing Authority (with additional functions of Certifying Authority)**

Romania and Serbia have agreed to entrust the functions of Managing Authority and Certifying Authority for the Programme to the Romanian Ministry of



Regional Development and Public Administration. The same institution performed the MA functions in 2007-2013 programming period.

The Managing Authority is responsible for managing and implementing the Programme in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and the provisions of article 37, para. 1 of Regulation (EU) No 447/ 2014, as well as for certifying the expenditure to EU according to the provisions of art. 37, para. 2 of Regulation (EU) No 447/ 2014.

Beside the tasks and responsibilities provided for in the Regulations, the managing authority shall also be responsible for:

- a) Signing the subsidy contracts financed from IPA with the lead beneficiaries;
- b) Signing the contracts regarding the national co-financing from the state budget with the Romanian beneficiaries;
- c) Ensuring the transfer of the IPA amounts to the lead beneficiaries;
- d) Ensuring the transfer of the national co-financing from the state budget to the Romanian project beneficiaries;
- e) Ensuring the transfer of the IPA funds and national co-financing to the beneficiaries of the Technical Assistance priority axis;
- f) Ensuring the availability of the amounts from the national co-financing for the budget of the Technical Assistance priority axis;
- g) Ensuring access to information for the National Authority and Audit Authority in order to fulfil their respective tasks;
- h) Ensuring the compliance of the expenditures with the Programme rules, Community rules, and with the Programme's procedures through an adequate control system;
- i) The measures included in the programme should ensure the compliance with the provisions of article 45 of the Commission Implementing Regulation No 447/2014 of 2nd of May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA II).
- j) Designating the controllers responsible for carrying out the first level control for the partners located in Romania;
- k) Nominating the representatives of Romania in the Joint Monitoring

Committee;

l) Ensuring an adequate audit trail for the whole system concerning the implementation of the Programme;

m) Preventing, detecting, and correcting the irregularities committed in Romania;

n) Coordinating the activities regarding the implementation of the Programme delegated to the JTS;

o) Ensuring the fast record and update of the information into the electronic system, being responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and completeness of the data concerning the Programme managed;

The Managing Authority will also carry the functions of the Certifying Authority. This modification is based on the experiences of the Romania-Serbia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme during 2007-2013 and will simplify and reduce the duration of the payment process. The European Commission will reimburse the certified expenditure directly in a special bank account of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration.

As regards the certification of expenditure, the managing authority shall be responsible for:

a) drawing up and submitting payment applications to the Commission, and certifying that they result from reliable accounting systems, are based on verifiable supporting documents, and have been subject to verifications by the managing authority;

b) drawing up the annual accounts referred to in point (a) of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;

c) certifying the completeness, accuracy, and veracity of the annual accounts and that the expenditure entered in the accounts complies with applicable law and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the operational programme and complying with applicable law;

d) ensuring that there is a system which records and stores, in computerised form, accounting records for each operation, and which supports all the data required for drawing up payment applications and accounts, including records of amounts recoverable, amounts recovered, and amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation or operational programme;

e) ensuring for the purposes of drawing up and submission of payment applications, that it has received adequate information from the controllers on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure;

f) taking account when drawing up and submitting payment applications of the results of all audits carried out by, or under the responsibility of, the audit authority;

g) maintaining, in a computerised form, accounting records of expenditure declared to the Commission and of the corresponding public contribution paid to beneficiaries;

h) keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation. Amounts recovered shall be repaid to the budget of the Union prior to the closure of the operational programme by deducting them from the subsequent statement of expenditure.

