

**Interreg - IPA CBC**



**CCI 2014TC16I5CB006**

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# **GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

**Call for Proposals No:  
2014TC16I5CB006-2018-2**

**Deadline for submission  
of project proposals:**

**11<sup>th</sup> of May 2018  
17:00 h. Bulgarian local time**

## Glossary of terms

<b>Applicant</b>	Any legal entity meeting the eligible criteria which submits an application to be financed by the programme
<b>Beneficiary</b>	An applicant whose application has been approved for financing
<b>Lead Partner/ Beneficiary</b>	A project partner designated by all partners within the operation, who submits the project proposal and shall assume responsibility for ensuring implementation of the entire operation in case of approval
<b>Eligible expenditure</b>	Expenditures made by a beneficiary, related to implementation of the operation financed through the programme, which could be financed from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), as well as from the state budget and/or own beneficiary contribution
<b>Eligible area/region</b>	The border area between the two participating countries comprising of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the districts of Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil in Bulgaria;</li> <li>- the North-East, the East and the South-East NUTS III statistical regions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.</li> </ul>
<b>Managing Authority</b>	The structure responsible for managing the programme - Directorate General Territorial Cooperation Management within the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works in Bulgaria
<b>National Authority</b>	The counterpart of the Managing Authority in the partner state - Ministry of Local Self-Government
<b>Priority Axis</b>	One of the priorities of the Programme's strategy corresponding to a thematic priority set out in the Annex III of Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 (IPA II Regulation) consisting of one or more specific objectives and description of activities to be supported, and their expected contribution to the specific objectives
<b>Project Partner</b>	Any applicant involved in the development of a project
<b>Operation</b>	A project, contract, action or group of projects selected by the Joint Monitoring Committee that contribute to the objectives of the Programme and the priority axis to which it relates
<b>Investment project</b>	Projects that have small scale construction and/or supply and/or purchase of the equipment component (works or/and supply) forming <b>more than 50 %</b> of total project costs of the entire project
<b>Soft project</b>	Projects that are mainly oriented at preparing studies, establishing networks, providing trainings, developing concepts, providing services for certain target groups, raising awareness on specific themes, etc. These projects may have an investment part <b>no more than 50%</b> of total costs of the entire project. Soft measures also include people-to-people type of actions that aim at increasing direct contacts and cooperation across the border among the people and their associations in the region
<b>Subsidy contract</b>	A written agreement between the MA and Lead beneficiary laying down the detailed conditions for proper implementation of the selected operation

## Glossary of Acronyms

<b>AA</b>	Audit Authority
<b>AF</b>	Application Form
<b>CA</b>	Certifying Authority
<b>CBC</b>	Cross-border Cooperation
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ERDF</b>	European Regional Development Fund
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ETC</b>	European Territorial Cooperation
<b>GD</b>	Government Decision
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IPA</b>	Instrument for Pre-accession assistance
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>JMC</b>	Joint Monitoring Committee
<b>JS</b>	Joint Secretariat
<b>LP</b>	Lead Partner
<b>MA</b>	Managing Authority
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>MS</b>	Member State
<b>NA</b>	National Authority
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NUTS</b>	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
<b>OP</b>	Operational Programme
<b>OPRD</b>	Operational Programme Regional Development
<b>PRAG</b>	Practical Guide for Procurement and Grants for European Union External Actions
<b>RDA</b>	Regional Development Agency
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research and Development
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
<b>SOP</b>	Sectoral Operational Programme
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>VAT</b>	Value Added Tax

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## Preface

These Application's Package for the Second Call for Proposals under the Interreg – IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 include the following integral parts, which must be considered in their entirety by all potential Applicants:

- **Guidelines for Applicants** for the Second Call for Proposals;
- **Attachments** - *contain important information and all Applicants must take them into consideration:*
  - Attachment 1 - Assessment of project proposals;
  - Attachment 2 - Fulfilment of Programme Indicators and Ranking of Project Proposals;
  - Attachment 3 - Complaint procedure;
  - Attachment 4 - State aid and de minimis provisions;
  - Attachment 5 - Instruction for electronic submission of project proposals.
- **Application Form** - to be filled in by the project partnership;
- **Annexes (A1-A3)** to the Application form - *contain templates of all declarations that must be submitted by the project partners together with the project proposal:*
  - Annex A1 - Checklist of submitted documents;
  - Annex A2 - Project Partnership Agreement;
  - Annex A3 - Declaration of E-mail Address of the Lead partner.
- **Subsidy contract** - draft version (for information purposes only).

## Legal basis

In the elaboration of the Guidelines for Applicants the following legal provisions have been observed:

- Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II);
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 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);
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes;

- Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action;
- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006;
- Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002;
- REGULATION (EU, EURATOM) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012;
- Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 2015/1929 of the European parliament and of the Council Of 28 October 2015 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union; Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/2462 of 30 October 2015 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

**Basic programme rules:**

- Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme 2014 - 2020, approved by the European Commission on 05.08.2015 by Decision No C(2015) 5653 with programme reference number CCI 2014TC16I5CB006, amended with Commission Implementing Decision No C(2016) 2851 from 4.5.2016 and Decision No C(2016) 8627 from 13.12.2016;

- Memorandum on Implementation of Interreg – IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme CCI Number: 2014TC16I5CB006 between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia;
- Financial Agreement between the European Commission and the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

### National legislation

Besides EU rules and rules of the Programme, national legislation in force ruling specific fields such as environmental interventions, natural and cultural heritage, construction, human resources, etc. has to be respected.

Please note that the legal provisions must be observed by the Applicants (Lead Partner and Project Partners) during both project development and project implementation phases.

## **1. General information**

The Guidelines for Applicants under Second Call for Proposals will serve as an essential reference document for all potential applicants interested in applying for funding under the Call within the framework of the Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme 2014-2020.

These Guidelines for Applicants aim to provide practical information for the Applicants and information that they need, in order to start application procedure (partnership, budget, filling in the application form) and other related requirements as project selection criteria, assessment and selection procedure and other practical advices.

### **⚠ IMPORTANT**

The present version of the document is only relevant in connection to the **Second Call for Proposals under the Interreg - IPA Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia CBC Programme 2014-2020.**

Possible modifications will be communicated via the Programme website.

The applicants are recommended to frequently visit the Programme website (<http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/>) to check the publication of the answers to the questions submitted and, before finalising the project proposal once more for any eventual changes.

## **1.1. Overview of the INTERREG - IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020**

This programme is financed by the European Union through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) and co-financed by Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through contributions from state budgets. Own co-financing by the project beneficiaries is allowed.

The programming document drafted jointly by the two countries through a large partnership with national, regional and local stakeholders was approved by the European Commission on 05.08.2015 (Decision No C(2015)5653). It sets out the general framework of intervention of IPA II

in the Programme cross-border area.

According to the IPA II Regulations, the two partnering countries have established the following main management and implementation bodies:

**Managing Authority (MA)** - Territorial Cooperation Management Directorate at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of the Republic of Bulgaria is designated to perform the functions of single Managing Authority - responsible for managing and implementing the Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and the provisions of Article 125 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

**National Authority (NA)** - The Ministry of Local Self-Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia cooperates with the Managing Authority in joint programming, management and implementation of the programme.

**Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)** is composed of representatives of MA, NA, European Commission, as well as other relevant national authorities and stakeholders. The composition of the JMC respects the principles of partnership and multi-level governance. JMC shall carry out its functions in accordance with the provisions of Article 38 of IPA II Implementing Regulation and Articles 49 and 110 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

**Joint Secretariat (JS)** is a common structure assisting the MA, NA and the JMC in carrying out their respective functions and providing relevant information on the programme to the potential beneficiaries. The main office of JS is based in **Kyustendil** (Bulgaria) and branch office - in **Strumitsa** (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

The programming document and application package are **available on the following web sites:**

- [www.ipa-cbc-007.eu](http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu)
- [www.mrrb.government.bg](http://www.mrrb.government.bg)
- [www.mls.gov.mk](http://www.mls.gov.mk)

### 1.1.1. Eligible cross-border area

The border area includes on Bulgarian side two NUTS III districts - **Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil** (52,5% of the CBC programme area), comprising of 23 municipalities, 462 settlements and a population of 452 973 people (46.2% of the total programme area population, 6,2% of the country population):

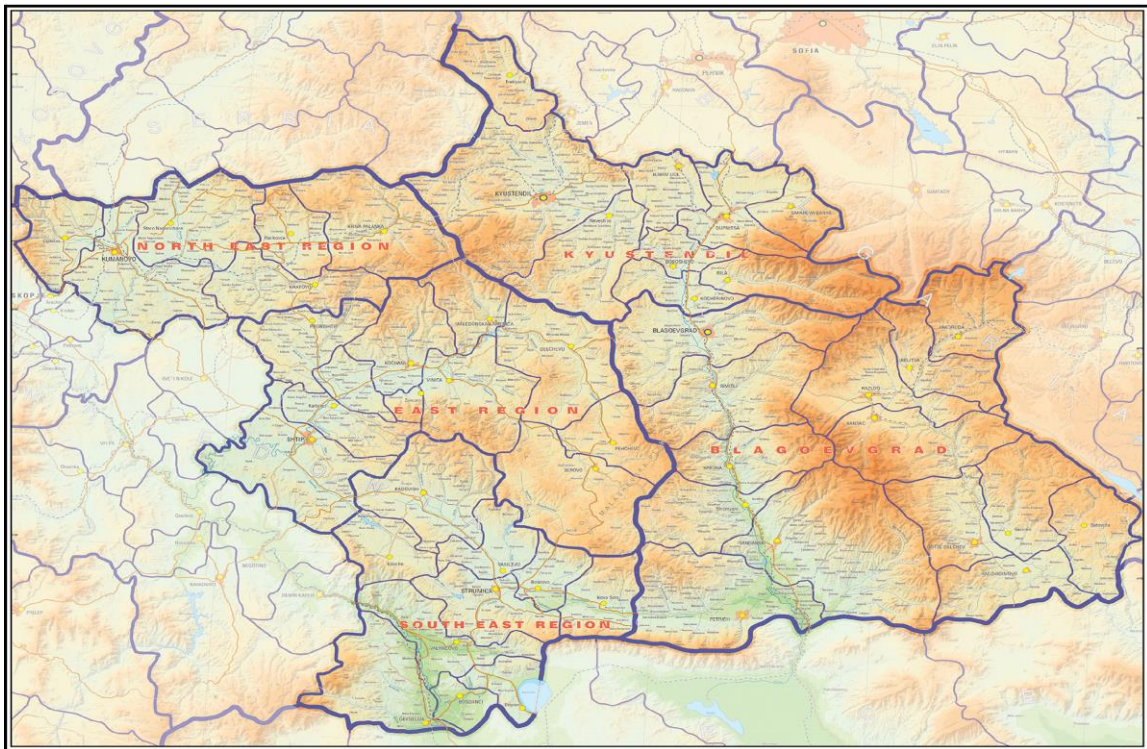
- District of **Blagoevgrad: 14 municipalities** - Bansko, Belitsa, Blagoevgrad, Gotce Delchev, Garmen, Kresna, Petrich, Razlog, Sandanski, Satovcha, Simitli, Strumiani, Hadjidimovo, Yakoruda;
- District of **Kyustendil: 9 municipalities** - Bobovdol, Boboshevo, Dupnitsa,



Kocherinovo, Kyustendil, Nevestino, Rila, Sapareva Banya, Trekliano.

The border area of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia comprises the **North-East, the East and the South-East** NUTS III statistical regions (47,5% of the programme area, 33,4% of the country area), consisting of 27 municipalities, 597 settlements and a population of 527 402 people (53,8% of the total programme area population, 25.6 % of the country population):

- **North-East region: 6 municipalities** - Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Rankovce, Kumanovo, Lipkovo and Staro Nagoricane;
- **South-East region: 10 municipalities** - Valandovo, Gevgelija, Bogdanci, Dojran, Radovis, Konce, Strumica, Bosilovo, Vasilevo and Novo Selo;
- **East region: 11 municipalities** - Berovo, Pehcevo, Vinica, Kocani, Cesinovo - Oblesevo, Zrnovci, Probistip, Stip, Karbinci, Delcevo and Makedonska Kamenica.



### 1.1.2. Programme strategy, priorities and objectives

The Programme strategy and the selection of priorities is based on the relevance of the topic regarding CBC, the identified potentials of the Programme area, the main needs and challenges that are impacting sustainable and socio-economic development of the region as well as budget constraints and lessons learnt from previous periods. The selected thematic priorities encompass subject matters and types of interventions of common interest, benefiting a broad spectrum of institutions and organisations located on both sides of the border and also having good potential for benefitting youth, women and vulnerable groups.

The overall objective of the Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme 2014 – 2020 is

**“to intensify cross-border cooperation between the people and institutions of the region in order to jointly address common challenges and exploit untapped potentials”**

The Programme had been prepared in compliance with three out of eight Thematic Priorities (TP) set in Annex III of Regulation (EU) №231/2014 (the IPA II regulation):

- Thematic Priority (b): Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management;
- Thematic Priority (d): Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage;
- Thematic Priority (g): Enhancing competitiveness, business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment.

In order to achieve the objectives set out in the programming document, the partnering countries have jointly agreed upon the main directions on which the interventions under this programme should focus. These main directions are called Priority Axes and are as follows:

- **Priority Axis 1: Environment;**
- **Priority Axis 2: Tourism;**
- **Priority Axis 3: Competitiveness;**
- **Priority Axis 4: Technical Assistance.**

#### **📌 IMPORTANT**

Only the **first three Priority Axes** finance projects submitted by applicants, while the fourth one (Technical assistance) is dedicated to ensuring the proper functioning of the programme management and implementation bodies.

The priority axes are broken down to the specific objectives (SO) as follows:

#### **Priority Axis 1: Environment**

- Specific objective 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of the common natural resources of the CBC area
- Specific objective 1.2 Prevention and mitigation of consequences of natural and man-caused disasters of cross-border dimension and impact

#### **Priority axis 2: Tourism**

- Specific objective 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through cooperation initiatives in better preservation and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage
- Specific objective 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region’s tourist offer

- Specific objective 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism

### **Priority axis 3: Competitiveness**

- Specific objective 3.1. Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses

**For further details on programme priority axes and specific objectives, please refer to the programming document.**

## **1.2. Financial allocation of the Call for Proposals**

**The amount allocated for this Call for Proposals represents Programme financial allocation for 2019 and 2020 for the three priority axes, broken down as follows:**

<b>Priority Axis</b>	<b>Community Funding</b>	<b>National funding*</b>	<b>Total funding (EUR)</b>
	(a)	(b)	(a)+(b)
<b>Priority Axis 1</b>	2 286 661	403 528	2 690 189
<b>Priority Axis 2</b>	2 613 327	461 176	3 074 503
<b>Priority Axis 3</b>	979 998	172 941	1 152 939
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 879 986</b>	<b>1 037 645</b>	<b>6 917 631</b>

*\*Contributions from national budgets of partnering countries*

**In addition to the above funds, the Programme shall also use all the generated savings from the financial resources that have been allocated towards the First Call for Proposals. Therefore, project under the current Call for Proposals may be contracted after approval by the Joint Monitoring Committee until the full exhaustion of the Programme funding for the 2014-2020 period.**

The EU will finance 85% of the eligible expenditures and the state budgets of the two participating countries shall provide 15% co-financing.

Voluntary own co-financing by the partners is allowed.

## **1.3. Programme indicators and ranking of project proposals**

The indicators are vital to the efficient and effective implementation of the Programme. They serve to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the Programme has achieved its objectives, and the efficiency with which it has done so.

The achievement of the Programme objectives will be measured by **output** and **result indicators**:

- **Output indicators** - measure the achievement of the quantitative targets of the

Programme.

- **Result indicators** - tracking the values of result indicators allows an on-going assessment on whether or not the supported actions under the Programme correspond to the specific objectives to be achieved.

### **🔥 IMPORTANT**

**Each project must contribute to the achievement of at least one of the Programme output indicators.**

Under each Specific objective for every Priority Axis, the Programme has identified a number of output indicators and has set target values for each of them. These targets need to be reached through the implemented interventions under the Programme, since each project must contribute to the achievement of the output indicators. Failure to fulfil the set targets shall indicate that the Programme has not achieved its goals in terms of overall cross-border impact, which in return shall result in loss of EU funding.

### **🔥 IMPORTANT**

**The financing** under the current Call for Proposals **shall be made available to potential beneficiaries** through a competitive process while **high priority will be given to project proposals contributing to the Programme output indicators, which will be not fully achieved by the project contracted under the First Call for Proposals.**

The applicants should pay serious attention **to the information for fulfilment of Programme indicators and the rules for ranking of project proposals specified in Attachment 2 - Fulfilment of Programme Indicators and Ranking of Project Proposals.**

## **2. Rules of the Call for Proposals**

### **2.1. Eligibility criteria**

The present Call for Proposal has the goal of establishing solid cross-border partnerships by encouraging the implementation of both "soft" activities (as studies, seminars, know-how exchanges, etc.) and "investment" activities (construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, restoration works and/or supplies, etc.)

Given the prevailing kind activities, two types of projects will be financed:

- **Soft projects** – projects that mainly involve elaboration of studies and strategies, seminars, know-how exchanges, etc., but which can also include small scale construction and/or supply components (representing Budget Line 5 – Equipment and Works), forming no more than 50% of the total eligible cost of the entire project;
- **Investment projects** – projects that have small scale construction and/or supply components (representing Budget Line 5 – Equipment and Works), forming more than

50% of the total eligible cost of the entire project. In addition, it is highly recommended those projects to involve also "soft" activities relevant to the proposed investment measures, such as studies, common strategies, trainings, seminars, know-how exchanges, etc. Thus their contribution to the achievement of the Programme specific objectives, results and outputs will increase.

In order to be eligible for funding under the Programme, the project proposal should meet three sets of eligibility criteria:

- eligibility of applicants (see section 2.1.1);
- eligibility of activities (see section 2.1.2);
- eligibility of expenditures (see section 2.1.3).

### 2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants

#### **📌 IMPORTANT**

Every project must include at **least one partner** from **each side of the border region**. Projects which do not comply with this requirement **will not be eligible**.