#### **National Authority in Republic of Serbia (NA)**

The Serbian NA, represented by the Serbian European Integration Office within the Government of Republic of Serbia, carries out mainly functions as follows:

1. Supporting the MA in the management and implementation of the Programme;
2. Ensuring the availability of the amounts from the national co-financing for the budget of the TA Priority Axis;
3. Ensuring access to information and relevant documents for the MA and AA in order to fulfil their respective tasks;
4. Informing the MA on the control system in the Republic of Serbia as well as on designated controllers responsible for carrying out the first level control for the partners located in the Republic of Serbia;
5. Nominating the representatives of the Republic of Serbia in the Joint Monitoring Committee;
6. Participating in the setting up of the procedures to ensure the proper functioning of the management and control systems including ensuring an adequate audit trail for the system concerning the implementation of the Programme in the Republic of Serbia;
7. Ensuring the compliance of the expenditures with the national Serbian and Community legislation and also with the Programme level procedures, by ensuring an adequate control system. EU legislation prevails where national legislation is not harmonized with the EU legislation;
8. Preventing, detecting and correcting the irregularities identified

on the territory of the Republic of Serbia;

9. Reporting to the MA about any detected irregularity which happened on the territory of the Republic of Serbia and about the activities undertaken in order to resolve it;

10. Recovery of amounts unduly paid from the Serbian project partners, (in the event that such amounts cannot be recovered from the project partners concerned) and it shall do so in close cooperation with the MA;

### **The Joint Monitoring Committee**

In accordance with Article 38 of Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014, the participating countries will set up a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) within 3 months of the notification to the Member State of the decision approving the cross-border cooperation programme.

Overall monitoring of the Programme implementation lies within the competencies of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC). The composition of the JMC includes the representatives of the Member State - Romania as well as representatives from the partner country- Republic of Serbia, who will have an equal role in the JMC.

Besides the responsibilities set forward in art. 38 of the Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014 the Joint Monitoring Committee shall ensure the quality of the implementation of the Programme.

#### *Composition and procedures of the Joint Monitoring Committee*

The composition of the Joint Monitoring Committee is decided by the participating countries to the Programme and in accordance with Article 38 of the Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014. The Joint Monitoring Committee shall have a balanced representation and a limited number of representatives from the national, regional and local level and other economic, social and environmental partners of both states participating in the programme to ensure efficiency and broad representation.

A representative of the MA, who conducts the meeting in an arbitrary role, not having a voting right, shall chair the Joint Monitoring Committee. Representatives of the partner country may take co-chairmanship. Representatives of the Joint Technical Secretariat shall assist the work of the Joint Monitoring Committee.

At its first meeting, the Joint Monitoring Committee shall draw up its rules of procedure and adopt them in order to exercise its mission in accordance to the Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014. Decisions taken by the Joint Monitoring Committee shall be made by consensus among the national delegations of both participating countries (one vote per country). Decisions of the Committee may be taken via written procedure.

Details regarding the practical organisation of the JMC meetings will be

provided in the Committee's rules of procedure.

#### *Convening a meeting*

Meetings of the Joint Monitoring Committee shall be held at least once a year. Additional meetings may be convened by the Chairperson either at the request of one of the participating countries to the Programme or of the Commission.

At the programme level, the Joint Monitoring Committee will approve the procedure for evaluation, selection and contracting, which also deals with complaints, according to art. 74 (3) of Regulation No 1303/2013.

#### **Role and tasks of the audit authority and group of auditors**

According to the Article 127 (4) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, a single audit authority shall be appointed by the Member States. The designated audit authority of the Programme is the Audit Authority (AA) within the Romanian Court of Accounts, located in Bucharest, 20 Ernest Broșteanu Street, Sector 1, Romania.

The provisions of the Article 25 of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 (referring to the Article 127 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), concerning the group of auditors shall be applied.

The main competencies and responsibilities of the AA, as provided for in the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, article 127 are:

- to ensure that audits are carried out on the management and control systems, on an appropriate sample of operations and on the annual accounts;
- to prepare an audit strategy, within eight months of adoption of the Programme, which shall set out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on operations and the planning of audits in relation to the current accounting year and the two subsequent accounting years. The audit strategy shall be updated annually from 2016 until and including 2024.

The AA shall:

- ensure that through a system audit before the submission of the first accounts that the CA has the accurate procedures in place to account for the amounts to be withdrawn or to be recovered and to be deducted from payment claims during the accounting year as well as to follow-up pending recoveries and irrecoverable amounts;

- draw up an annual audit opinion in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;
- draw up an annual control report setting out the main findings of the audits carried out in accordance with Article 127(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including findings with regard to deficiencies found in the management and control systems, and the proposed and implemented corrective actions.

In carrying out its functions, in compliance with Article 25 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the AA is assisted by a GoA composed of a representative from each of the participating countries. Each participating country shall be responsible for audits carried out on its territory. Each representative from each participating country in the Programme shall be responsible for providing the factual elements relating to expenditure on its territory that are required by the audit authority in order to perform its assessment.

The GoA will be set up within three months of approval of Programme. It will draw up its own rules of procedure, under the lead of the chair, the AA. The rules of procedure will include a detailed description of the functions and responsibilities of each of the audit actors.

These auditors shall be functionally independent from FLC/JTS/NA/MA.

The GoA will assist the AA in setting up and implementing the audit strategy. The audit strategy will also indicate which measures have been put in place by the AA and the GoA, in order to ensure that the same audit methodology, in accordance with internationally accepted audit standards, has been applied by all members of the Group of Auditors.

The quality and completeness of the audit work carried out and/or the documents issued will be ensured by the AA together with the GoA. Periodic quality reviews of working methods and procedures shall be carried out by the AA together with the GoA to ensure that the audit reports and findings can be fully relied upon. Such reviews shall cover the audit files, working and supporting papers and monitoring and follow-up systems.

#### 5.5. Apportionment of liabilities among partner States in case of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

According to art. 143 of Regulation 1303/2013, each partner State shall be responsible for investigating irregularities committed by the beneficiaries located on its territory. In the case of a systematic irregularity, the partner

State shall extend its investigation to cover all operations potentially affected. The partner State shall make the financial corrections in connection with individual or systemic irregularities detected in operations or operational programme. Financial correction shall consist of cancelling all or part of the public contribution to an operation or to the operational programme. Financial corrections shall be recorded in the annual accounts by the managing authority for the accounting year in which the cancellation is decided.

The managing authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the lead beneficiary. Beneficiaries shall repay the lead beneficiary any amounts unduly paid. Special provisions regarding the repayment of amounts subject to an irregularity shall be included both in the contract to be signed with the lead beneficiary and in the partnership agreement to be signed between the beneficiaries. The Programme shall provide the beneficiaries a template of the Partnership Agreement.

If the lead beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment from other beneficiaries or if the managing authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead beneficiary, the partner State on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the managing authority the amount unduly paid to that beneficiary. The managing authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union, in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating partner States as laid down in the cooperation programme.

In accordance with article 85 of Regulation no.1303/2013 (CPR) the Commission has the right of making financial corrections by cancelling all or part of the Union contribution to the programme and effecting recovery from the partner States in order to exclude from Union financing expenditure which is in breach of applicable Union and national law, including in relation to deficiencies in the management and control systems which have been detected by the Commission or the European Court of Auditors.

In case of any financial corrections by the Commission, the two partner States commit to dividing the amount between the two partner States proportionally with the approved project budgets and performed activities by Romanian and Serbian beneficiaries, affected by the financial correction. In case of financial corrections by the Commission, due to random or anomalous irregularities, the two partner States commit to investigate on a case by case basis. The financial correction by the Commission shall not prejudice the partner States' obligation to pursue recoveries under the provisions of the applicable European Regulations.