All partners involved in the project should fulfil the following criteria:

- **be legally established organizations (legal persons) according to the national legislation of the state on whose territory they are located;**

Exception is made for subsidiary structures of local/regional/national authorities. In case a structure of local/regional/national authority is not and cannot act as a legal entity, its legally established central organization, if such exists, shall be the project partner;

and

- **be registered within the eligible cross border region between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;**

Exception is made for national/regional public authorities whose area of competence, established by legal acts, extends to the eligible area of the programme or structures of central public authorities located in the eligible cross border region which cannot be registered as legal entities – in this case the central authority is a project partner;

and

- **be non-profit making bodies/organizations,**

and

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary.

#### **📌 IMPORTANT**

Local and regional branches of organizations whose **headquarters are registered outside the eligible border region** between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia **are**

**not eligible under current Call for Proposals with exception of regional structures of central public authorities located in the eligible cross-border area** that cannot be registered as legal entities.

Political parties/organizations and trade companies are not eligible applicants under the programme.

### **📌 IMPORTANT**

In addition to other eligibility criteria specified above, **Lead partner** must be registered **at least 12 months before the deadline for submission of project proposals under current Call for Proposals.**

Indicative lists of potential beneficiaries under each priority axis and type of measures are given below:

#### **Priority axis 1 Environment:**

- Local and regional authorities and their associations
- Regional structures of central public authorities (including protected areas administration and those dealing with emergency situations and nature / environment protection)
- Regional and sectoral development agencies, non-government organisations
- Research, education and training institutions
- Social institutions
- Any association of the above

#### **Priority axis 2 Tourism:**

- Local and regional authorities and their associations
- Regional structures of central public authorities (including protected areas administration and those dealing with tourism development)
- Regional and sector development agencies
- Civil society / non-government organisations
- Regional touristic associations / NGOs in the field of tourism
- Business support structures - chamber of commerce, business association, business cluster and others
- Education and training institutions / centres
- Cultural institutes (museum, library, art gallery, community centre, and others)
- Euroregions
- Any association of the above

#### **Priority axis 3 Competitiveness:**

- Local and regional authorities (and their associations)
- Regional structures of central public authorities (including regional offices of employment agency; structures dealing with economic development and others)
- Business support structures – chamber of commerce, business association, business

cluster and others

- Regional and sector development agencies, non-government organisations
- Research, education and training institutions / centres
- Euroregions
- Associations of the above

**Potential applicant is not eligible to participate in this Call for proposals or be awarded a contract if:**

a) – it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

b) - it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established;

c) - it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

i) - fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility criteria or in the performance of a contract;

ii) - entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;

iii) - violating intellectual property rights;

iv) - attempting to influence the decision-making process during the evaluation, selection and pre-contracting procedure;

v) - attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the evaluation, selection and pre-contracting procedure;

d) - it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:

i) - fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;

ii) - corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, as well as corruption as defined in the law of the country where the Managing Authority is located, the country in which the applicant is established or the country of the performance of the contract;

iii) - participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;

iv) - money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;

v) - terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA respectively, or inciting or aiding or abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Framework Decision;

vi) - child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;

e) - the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract financed by the EU, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;

f) - it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/951;

g) - the applicant is in situation of conflict of interests; the conflict of interests represents any circumstances that may affect the evaluation or implementation process, in an objective and impartial manner. Such circumstances may result from economic interests, political or national preferences or family connection.

### **IMPORTANT**

All project partners should sign and stamp a "**Declaration of eligibility and commitment**" (part of the Application Form) including all categories listed and declare that they do not fall into any of the above categories.

### **Partnership principles**

All organizations participating under this Call for Proposals are called project partners.

All project partners must sign and stamp a **Project Partnership Agreement** (Annex A2) that



stipulates their rights and duties. The Project Partnership Agreement should be submitted together with the Application form. A template of Annex A2 indicating the minimum standards of the Project Partnership Agreement can be further extended and/or clarified by the project partners.

The partners shall select one, from among themselves, to be the **Lead Partner**.

The tasks of the Lead Partner are provided in the **subsidy contract (Annex C)** and in the **Project Partnership Agreement** template (**Annex A2**) as well.

### **🔥 IMPORTANT**

The maximum number of partners in a project shall not exceed **five (5), including the Lead Partner!**

All partners are directly responsible for the project implementation and cannot act as an intermediary.

All project partners shall annex a Decision of Local Council/ Board of Directors or any similar body governing them regarding the project development and the coverage of expenditures related to it.

### **🔥 IMPORTANT**

Under current Call for Proposals an institution/organization may submit **maximum two (2) project proposals: one (1) project proposal as Lead Partner** and **one (1) project proposal as Project Partner** or **two (2) project proposals as Project Partner**.

**In case the above requirement had not been respected, all proposals submitted by the applicant will be eliminated on administrative compliance and eligibility check stage** (for details see Attachment 1).

## **2.1.2. Eligibility of activities**

### **Projects duration and grant amount limits**

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Type of measure</b>	<b>Project Grant Amount (€)</b>	<b>Project Duration (months)</b>
Priority Axis 1 Environment	1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of the common natural resources of the CBC area	Soft	50 000 - 120 000	8 - 15
		Investment	100 000 - 400 000	12 - 24
	1.2 Prevention and mitigation of consequences of natural and man-caused disasters of cross-border dimension and impact	Soft	50 000-120 000	8 - 15
		Investment	100 000 - 400 000	12 - 24

Priority Axis 2 Tourism	2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through cooperation initiatives in better preservation and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage	Investment	100 000 - 500 000	12 - 24
	2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer	Soft	50 000 - 120 000	8 - 15
	2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism	Soft	50 000 - 120 000	8 - 15
Priority Axis 3 Competitiveness	3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses	Soft	50 000 - 120 000	8 - 15

**Duration:**

For **Soft projects** the duration of the project should **not exceed 15 months** from the starting date of the project.

For **Investment projects** the duration of the project should **not exceed 24 months** from the starting date of the project.

**Location:**

In order to be eligible for financing all project activities must take place within the **eligible cross-border area of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** (see section 1.1.1).

**🔥 IMPORTANT**

Pursuant to Article 44(2) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 and Section 5, point 5.4 of the Programme document, the Programme shall finance **operations located outside the eligible cross-border area up to the limit of 20 %** of the support from the Union at Programme level.

The activities outside border area **must be related to participation/organization of events, seminars, business trips, promotion campaign etc.** and should be **budgeted in BL3 and BL4 in the budget of the respective partner.**

In accordance with the above and following the provisions of the Programme it is possible **up to 20 % of the respective beneficiary's budget** to be spent for the activities implemented **outside of the programme eligible area.** The beneficiary should provide a detailed justification proving that those activities are necessary for achieving of the specific project objective. The activities and related costs should be indicated in the application form. The limitation of 20 % also should be respected in the implementation phase of the project – spending, reporting and verification. When calculating the amount of expenditures for the activities which will be

implemented outside of the programme eligible area, applicants must keep in mind that:

- The place for incurring expenditures for services is the place of the performance of the service in question;
- The place for incurring expenditures for meetings, conferences, seminars, trainings, etc., is the place where the event will be held.

The project must be in line with the indicative actions from the specific objective under each priority axis as stipulated in the Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme and described below:

### **📌 IMPORTANT**

One project proposal **must cover only one Specific objective under respective Priority axis. Combination of activities from different Specific objectives is forbidden and will lead to direct elimination.**

### **ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:**

Under **all Priority Axes** indicative activities **are given below:**

#### **Priority Axis 1 – ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Specific Objective 1.1 Environmental protection and sustainable use of the common natural resources of the CBC area**

##### **Environmental friendly small-scale investments:**

- Joint environmental friendly initiatives and investments in small infrastructure, equipment and technologies for air, water and soil pollution control/monitoring and rehabilitation of rivers, contaminated lands, brown fields, etc.;
- Small scale investments in recycling, waste collection, waste separation, remediation of illegal dumping sites and improving public hygiene;
- Small scale investments for improving the management of Natura 2000 and nature protected sites;
- Small scale investments in Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and energy efficiency in public infrastructure;
- Joint initiatives towards the protection and restoration of ecosystems and endangered / protected species;
- Joint coordinated actions for restoration of the natural processes and characteristics of river habitats;
- Air pollution control / monitoring activities as cleaner domestic combustion installations, fuel switching abatement technologies;

##### **Joint initiatives and cooperation, exchange of experience, know-how and capacity building activities:**

- Joint initiatives, networks and partnerships for promoting nature protection, energy

- efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources among local population, including young people, marginalized communities and other vulnerable groups;
- Joint approaches, studies, plans, common databases focusing on protecting landscape and biodiversity;
  - Development and implementation of management plans for the protected areas, existing and potential Natura 2000 sites;
  - Cooperation, exchange of experiences and knowledge between institutions in the field of nature protection and pollution prevention;
  - Cooperation between public authorities and NGOs in the field of safe and sustainable low-carbon economy across borders;
  - Awareness raising and training initiatives on all levels (individual persons, organizations, businesses, public administration, schools) on issues related to environmental and nature protection, reducing and recycling waste, etc.;
  - Awareness raising initiatives related to the possibilities to mainstream air quality in agriculture (e.g. in livestock keeping, handling of manure, using fertiliser, burning of biomass and agricultural waste).