## **5.6. Use of the Euro (where applicable)**

Method chosen for the conversion of expenditure incurred in another currency than the Euro

In accordance with the ETC Regulation, Article 28, expenditure incurred by project partners located in countries, which are outside of the Euro zone, shall be converted into euro. The conversion is to be made by the beneficiaries using the monthly accounting **exchange rate of the Commission applied in the month during which that expenditure was submitted for verification to the controller**, according to paragraph (b) of Article 28 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013).

### **5.7. Involvement of partners**

Actions taken to involve the partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 in the preparation of the cooperation programme, and the role of those partners in the preparation and implementation of the cooperation programme, including their involvement in the Joint Monitoring Committee

#### **Participation of partners in the preparation of the programme**

The programme partners, including representatives of programme target groups, stakeholders, potential beneficiaries, were deeply involved in the programme preparation, with various tools of information and promotion and with meetings and conferences held since the first stages of the programming process.

#### **The consultations for the Territorial analysis and SWOT**

The stakeholders and potential beneficiaries were asked to contribute to the elaboration of the Territorial analysis and SWOT by participating in two workshops, one held in Romania at Drobeta Turnu Severin and one held in Serbia at Pancevo, that offered the opportunity to all participants to intervene actively and to bring their experiences and feedback.

In parallel, programme partners were asked to contribute with their vision through surveys based on questionnaires. The partners expressed their views and opinions by answering the open questions in the questionnaire provided, and offering a quantitative ranking for their agreement to the sections of the first draft of the SWOT, based on a scale of 5 levels from total disagreement (1) to perfect agreement (5).

The participation to all three parallel stages of consultation was large, and active, from all counties and districts of the eligible area. A little more than 50% of the participants to the survey are partners of projects financed by the current programme, and among them were included representatives of NGO, educational and university institutions, local administrations.



The qualitative feedback, proposals of new items for the SWOT, critics to others, were considered for the revision of the SWOT, and are incorporated in the new draft proposed to the partners.

The quantitative evaluation, based on “agreement marks” from 5, maximum, to 1 minimum, produced very positive results.

The average of these quantitative appraisals is very high for all sections of the SWOT, as shown in the table below. The rankings made by Serbian and Romanian partners were very similar, proving that the analysis was equally accurate on both sides of the border and both target groups perceived that their specific needs and challenges well represented in the common framework.

	Average evaluation mark of SWOT items (5 perfect agreement 1 total disagreement)		
SWOT SECTION	Serbian stakeholders	Romanian Stakeholders	All interviews Average
Social and demographic structure	4,44	4,43	4,44
Economy, SMEs development, Labor Market	3,89	4,39	4,25
Transport infrastructures, Accessibility, CBC connection	4,50	4,43	4,45
Environment Natural and cultural resources, Tourism	4,33	4,50	4,45
Education, R&D and Innovation	4,33	4,35	4,34
Local institutions and civil society	4,44	4,67	4,60

The consultations for the definition of the programme strategy, priorities and specific objectives and actions.

A second round of consultations was held after the approval of the selection of the priority axes themes.

The aim of this second round was that of the collection of feedback from

stakeholders on the expected results per each investment priority, the potential actions and project examples.

The consultations used multiple instruments and methodologies: workshops, collection of project ideas from the potential beneficiaries, publication of the programme draft on the programme web site, with invitation to the submission of comments and proposals.

The workshops with the stakeholders were held on both sides of the borders, as follows:

20-21 February 2014: In Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Romania and Pancevo, Serbia the draft Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis were discussed with the stakeholders. Also the potential beneficiaries were invited to present their proposals for the improvement of the programme implementation system.

18-19 June 2014: In Reșița, Romania and Smederevo, Serbia, the first programme draft was discussed together with the strategic projects proposals. Once more the potential beneficiaries were invited to present their proposals for the improvement of the programme implementation system

The total number of participants in these workshops was higher than 60, with representatives from all target groups and stakeholders.

The consultations via internet produced a rich set of comments and proposals for the improvement of programming documents (Territorial Analysis, SWOT Analysis, Draft Programme). Moreover, the potential beneficiaries were invited to fill in questionnaires with their project ideas that were used by the MA and the programming team to revise and improve the priority axes and related fields of interest content.