### **Specific Objective 1.2 Prevention and mitigation of consequences of natural and man-caused disasters of cross-border dimension and impact**

#### **Early warning systems, equipment and assets, small-scale investments:**

- Small scale investments for consolidation of river beds, reconstruction or construction of dikes, prevention of landslides, construction of hydro technical facilities (weirs) for flood prevention, etc.;
- Small scale investments for risk prevention and response to natural and environmental hazards and the consequences of climate change, such as:
  - supply of specialized fire-fighting equipment,
  - supply of specialized equipment for control of floods and for search and rescue interventions,
- Support of small-scale interventions / investments as restoration of flood plains and wetlands, afforestation, re-meandering, sanitation of river banks; building flood defence (dikes, canals etc.); removal of river sediments; forestation of non-permanent or vulnerable land; cuttings for emergency situations; etc.

The natural flood risk management approach (green infrastructure) will be considered as preferable to grey infrastructure projects (e.g. canals, dykes) for flood prevention and protection as it is a better environmental option (or as complementary to minimize grey infrastructure and its impacts).

In addition, the nature based solutions would contribute to the restoration of the natural processes and characteristics of river habitats in the designated Natura 2000 sites and potential Natura 2000

sites. In this regard coordinated actions between the two countries should be envisaged as well.

**Joint initiatives, strategies, awareness raising, exchange of experience:**

- Joint approaches for promoting risk prevention awareness, adaptation and mitigation (e.g. risk mapping of accident risk spots, hazard and risk assessment and evaluation methods, joint databases, joint plans and methodologies, joint risk assessment strategies; early warning and disaster management systems);
- Preparation of technical documentation, feasibility studies and detailed designs for consolidation of river beds, for construction of dikes or prevention of landslides; Joint activities for improving cooperation and capacity for disaster management;
- Joint initiatives addressing water quality and management;
- Exchange of experience and good practices (study visits, round-tables, conferences, trainings) for public authorities and other concerned target groups on management of environmental emergencies;
- Awareness-raising campaigns in the field of risk prevention and management for all population groups (including young people and marginalised groups), the negative effects of climate change and possible mitigation measures;
- Conducting joint theoretical-tactical practices and field trainings for emergency situation management for local population (with special focus on young people);
- Specific actions in the field of education, information-sharing, training for local population and etc.

**Priority Axis 2 – TOURISM**

**Specific Objective 2.1 Enhancing the tourism potential of the region through cooperation initiatives in better preservation and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage**

**Small-scale investments, ICT and GIS platforms, info-centres, touristic transport schemes:**

- Restoration and maintenance of touristic sites of historical and cultural importance, including conservation and protection of tangible and intangible natural, historical and cultural heritage;
- Improvement of accessibility to natural, cultural and historical touristic sites through rehabilitation of access roads, building of new and/or reconstructing or upgrading of existing cycling routes and walking paths (including the accompanying elaborating a common standard for road signs and information tables, as well as a joint travel guides etc.);
- Building of new and/or rehabilitation and upgrading of tourist attractions, info-centres, kiosks to guide potential visitors, etc.
- Public utilities upgrade (electricity, water-supply, sewage, etc.) related to touristic sites;

- Development of facilities for access to or in the tourist sites for disabled people;

### **Specific Objective 2.2 Raising the competitiveness of the CBC region's tourist offer**

#### **Joint researches, joint tourism product and services development and promotion, training and consultancy:**

- Elaboration and implementation of joint thematic routes and thematic tourism clusters (that are based on the region's unique natural and cultural heritage);
- Development of new / alternative / sustainable tourism products and services;
- Joint actions, tools and initiatives for the promotion of the cross-border tourist products (e.g. joint participation in tourism trade fairs, exhibitions and other promotional events, joint advertising campaigns, etc.);
- Joint elaboration and implementation of plans for development of tourism activities, new tourist destinations and experience;
- Joint initiatives to improve the service quality in tourism (exchange of experience and good practices, trainings, study tours, etc.);
- Support to start-up initiatives for exploiting local assets to create new tourism products and services (incl. for women and marginalized groups);
- Development of cross-border transport schemes to touristic sites;

### **Specific Objective 2.3 Promoting cooperation among regional actors in the area of sustainable tourism**

#### **Joint promotional events, awareness raising and networking:**

- Creating / developing / strengthening of joint networks for exchange of good practices in sustainable tourism management;
- Developing / implementing joint policies, strategies, training and capacity building events for the valorization of the cultural and natural heritage through its restoration and promotion for sustainable economic uses;
- Organization of joint cultural events for the promotion of the region's cultural identity in the field of music, theatre, art and etc.;
- Creating networks for addressing youth initiatives in the border area, incl. the participation of kids and young people in initiatives in the area of cultural, social, science and physical activities (music, philosophy, sports, regional exploration);

Awareness raising campaigns on all levels (individual persons, organizations, businesses, public administration, schools, universities) on issues related to sustainable utilization and promotion of the region's intangible cultural and natural heritage;

### **Priority Axis 3 – COMPETITIVENESS**

#### **Specific Objective 3.1 Improving the competitiveness of regional businesses**

**Only soft measure activities are envisaged under this priority axis:**

**Actions for enhancing the competitiveness of companies:**

- Support to joint start-up and self-employment initiatives (especially for young people, women);
- Support to (creation of) social enterprises and social entrepreneurship;
- Joint approaches and promotion, development and implementation of innovations in businesses;
- Exchange of experience in innovation tools and products and joint actions for stimulating the growth of innovative/higher added-value industries (e.g. bio-farming, environmental technologies, ICTs, energy saving, pharmaceutical, electronic, etc.);

**Actions for intensifying the cooperation among businesses:**

- Support for the development of cross-border business clusters;
- Promoting and implementing joint business development training, cooperation, exchange of experience and capacity building schemes;
- Joint initiatives for export promotion; organization and participation of cross-border fairs, exhibitions, trade missions; joint participation in fairs in third countries;
- Exchange of experience and good practices for boosting the economic development of the region for investment promotion;
- Cooperation between business, research and development and educational / training institutions in the field of technology transfer, innovative approaches / tools and the promotion of knowledge-based economy;
- Creating networks for enhancing the employment potential of young people, women and vulnerable/marginalized groups;

**🔥 IMPORTANT**

**Please consider the following requirements for all works activities:**

**Works activities should be implemented on a municipal or state-owned property.**

The property should be:

- free of any encumbrances;
- not the object of a pending litigation;
- not the object of a claim according to the relevant national legislation.

**All envisaged works activities have to be supported with approved/certified detailed works design** (where applicable according to the relevant legislation of the country - Bulgaria or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), **where the works activities will be implemented. In case of construction works, for which the relevant legislation do not require approval of a work design, the applicants have to present a statement by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for design's approval.**

**All the investment proposals should have positive environmental impact assessment**

**(EIA), if for such kind of activities an EIA is required by the national legislation.**

When the relevant legislation does not require positive environmental impact assessment, the applicants have to present a statement by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for environmental impact assessment.

**Please be aware that all required documents concerning investment activities must be in compliance with the national legislation.**

**🔥 IMPORTANT**

**Supplies, which need permanent installation, shall be installed on municipal or state-owned property.**

**INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:**

Under **all Priority Axes** expenditures for the following types of activities **are ineligible:**

- Activities without a real cross-border impact;
- Activities concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- Activities concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses or research actions;
- Activities with provisions for financing the usual management activities of the local organizations;
- Activities that started before the applicants have signed a contract for awarding grants except project preparation activities;
- Activities linked to political parties;
- Charitable donations;
- Activities financed by other Community Programmes;
- One-off actions such as conferences, round tables, seminars or similar events. These actions can only be funded if they form part of a wider project. For this purpose, preparatory activities for a conference and the publication of proceedings do not in themselves constitute such a wider project;
- Actions for which the Partner has already received funding e.g. from the state budget, other Community programmes or other funds;
- Commercial activities;
- Actions which are ideologically biased;
- Sub-granting activities (i.e. the use of the grant to make further grants (financial or in-kind) or loans to other organisations or individuals such as for those who are establishing their businesses);
- Actions that include provisions to finance the core activities currently carried out by the applicant or (if any) his partners;
- Actions supporting establishment or activities of private or public enterprises, and profit-



earning activities;

- Tourist packages activities such as "safari" and "off-road" runs are not eligible because they lead to significant damage to environment and biodiversity.

### 2.1.3. Eligibility of expenditures

Only eligible costs can be taken into account for financial support. The expenditures are generally eligible if they comply with the principles of sound financial management and with the relevant rules for public procurement.

Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents with some exceptions for which the flat rate should be applied.

The eligibility of the expenditures is subject to the technical and quality assessment of the project proposals. Therefore it is in the applicants' interest to provide a realistic and cost-effective budget. Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checking process which precedes the signing of the contract does not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic costs and other ineligible costs).

#### **ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES**

Under the current call for proposals, **eligible expenditures** must:

- be necessary for carrying out the activity and must comply with the principles of sound financial management, in particular value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- have been stipulated in the project budget;
- have actually been incurred by the beneficiaries or their partners during the implementing period for the activities defined in the application form;
- be recorded in the partners' accounts and tax documents, be identifiable and verifiable, and be backed up by supporting documents;
- be verified by controllers and certified as eligible;
- be in line with the provisions of the subsidy contract, European and national legislation;
- not be subject to financing from any other public funds;
- be carried out within the eligible period. In accordance with Article 43(1) of the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 the starting date for the eligibility of expenditure for project preparation for the Bulgarian partners is the starting date of the programme period, namely January 1, 2014. For the partners from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the starting date for the eligibility of expenditure for project preparation is 23 September 2014 - the date after the date of the submission of the Programme to EC. The ending date for eligibility of expenditures for project preparation is the date of submission of the project proposal to the MA and this condition applies to all applicants, both Bulgarian and Macedonian. The project preparation expenditures should be carried out before or on the date of submission of the project proposals at the latest, and this condition applies to all applicants, both Bulgarian and Macedonian.

**🔔 NOTE**

The earliest possible starting date for eligibility of project expenditures is **the date following the Subsidy contract registration in the Registry system of MA** with the exception of expenditures for project preparation (when applicable).

**INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES**

According to Article 43(2) of Commission implementing regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 the following expenditures shall **not be eligible** for a contribution from the IPA:

- (a) interest on debt;
- (b) value added tax (VAT) except where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation;
- (c) the decommissioning and the construction of nuclear power stations;
- (d) investment to achieve the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from activities falling under Annex I to Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (1);
- (e) the manufacturing, processing and marketing of tobacco and tobacco products;
- (f) undertakings in difficulties as defined under Union State aid rules;
- (g) investment in airport infrastructure unless related to environmental protection or accompanied by investment necessary to mitigate or reduce its negative environmental impact.

In addition, the project **ineligible expenditures** are as follows:

- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation;
- Costs of gifts, except those not exceeding EUR 50 per gift where related to promotion, communication, publicity or information;
- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange currency;
- Interest on debt;
- Purchase of land not built on or land built on in the amount exceeding 10% of the total eligible expenditure of the project. For derelict sites and for those formerly in industrial use which comprise buildings, the amount exceed 15 % of the total eligible expenditure of the project;
- Recoverable VAT from other sources;
- Charges for national financial transactions;
- Consultant fees between partners for services and work carried out within the project.

Operations shall not be selected under the Programme where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for funding under the cross-border cooperation programme is submitted by the beneficiary to the Managing Authority, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made by the beneficiary.

**🔔 IMPORTANT**

**In-kind contribution is not eligible expenditure.****Direct and indirect expenditures (costs):**

- Direct expenditures are all expenditures that can be attributed directly to the project - expenditures for travel and accommodation, external expertise and services, equipment and works (budget lines 3, 4 and 5).
- Indirect expenditures are the costs that cannot be assigned directly to the project activities but are necessary for their implementation – expenditures for staff, office and administrative expenditures (budget lines 1 and 2).

Project preparation expenditures (budget line 6) are carried out before the project implementation period.

**Note****Eligible expenditures for VAT****For Bulgarian partners:**

The expenditures for VAT are eligible if they are non-recoverable from other sources under national VAT legislation. Before filling the application form each beneficiary should clarify its VAT status for each activity and determine the VAT as recoverable or non-recoverable from other sources. In case the VAT is non-recoverable from other sources it is eligible for financing by the programme.

The amount of eligible VAT (non-recoverable from other sources) should be included in the unit rates of the budget. The eligibility of expenditures for VAT should be proved by the beneficiary at the reporting stage and is subject of verification by the MA. The beneficiaries who partially recover VAT have to provide the first level controllers with the proof of the percentage of non-recoverable VAT. VAT paid abroad is eligible expenditure in case it is not recoverable by any means from other sources. Guidelines for Bulgarian beneficiaries concerning the eligibility of expenditures for VAT is given by Bulgarian minister of finance with letter No NF-3/23.12.2016.

**Note**

Unit rates in the respective partners' budgets must be written to the second decimal place only, regardless of the fact that Excel shall automatically round them in case more decimal places are written.

Example:

10 units X 2.25 = 22.50 is the CORRECT way to write the unit rate;

10 units X 2.24875 = 22.50 is the INCORRECT way to write the unit rate, regardless of the fact that Excel shall automatically round it to 2.25.

Failure to comply with this requirement might cause technical glitches in the electronic Application Form and its proper upload in the electronic system, which in turn may lead to problems during the assessment process for the proposal!

**Budget Lines:**

BUDGET LINE 1: Staff costs

BUDGET LINE 2: Office and Administrative costs

BUDGET LINE 3: Travel and Accommodation costs

BUDGET LINE 4: External expertise and services costs

BUDGET LINE 5: Equipment and Works

BUDGET LINE 6: Project preparation

**Budget Line 1: Staff costs**

This budget line covers the expenses for remuneration of staff involved in the project implementation. Staff cost shall not exceed 15% of the eligible direct costs for "Soft" projects and 10% of the eligible direct costs for "Investment" projects.

**Staff costs shall be reimbursed by Managing Authority in one of the following options:**

- on a real cost basis (proven by the employment document and payslips); or
- as a flat rate of the direct costs.

**Each project partner must choose one of these reimbursement options which will remain unchanged through the entire project implementation period.**

**Real cost option**

Expenditure on staff costs shall consist of gross employment costs for individuals employed by the beneficiary in one of the following ways:

- full time – 100% of gross employment costs are allocated to the project respectively the employee is working 100% on the project;
- part-time with a fixed percentage of time worked per month – fixed percentage of the gross employment costs allocated to the project in line with a fixed percentage of time worked on the project per month;
- part-time with a flexible number of hours worked per month – the reimbursement of staff costs shall be calculated on an hourly rate basis determined by: - dividing the monthly gross employment costs by the monthly working time fixed in the employment document expressed in hours; or - dividing the latest documented annual gross employment costs by 1720 hours. The calculated hourly rates shall be multiplied by the number of hours actually worked on the project;
- on an hourly basis – staff costs related to individuals who, according to the employment document, work on an hourly basis.

**Flat rate option****· IMPORTANT**

**Flat rate is eligible option only for project partners where all team members will be full time employed under the project. In any other cases the eligible option is a real costs.**

The flat rate shall be applied at the level of the project partner and shall not exceed 15% of the

eligible direct costs for "Soft" projects and 10% of the eligible direct costs for "Investment" projects. The flat rate percentage should be indicated in the budget by the project partner and will remain the same for the entire project implementation period. In the verification process the beneficiaries do not need to present any supporting documents that the expenditures have been incurred and paid. The proper appointment of the project team is on the responsibility of the beneficiaries themselves.

### Description

The members of the project staff for example are project manager, coordinator, accountant, assistant, etc. Staff costs must relate to activities which the partner organization would not carry out if the project was not undertaken. The members of the project staff perform periodically repetitive actions related to the organization, coordination, management and reporting of the activities and results related to the project during the project period. The employee could work full-time or part-time for the project.

The staff costs include:

- Salary payments fixed in the employment/work contract, an appointment decision (in the case of natural persons working for the partner organization under a contract other than an employment/work contract) or by law, relating to the responsibilities specified in the job description of the staff member concerned.
- Any other costs directly linked to the salary such as employment taxes and social security including pensions as long as they are fixed in the employment document and they are in accordance with the legislation and standard practices in the country and/or organization and are not recoverable by the employer.

The appointment of the staff by the beneficiaries is the sole responsibility of the beneficiaries themselves and has to be made in accordance with European and national legislation.

In the beginning of the project implementation each beneficiary will be requested to present internal order, or a letter for nomination of project team members for successful implementation of the project activities.

## Budget Line 2: Office and administrative costs

**Office and administrative costs shall be reimbursed by the Managing Authority to the beneficiaries as a flat rate of maximum 15% of staff costs for both soft projects and investment projects.** The flat rate percentage should be indicated in the budget by the project partner and will remain the same for the entire project implementation period. In the verification process the beneficiaries do not need to present any supporting documents that the expenditures have been incurred and paid. The spending and proper documentation of these expenditures is the responsibility of the respective beneficiary.

The expenditures on office and administration costs cover operating and administrative expenditures of the partner organization that support delivery and implementation of project activities.	
Description	
<b>Rent of office</b>	Expenses covering rent of office for the purpose of the project;
<b>Overheads</b>	Expenses covering electricity, heating, water, telephone costs, internet, and other utilities;
<b>Consumables</b>	Expenses covering paper, pens, CDs, folders, toners for the needs of the office;
<b>Bank taxes</b>	Bank charges for opening and administering the account(s) where the implementation of the project requires a separate account to be opened (only for the Lead beneficiary);
<b>Maintenance costs</b>	Bank Charges for transnational financial transactions (for all beneficiaries); Postal services, maintenance, cleaning, security, insurances, business cards, coffee/biscuits for small project meetings.