In addition to the workshops, consultations and debates on the programming documents were held during the Joint Working Groups for Planning and Programming as follows:

On 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2013, the first meeting of the Joint Working Group for Planning and Programming for Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 was held. During this meeting the JWG approved its Rules of Procedure, the Terms of Reference for Planning and Programming and the Terms of Reference for Ex-Ante Evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

On 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2013, in Bor, Serbia the first discussion on the draft Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis was held.

On 03<sup>rd</sup> of March 2014, in Reșița, Romania, the final versions of Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis were discussed and the JWG members were invited to submit any other additional comments until 14<sup>th</sup> of March. The documents included the comments and proposals received from the stakeholders during the workshops. Also the first draft of programme strategy was discussed.

On 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2014, in Vrsac, Serbia, the Territorial Analysis and SWOT analysis were approved, including the thematic priorities to be financed through the Programme.

On 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2014, in Baile Herculane, the priority axes were approved and also the JWG took the decision that strategic projects will be financed within the limit of 30% from the total IPA funds allocated to the programme.

On 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2014, in Veliko Gradiste, Serbia, the Joint Working Group approved the fields of interest providing a frame for the detailed indicative actions.

## 6. SECTION 6 - HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

### 6.1. Sustainable development

*Programme Authorities must ensure that environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management are promoted in the preparation and implementation of the programmes.*

*In the case of the Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme the biggest challenges are related to environmental and biodiversity protection and sustainable use of natural resources and the addressing of climate change, environmental risks management and emergency preparedness. These challenges relate to the protection of the environment as an intrinsic value of the region and as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism.*

The Programme is implemented via a number of projects. The assessment of the quality of the eligible project proposals should be based on a set of quality criteria which are common to all Priority Axes and Investment Priorities. When examining project proposals the guiding

question is:

*“Is the operation contributing to the promotion of sustainable development?”*

The contribution of each project to these principles will be addressed in a qualitative manner in the frame of project selection and programme monitoring and evaluation.

As a technical tool for the evaluators the following aspects will be considered in project selection:

- Contribution to energy efficiency, renewable energy use and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions<sup>25</sup>
- Contribution to efficient water supply, waste-water treatment and water reuse;
- Application of green public procurement in a systematic manner;
- Contribution to efficient waste management, re-use and recycling;
- Contribution to the development and management of green infrastructures including sound management of Natura 2000 sites on the Romanian side and equivalent natural protected areas on the Serbian side;
- Contribution to sustainable mobility and intermodality;
- Contribution to sustainable integrated urban development;
- Contribution to enhanced awareness of adaptation to climate change and risk prevention;
- Contribution to more employment opportunities, education, training and support services in the context of environment protection, risk management and sustainable development etc.

The estimated decrease of greenhouse gas emissions, the increase in energy efficiency and in renewable energy production are EU 2020 headline target indicators and should be monitored across supported operations.

Sustainable development is integrated as a horizontal principle considered in all steps of the elaboration of the Operational Programme, and will be followed in its implementation, by the Managing and National

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<sup>25</sup> The estimated decrease of greenhouse gas emissions, the increase in energy efficiency and in renewable energy production are EU 2020 headline target indicators and should be monitored across supported operations.

Authorities, beneficiaries and other stakeholders within the cross-border area. Appropriate management arrangements shall ensure at all levels of programme implementation, that - beyond the legally required absolute minimum standards possible effects which are unsustainable or unfavourable to environment, especially as concerns impacts on climate change, the maintaining of biodiversity and ecosystems, and the drawing on natural resources, are avoided or kept as low as possible, so that the environmental charges of the OP in total, will in the end be climate - and resource neutral.

The OP's positive effects and potentials for synergies in the sense of optimizing its contribution to an environmentally sustainable development shall be exploited at best and, wherever possible, be strengthened.