**📌 IMPORTANT**

**The maximum thresholds for flat rates on budget line 1 and 2 are obligatory and will be ground for rejection of the project proposal.**

Example for calculation of the amount of flat rates on BL 1 "Staff costs" and BL 2 "Office and administrative costs" for project partner:

**Investment project:**

BL 3 "Travel and accommodation costs" = 5 000 Euro;

BL 4 "External expertise and services costs" = 50 000 Euro;

BL 5 "Equipment and works" = 180 000 Euro;

- Max. amount of BL 1 "Staff costs" =  $(BL\ 3 + BL\ 4 + BL\ 5) * 10/100 = (5\ 000 + 50\ 000 + 180\ 000) * 10/100 = 23\ 500$  Euro
- Max. amount of BL 2 "Office and administrative costs" =  $BL\ 1 * 15/100 = 23\ 500 * 15/100 = 3\ 525$  Euro.

**Soft project:**

BL 3 "Travel and accommodation costs" = 3 000 Euro;

BL 4 "External expertise and services costs" = 55 000 Euro;

BL 5 "Equipment and works" = 25 000 Euro;

- Max. amount of BL 1 "Staff costs" =  $(BL\ 3 + BL\ 4 + BL\ 5) * 15/100 = (3\ 000 + 55\ 000 + 25\ 000) * 15/100 = 12\ 450$  Euro
- Max. amount of BL 2 "Office and administrative costs" =  $BL\ 1 * 15/100 =$

$$= 12\,450 * 15/100 = 1\,867,50 \text{ Euro.}$$

In the examples are given the maximum flat rates for staff costs and office and administrative costs allowed by the current Call for Proposals. The project partners may use smaller percentages for flat rates in the process of preparation of the budgets.

### Budget line 3: Travel and accommodation costs

**This budget line** covers the expenses for project staff members only participating in events taking place in the two partnering countries, as follows:

- events related to the project (technical meetings, meetings of joint working groups, meetings of the project team, workshops, trainings and seminars, etc.) ;
- business trips related to the project activities.

Sub–line	Eligible expenditures
<b>Travel costs</b>	<p><b>Travel costs usually cover expenses for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• train tickets;</li> <li>• bus tickets;</li> <li>• airline tickets;</li> <li>• rent of vehicle for the operation;</li> <li>• car/mini-bus travels (expenditure for fuel/kilometre, green cards, motor way taxes, vignettes, parking fees, etc.);</li> <li>• medical insurances;</li> </ul> <p><b>🔥 IMPORTANT</b></p> <p>Total number of kilometres should be determined in the project proposal in compliance with the project scope. The expenditure for fuel of <b>personal vehicle</b> or vehicle of the organization is budgeted in kilometers (<b>maximum 0,21 euro per kilometer</b>). In the sub-line only expenses for fuel of vehicle used for events shall be budgeted.</p> <p>The expenditure for rent of vehicle for project staff travels (car, van, <b>minibus</b>, etc.) must be budgeted in kilometers at <b>a maximum rate of 1,5 euro per kilometer</b>. Please note that personal vehicles or vehicles of the organization cannot be rented for the purposes of the project activities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit: per km.</p>
<b>Daily allowances</b>	<p><b>Daily allowances</b></p> <p>In the eligible border region - € 20 per day per person.</p> <p>Outside the eligible area daily allowances are € 35 per day per person.</p> <p>Daily allowances are eligible only for project team members.</p> <p>Expenses for daily allowances for in-country and travel <u>abroad without</u></p>

	<p><u>accommodation</u> must be calculated in accordance with the national rules of the respective country.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit: per person.</p>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<p><b>Accommodation costs</b></p> <p>In the eligible border region of the two partnering countries the accommodation costs are up to € 50 per night;</p> <p>Outside the eligible area the accommodation costs are up to € 130 per night.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit: per night.</p>

#### Budget line 4: External expertise and services costs

This budget line covers expenses for organisation of meetings, seminars, press conferences, awareness campaigns, trainings, consultancy, studies, designs, etc.

Sub-line	Eligible expenditures
<b>Rent of hall</b>	<p>Expenses for rent of hall – for meetings, trainings, conferences, etc. (proposed unit rate – per hour, per day).</p> <p>The maximum allowed rate for rent of hall for events is 200 Euro/day.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit: per hour, per day.</p>
<b>Rent of audio/ video equipment for events</b>	<p>Expenses for rent of equipment for events (proposed unit rate – per hour, per day), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• translation equipment;</li> <li>• audio equipment;</li> <li>• video equipment;</li> <li>• other equipment related to the event.</li> </ul> <p>The maximum allowed rate for rent of audio/video equipment (including sound equipment) for events is 150 Euro/day.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit: per hour, per day.</p>
<b>Catering for events</b>	<p>Expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, dinners and lunches for participants in the events.</p> <p>Maximum allowed rate for catering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ coffee and refreshments - 5 Euro per participant;</li> <li>➤ lunch – 15 Euro per participant;</li> <li>➤ Dinner – 15 Euro per participant.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit rate – per participant.</p> <p>The costs are only eligible if the existence of catering/lunch /dinner/coffee</p>



	<p>break is stated clearly and easily visible on the invitation/agenda.</p> <p><b>NOTE</b></p> <p><b>Expenditures for alcoholic beverages and cigarettes are not eligible.</b></p>
<b>Travel for events/Rent of vehicle</b>	<p>Expenses for rent of vehicle for participants in the events.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit rate – per kilometer.</p> <p>The maximum allowed rate for Rent of vehicle for event is 1,5 euro per kilometer.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit – per km, per contract.</p> <p>Please note that personal vehicles or vehicles of the organization cannot be rented for the purposes of the project activities.</p>
<b>Accommodations for participants in the events</b>	<p>In the eligible border region of the two partnering countries the accommodation costs are up to € 50;</p> <p>Outside the eligible area the accommodation costs are up to € 130.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit rate: per participant.</p>
<b>Consumables and materials for events</b>	<p>Expenses for purchase of consumables and materials for the participants in the events as paper, files, folders, cases, CDs, printing of invitations, agenda, presentations, etc.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit rate: per participant.</p>
<b>Elaboration, design, translation of promotional materials.</b>	<p>Expenses for purchase of materials produced for promotion of the project and for distribution during the planned public events as pens, key chains, CDs, USBs, hats, bags, T-shirts, note books, folders etc. Proposed unit rate – per item. Additionally, in this sub-line should be included expenses for elaboration, design, translation, publishing or printing of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information materials (concerning the project documents, implementation provisions etc.)</li> <li>• brochures, leaflets (informing about the project's implementation and results);</li> <li>• manuals and guidelines (related to the project);</li> <li>• design and printing of advertising items with the logo of the programme (pens, key chains, CDs, USBs, hats, bags, note books, folders).</li> </ul> <p>It is not necessary for a project to have a logo. In fact, it is recommendable that the beneficiaries use the Programme logo in combination with the project name (or acronym, if appropriate) as project logo. In case the beneficiaries decide to create a project logo, the</p>

	<p>respective expenditure should be at their own expense.</p> <p>The following maximum rates (including design, preparation/pre-print, elaboration and delivery) of promotional materials should be respected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaflet (can provide basic factual information for the project, address where further information can be found and etc.) – 1 Euro;</li> <li>• brochure (can go into greater detail, highlighting the context, including interviews with stakeholders, beneficiaries, and so on;) – 3 Euro</li> <li>• catalogue (multi paper material, containing specific information related to the project, usually full color, A4 or other appropriate size, hardcover) – 3 Euro</li> <li>• folder – 1,50 Euro</li> <li>• note book – 3 Euro</li> <li>• pen – 1,50 Euro</li> <li>• key chain – 1 Euro</li> <li>• hat – 3 Euro</li> <li>• conference bag – 4 Euro</li> <li>• T-shirt – 5 Euro</li> <li>• mug – 4 Euro</li> <li>• USB – 15 Euro</li> <li>• poster –1 Euro</li> <li>• roll up banner – 80 Euro</li> </ul> <p>Concerning the printed materials, the maximum allowed rate for written translation is 10 Euro per page.</p>
<p><b>Publications in mass-media</b></p>	<p>Expenses for publications in press and broadcasting in mass-media (radio, TV). Applicants must explicitly specify the type of media they plan to use – local, regional or national. Proposed unit rate – per publication.</p> <p>Please note that publications in the social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) or own website/s are free of charge and costs for these publications could not been envisaged in the budget.</p>
<p><b>Consultancy, studies, designs, website development, etc.</b></p>	<p>Expenses for feasibility studies, surveys, technical expertise, legal advice, elaboration of works design/specialized software/web-pages, web platforms, video films, clips, procurement expertise, etc.</p> <p><b>For expenditures planned as a lump sum (unit – per contract), justification for calculation of the amount should be presented in a separate documents signed by the respective partner. This justification should contain at least:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detailed description of the proposed activity;</li> <li>• calculation of the envisaged experts' input, including number of experts needed, days/months of involvement and remuneration unit rate. Please note that the maximum allowed rates for involvement of experts should respect the rates specified in sub-line "Interpreters, lecturers, trainers, experts, moderators, etc." below;</li> <li>• detailed description of the expected outcomes from the activity, including information about any printed materials (type, number of copies, number of pages) and calculation of the price;</li> <li>• any other additional information the applicant may find appropriate for justification of the proposed cost.</li> </ul> <p>The maximum allowed rate for website development is 2 500 Euro per contract.</p> <p>The maximum allowed rate for procurement expertise is 3 000 Euro per contract.</p> <p>Expenditures for procurement expertise are not eligible in case procurement expert is envisaged in the project team.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit: per contract.</p>
<p><b>Interpreters, lecturers, trainers, experts, moderators, etc.</b></p>	<p>Expenses for interpreters, lecturers, trainers, experts, moderators, etc.</p> <p>The following maximum rates should be respected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpreter - 30 Euro per hour (160 Euro per day);</li> <li>• Lecturer/ trainer/ expert - 40 Euro per hour (320 Euro per day);</li> <li>• Moderator - 25 Euro per hour (200 Euro per day).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Proposed unit rate – per day, per hour.</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>Any other specific project expenses which cannot be classified and included in any other budget lines/sub-lines.</p>

In each budget sub-line the expenses shall be budgeted as per event and per participants in accordance with the description of the project activities.

### Budget line 5: Equipment and works

The budget line represents the investment part of the project and **covers the expenses for supplies and works.**

#### Investment projects

The total amount of the eligible expenses under this budget line should be **more than 50% of total eligible project costs** of the entire project. **This threshold is obligatory for "investment" projects.**

**"Soft" projects**

The total amount of eligible expenses under this budget line should be **maximum 50% of total eligible costs** of the entire project. **This threshold is obligatory for "soft" projects.**

Sub-line	Eligible expenditures
<p><b>Small scale investments</b></p>	<p><b>Expenses for land preparation</b> – any works aimed at making the land suitable for the purpose of the project (removal of unnecessary materials and vegetation, drainage etc.);</p> <p><b>Main investment</b> (construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, widening and modernization of the building(s)/site(s) and the related installations).</p> <p><b>Connection to utilities:</b> power connection, water supply and sewage connection, gas connection etc.</p> <p><b>Site organization:</b> places for workers and equipment, waste removal, fences etc.</p> <p><b>Expenses for land rehabilitation</b> after completion of works and/or environment protection activities;</p> <p><b>Expenditure for supervision</b> (if necessary) – in compliance with the relevant national legislation.</p>
<p><b>Supply*</b></p>	<p>Expenditure for <b>purchase of IT equipment and office furniture;</b></p> <p>Expenditure necessary to <b>bring the equipment to working condition;</b></p> <p>Expenditure for <b>software;</b></p> <p><b>PCs, laptops or other relevant equipment</b> can be procured under supplies, while the procurement of laptops should be properly justified for the purpose of the specific activity and will be eligible only if such <b>have not already been procured under other EU - funded projects.</b></p> <p>Purchase of vehicles is eligible provided that they are mandatory for achieving the project objective (i.e. specialized vehicles for interventions in case of disasters).</p> <p>Expenditure for purchase of laboratory equipment, machines measuring instruments, etc.</p>

**\*For equipment that will not be used by the project partners or the project target group after the project completion and if the economic lifetime of the equipment is longer than the project duration, only the depreciation costs are eligible.** In this case, the eligible expenditure will be its depreciation costs during operation duration. The depreciation

rate has to be in line with national or internal partners' rules.

Depreciation is charged proportionally in each relevant periodical report. The full value of depreciated costs on equipment in relation to the total project duration cannot be charged as total amount in one particular period.

**Only the proportionate sum of the depreciations costs according to the use of equipment for the project is eligible.** The amount (percentage used and time duration) has to be auditable.

The depreciation costs of equipment can never exceed the purchase price of the equipment.

### Budget line 6: Project preparation

**This budget line covers the expenses for project preparation** (meetings between partners, consultancy, studies, translation of documents, taxes and other charges arising from preparation of project proposal, preparation of the application package, elaboration of investment technical documentation, etc.).

Budget line	Eligible expenditures
<b>Preparation of Application package</b>	<p>This budget sub-line covers the expenses for preparation of the Application package (Application Form, necessary annexes and supporting documents), including consultancy, as well as all connected translation costs, taxes and other charges (the maximum allowed rate for written translation is 10 Euro per page). The sub-line may also include the expenses for meetings between the project partners.</p> <p>Amount for preparation of the Application Form may be included in the budget of only one of the project partners.</p> <p><b>The maximum allowed rate for this sub-line is 3000 Euro.</b></p>
<b>Preparation of technical documentation</b>	<p>This budget sub-line covers the expenses for elaboration of technical documentation (incl. feasibility studies, detailed designs, technical drawings, etc.) including consultancy, as well as all connected translation costs, taxes and other charges (the maximum allowed rate for written translation is 10 Euro per page).</p> <p>The amount under this sub-line could be distributed among the project partners responsible for preparation of the relevant technical documentation.</p>

### **IMPORTANT**

The cost for project preparation will be reimbursed only to those applicants awarded subsidy contracts. Otherwise this cost is not recoverable. **The starting date for eligibility of project preparation expenditures for the Bulgarian beneficiaries is the starting date of the**

**programme period, namely 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2014. For the beneficiaries from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the starting date for the eligibility of expenses for project preparation is 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2014 - the date following the date of the submission of the Programme to the EC.**

The project preparation expenditures should be carried out before or on the date of submission of the project proposals at the latest. It means that all supporting documents as invoices, acceptance protocols, lists, etc., should be issued before or on the date of submission of the project proposal at the latest. The expenses for project preparation should be requested for reimbursement and verified only in the first request for reimbursement of the respective project partner and in accordance with the guidelines from the Managing Authority. The payment has to be done not later than the first request for FLC under the project, reporting expenditures of the related project partner.

**In case of sub-contracting, procurement rules should be applied (see point 2.5).**

#### **🔥 IMPORTANT**

At the stage of preparation of the budget the total project preparation expenditures (including the "Preparation of Project proposal" and "Preparation of technical documentation" sub-lines) should be maximum **3 % of direct project costs (BL 3+BL4+BL5)**.

On pre-contracting stage the Managing Authority may request evidence about the market price of the proposed expenditures (for example, offers from operators, print screens from websites, etc.). The total sum of the maximum rates of the budget lines listed above exceeds 100%. In a project with real expenditures the amount should be 100 %.

#### **📌 Note**

**In addition to the above detailed instructions on how to complete the project budget is given below of these Guidelines for applicants in p. 3.2, Application Form Part III.**

The budget for the project should be prepared using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission. You can find the EU currency exchange rates at: [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/infoeuro/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/index_en.cfm).

## **2.2. Cross-border impact**

The projects must deliver direct cross-border impact and benefits for the project partners, target groups and Programme area. The partners should clearly demonstrate that the cross-border approach has been respected in the project proposal.

A clear cross-border impact could be found in these cases where the implementation of the projects ensures tangible results in the cross-border area (in both countries); otherwise the effect would be at local level. The cross-border impact consists of two main aspects:

- positive effect on the targeted organisations and individuals who are the intended

beneficiaries of the project's activities or recipients, respectively users of the project's outputs;

- cross-regional or cross-country benefit.

Through implementation of the planned activities (which are designed for facing certain specific needs of the partners and the target groups), each project shall contribute to achievement of the overall Programme aim. This means that when formulating the project idea, all partners should think about the impact of the project not only for their own organisations and the target groups, but also for the Programme area. Establishment of a partnership among organizations from the two countries by definition brings a cross-border character to the project, but only by itself this is not enough to ensure the direct cross-border impact and added value to the Programme area – rather, it is necessary that the combination of all project activities demonstrate achievement of distinct results in the cross-border area.

### 2.2.1 Cooperation criteria

The Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Macedonia Programme shall support operations, which have direct cross-border impact, respecting the following cooperation criteria: joint development, joint staffing, joint implementation and joint financing.

- **Joint development (mandatory)** means that the project must be designed in close cooperation of the partners from both sides of the border. The project proposals must clearly integrate the ideas, priorities and activities of stakeholders. The Lead Partner is the coordinator of this process but should include other partners from the beginning of the development process;
- **Joint implementation (mandatory)** means that activities must be carried out and coordinated among partners on both sides of the border. It is not enough that activities run in parallel. There must be clear content-based links between what is happening on either side of the border and regular contact between the two sides. The Lead Partner is responsible for ensuring that activities are properly coordinated, that schedules are kept and that the right quality levels are achieved;
- **Joint staffing** means that there will be a single project team within the project. The project staff should not have duplicate functions on either side of the border and project team members should work together on the project. The partners should not merely carry out activities in parallel without mutual coordination and exchange of information, but the project team will be responsible for project activities on both sides of the border.
- **Joint financing** means that there will be only one contract per project and there must therefore be one joint project budget. The budget should be divided between partners according to the activities carried out. There is also only one project bank account for the EU contribution (held by the Lead Beneficiary) and payments representing EU

support are made from the programme to this account. The Lead Beneficiary is responsible for administration and distribution of these funds and for reporting on their use. Funding should come from both sides of the border and illustrates the commitment by each partner to the joint project. The distribution of financial resources should reflect tasks and responsibilities of the partners.

The rights and obligations of each partner in view of project implementation (including transfer of funds and payments) are included in the Project Partnership Agreement.

#### **🔔 IMPORTANT**

The project partners from the two participating countries have to cooperate **mandatory in both joint development and joint implementation** and additionally in one of the two other cooperation criteria: joint staffing or joint financing.