## **6.2. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination**

The European Commission underlines that "Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes"<sup>26</sup>.

Non-discrimination covers not only women (and men) but any discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. While anti-discrimination legislation is an acquired aspect of EU legal systems, the practical implementation of anti-discrimination practices is lagging behind. Equal access to information and controls on whether equality and non-discrimination requirements are being met is also an issue.

In the course of programme preparation, the Programme has observed non-discrimination and addressed relevant issues related to the socio-demographic developments in the eligible area (mainly related to ethnic composition, access to services and opportunities, migration and ageing) in the SWOT analysis. The strategy of the Programme puts emphasis in the availability of programme benefits to everyone through knowledge diffusion and dissemination, equality in the quality and access to social and public services, promotion of resources efficiency and availability of public environmental goods and services.

<sup>26</sup>

Article 7,CPR, COM(2011) 615 final/2, Brussels, 14.3.2012, p. 34

During programme implementation, the Programme emphasizes on the principle of equal access to information of the possibilities offered by the Programme. This includes targeting different social groups adequately; removing barriers in the communication of the Programme (e.g. media, language etc.), promoting barrier free approaches etc.

In the fields of monitoring and evaluation, attention will be given to equal opportunities and non-discrimination through:

- the inclusion of relevant indicators related to the profile of persons involved in the projects, e.g. on gender, ethnic origin, age, occupation and education level, disabilities etc.,
- the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the Joint Monitoring Committee and
- the evaluation of actions for the involvement of potentially discriminated groups in Programme Implementation e.g. related to flexible working arrangements, deputy arrangements, provisions for persons with disabilities, etc.)

While no penalty is foreseen for the projects, e.g. when not actively promoting non-discrimination and equal opportunities, it will be analysed based on the monitoring findings what was achieved in the field and which where the obstacles in the cases this did not materialise.

This strategic orientation of the Programme can be enhanced by a targeted selection of operations. When examining proposals the following “guiding question - where appropriate - should be assessed:

**Is the operation contributing to the promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination?**

The assessment of the quality of the eligible project proposals will be based on a set of quality criteria which are common to all Priority Axes and fields of interest. As a guide for the evaluators the following indicative aspects could be considered in project selection:

- Consideration of the different needs and intended and unintended impact of the project on different groups (e.g. vulnerable population with disabilities, minorities, returning and internal migrants, minorities of different religious beliefs and people of different sexual orientation etc.);
- Consideration of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in project implementation, e.g. concerning the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Action Plan, definition of equal opportunity

targets, provision of equal opportunities training or diversity management courses, provision of supporting services;

- Provisions for an equal access to the operation's outputs and benefits for all members of the society.

The OP will consider the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination during all stages of implementation - preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects.

The OP is highly concerned with promoting equal chances and opportunities and preventing any discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, disabilities or sexual orientations. Particular attention will be given to any groups at risk of being discriminated against, especially to those facing multiple discriminations (e.g. ethnic minorities women), and to requirements for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The cross-border region is characterised by disparities between urban and rural areas, in terms of economic development, innovation, social cohesion and access to public services. Therefore, applying the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination will contribute to the leveling of such differences in domains such as economic growth, public services, professional skills, innovation, labour mobility etc.

### 6.3. Equality between men and women

The aim of equality between women and men belongs to the fundamental values of the European Union and is set out in the Treaty on the European Union. Article 3 states that the Union shall *“combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child”*<sup>27</sup>. The elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men are also included in the consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union<sup>28</sup>. These fundamental values must be respected in the regulations and implementation of the Programme as indicated by the need to *“ensure that equality between men and women and [that] the integration of gender perspective is promoted in the preparation and implementation of programmes”* and that the *“...appropriate steps [will*

<sup>27</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union - TITLE I: COMMON PROVISIONS - Article 3 (e.g: Article 2 TEU), Official Journal 115 , 09/05/2008 P. 0017 - 0017

<sup>28</sup> Article 8, Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, Official Journal of the European Union C 83/49 of 30.3.2010.

*be taken]* to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes”<sup>29</sup>.

The same approach proposed above for the issues of non-discrimination can be used to ensure equality between men and women with a focus on the gender issue.

In the fields of monitoring and evaluation attention could be given to basic ‘gendered’ monitoring e.g. :

- Counting the number of women and men participating in projects;
- Assessing the number of women and men benefiting from funding;
- Assessing how much support and for which projects women and men are receiving funding (broken down by types of project/ ).

The assessment of the quality of the eligible project proposals will be based on a set of quality criteria which are common to all Priority Axes and fields of interest. As a guide for the evaluators the following indicative aspects could be considered in project selection:

- Consideration of the different starting positions of the target groups based on sex and gender (existence and extent of differences between women and men and the implications of these differences for the specific policy area etc.) and intended and unintended impact of the operation project on those groups in the project concept;
- Consideration of equality between men and women in project implementation, e.g. through inclusion of gender mainstreaming provisions, concerning the special needs and circumstances of men and women employees, introducing flexible, individual arrangements for female employees including childcare, information about these provisions in advertisements for job opportunities.

This principle will also be taken into consideration regarding the programme management structures, and the procedures for programme implementation and monitoring, e.g. staff recruitment and personnel policies.

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<sup>29</sup>

Article 7,CPR, COM(2011) 615 final/2, Brussels, 14.3.2012, p. 34



**7. ANNEXES (UPLOADED TO ELECTRONIC DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEMS AS SEPARATE FILES):**

- Final report of the ex-ante evaluation (including an executive summary of the report)
- Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme (Reference: Article 8(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)
- A map of the area covered by the cooperation programme
- A "citizens summary" of the cooperation programme
- Territorial analysis of the programme area
- Strategic Environmental Assessment

## **Annex II**

European Union contribution for the implementation of cross-border cooperation programme "*Interreg-IPA CBC Romania – Serbia 2014-2020*" per year

<b>Fund</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016*</b>	<b>2017*</b>	<b>2018*</b>	<b>2019*</b>	<b>2020*</b>	<b>Total</b>
IPA II	0	5,424,998	7,747,240	17,792,098	14,358,224	14,645,390	14,938,298	74,906,248

\*In accordance with Article 6(3) of Regulation (EU) No 231/2014, the commitments for the years 2016 to 2020 are indicative and dependent on the future annual budgets of the Union.

**Annex III** - The co-financing rate for each priority axis applicable to total eligible expenditure, including private and public expenditure.

Priority axis	Basis for calculation of Union support	Union support (a)	National counterpart	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding	Co-financing rate	For information	
	(Total eligible cost)		(b) = (c) + (d))			(e) = (a) + (b)	(f) = (a)/(e) (2)		
				National Public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
<i>Priority axis 1 - Employment promotion and services for an inclusive growth</i>	18,188,970	15,460,624	2,728,346	2,364,566	363,780	18,188,970	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 2 - Environmental protection and risk management</i>	21,150,000	17,977,500	3,172,500	2,749,500	423,000	21,150,000	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 3 - Sustainable mobility and accessibility</i>	21,150,000	17,977,500	3,172,500	2,749,500	423,000	21,150,000	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 4 - Attractiveness for sustainable tourism</i>	18,823,530	16,000,000	2,823,530	2,447,058	376,472	18,823,530	85.00%		
<i>Priority axis 5</i>	8,812,499	7,490,624	1,321,875	1,321,875	0	8,812,499	85.00%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,124,999</b>	<b>74,906,248</b>	<b>13,218,751</b>	<b>11,632,499</b>	<b>1,586,252</b>	<b>88,124,999</b>	<b>85.00%</b>		