### **2.3. Horizontal principles**

The following horizontal principles shall be observed by all applicants in the development and implementation of their projects:

- a) **Sustainable development** – specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations;

All projects and interventions of the programme can integrate measures to ease the burden of emissions of their actions, e.g. by:

- actively tackle wider environmental concerns;
  - actively tackle environmental issues of specific concern, including climate change as well as the maintaining of biodiversity and ecosystems
  - carrying out environmental management (structured experience sharing, capacity development, etc.)
  - actively tackle sustainability issues, including ecological, economic and social concerns
  - adopting measures for the organisation and implementation of conferences and events in a sustainable way.
- b) **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination** – specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the Programme and, in particular, in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination, and in particular, the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities;

All projects implemented through the Programme can integrate measures to consider the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, e.g. by:



- actively tackle concerns of demographic change;
  - actively tackle concerns of peripheral location;
  - actively focussing on and involving youth, women and people from vulnerable groups.
- c) **Equality between men and women** - promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at programme and operation level.

All projects and interventions of the programme can integrate measures such as:

- Actively tackle wider equality concerns;
- Integrate and monitor equal participation of women and men;
- Contribute to a better and more diversified labour market for women.
- Especially the Programme's Priority Axis 2 Tourism and Priority Axis 3 Competitiveness provide a frame to foster opportunities for equality between men and women.

The observance of the horizontal principles shall be taken into account during project evaluation. Projects should consider what their overall influence as regards these principles is. In order to be considered that the project makes positive contribution to the particular horizontal principle, the projects should highlight in the application form how it is reflected in project activities and outputs.

For more information regarding the Programme commitment towards observing the horizontal principles, please consult Section VI in the official version of the Programme, available at <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/>.

## 2.4. Communication and visibility

The projects must respect the European legislation provisions on information and publicity. The information and publicity measures for the interventions of the IPA II funds are aimed at publicizing the actions of the European Union, increasing transparency and creating a uniform image of the interventions throughout participating countries. In all actions (projects, programmes) communication activities should be properly planned. Communication should focus on the achievements and impact of the project actions.

- Activities need to be timely;
- Activities should be appropriate in terms of resources spent and expected impact;
- Information used must be accurate;
- The right audience(s) should be targeted, etc.

More detailed practical guidelines (including templates) concerning the basic information and publicity measures are provided by the European Commission in the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions, published on the following EU website:

<https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions>.

## 2.5. Applicable law and public procurement

The projects must be in line with the national and European legislation on equal opportunities and environmental protection.

For the award of service, supply and works contracts by beneficiaries, the procurement procedures shall follow the provisions of Chapter 3 of Title IV of Part Two of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and of Chapter 3 of Title II of Part Two of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 which apply in the whole programme area in both countries.

Respecting the procurement provisions of the above regulations, beneficiaries under this Call for Proposals must refer to and use the guidelines and templates of the Practical Guide for Procurement and Grants for European Union External Actions (PRAG): <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/>.

To this end, the following provisions shall be fulfilled by each project:

- When sub-contracting the activities in order to achieve the project objectives, including activities for project preparation, the contracting must be done by a transparent tendering procedure, following the above rules.
- The project or any sub-contracting procedures must not create an economic advantage to an economic operator.

## 3. How to apply

The financing under Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Programme is available to all potential beneficiaries through a competitive process.

The submission of project proposals is open to all potential beneficiaries that meet the eligibility criteria.

### **📌 IMPORTANT**

Applying under the present Call for Proposals shall be done entirely in **electronic form** using the **Electronic Application System**.

No paper documents shall be submitted by potential applicants to the premises of the Managing Authority.

## 3.1 How to review the Application Package

The Application Package contains the Guidelines for Applicants with its Attachments, Application Form and Annexes. These are the official forms that should be submitted when applying for financial support under the Programme. The Guidelines for Applicants provide potential beneficiaries with detailed guidelines on the application for funding process.

Prior to preparation of the project proposal and completion of the online submission of the project, potential applicants must carefully review the content of the Application Package, available on the following websites:

- Programme website: [www.ipa-cbc-007.eu](http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu)

- Managing Authority's website: [www.mrrb.government.bg](http://www.mrrb.government.bg)
- National Authority's website: [www.mls.gov.mk](http://www.mls.gov.mk)
- EU Structural Funds in Bulgaria website: [www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

Applicants may submit questions related to current Call in writing **up to 21 calendar days** before the deadline for submission of proposals. The JS will reply no later than 11 calendar days before the deadline for the submission of proposals. Questions should be sent by e-mail or by fax to the address listed below, indicating clearly the reference of the current Call for Proposals, namely:

**No 2014TC16I5CB006-2018-2**

**Fax: +359 78 55 11 85**

**E-mail: [jtsipakyustendil@gmail.com](mailto:jtsipakyustendil@gmail.com)**

**All the questions received by the potential applicants, together with their answers will be periodically published during the submission period on the Programme website: [www.ipa-cbc-007.eu](http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu)**

### **3.2 How to fill in the Application Form and its Annexes**

The guidelines for filling in the Application Form (separate annex in Excel format) and Annexes can be found below.

**The applicants should be aware that:**

- ✓ The Application Form and Annexes should be filled in on computer, correctly, completely and all related documents submitted via Electronic Application System;
- ✓ Application Form and all Annexes must be filled in in English;
- ✓ Modifying the standard templates can result in the rejection of your application;
- ✓ The supporting documents issued by national/local authorities or other bodies shall be attached in the original language accompanied by a translation in English;

#### **APPLICATION FORM (AF)**

The **scanned copy of the Application form** should be attached in the Electronic Application System together with the **Excel format of the Application form**.

Please note that each page of **the scanned AF should be signed by the LP's Legal representative**.

#### **APPLICATION FORM - COVER**

On the cover page of the Application form you should fill in the Project title and then to select the Priority Axis, Specific Objective, Type of project and Intervention field from the drop-down menus (please see item 2.1.2 "Eligibility of activities" of these Guidelines). You should fill in the Lead Partner organization/institution and the name of its official representative (in English) with signature and the stamp of the organization.

When the Application is received in the Electronic Application System, it will receive a registration number (project number).

## APPLICATION FORM - CHECKLIST

The checklist will be filled automatically when all parts and sections of the Application form have been properly completed.

If more than 2 project partners (Lead Partner, Project partner 2, Project partner 3, etc.) are involved in the project proposal, the next Project partners from the drop-down menu should be checked and the relevant information be filled in in PART I.

## APPLICATION FORM – OUTPUT INDICATORS

This section is filled in automatically as the information is extracted from section 4.1 Expected outputs of the Application form.

## APPLICATION FORM - PART I

### NOTE

**The information below should be filled in for every project partner starting with No 1 for Lead partner/PP1!**

### 1. Identity

#### 1.1. Contact information

- State the official and full name of the organisation both in English and native language;
- Select the type of the organization/institution from the drop-down menu;
- Indicate the nationality of the organization;
- Indicate the NUTS III region where the organization is registered;
- State the legal status, official address, legal representative, telephone, fax and e-mail, website;
- For all partners including the Lead Partner organization, the name and position of the legal representative are requested;
- The Lead Partner and the partners must present data regarding the object of activity and the tax registration number.

The Lead partner will be the addressee of the entire correspondence during the application assessment process and therefore, the **contact information must be correct and up-to-date in the Application form.**

If a change in the contact information occurs during the assessment stage, the Lead partner must immediately inform the MA/JS and provide new channels for communication.

#### 1.2. Partner profile

- In section **1.2.1. Partner's background** the project partners have to describe the organization's background and scope of competences and activities by focusing on experience and expertise related to project objectives, activities and outputs.
- In section **1.2.2 Partner's authority**, it is important to describe whether the project

partners have the authority to implement the project activities envisaged for each of them. Note that the envisaged project activities should be of the respective partner competence.

### 1.3. Partners experience

Here the project partners must state if they have **experience in project management of public funded projects**:

- If the respective organization has previously experience please select the "YES" button and provide in the respective table/s detailed information about already financed and implemented projects (maximum three projects per project partner). Please, be aware that previous experience in public funded projects in the field addressed by the current project will be considered as advantage.
- If the respective organization has not experience in project management, than skip this question and move to the next section.

## 2. Financial data

### 2.1. Detailed information

State national registration code of the organization and VAT registration (if applicable).

### 2.2. Financial status and human resources

Here the project partners must state information concerning annual turnover for the past 3 years (2016, 2015 and 2014), as well as the number of full time staff, number of part time staff.

## APPLICATION FORM - PART II

### 1. Project identity

#### 1.1. Project title

- The Full name of the project, Priority axis, Specific objective and type of project will appear automatically after filling in the Application Form Cover;
- State the project duration in months (Please refer to the table in section 2.1.2. "Eligibility of activities").

#### 1.2. Cooperation criteria

In order to prove the cross-border impact of the project here the project partners must clearly explain which of the criteria described in item 2.2.1 "Cooperation criteria" are fulfilled, as their proposal must respect at least Joint Development and Joint Implementation and, additionally, one of the other two cooperation criteria: Joint Financing or Joint Staffing.

In the column Description, project partners should explain how the project meets the selected cooperation criteria. Please give here brief justification on how the selected criteria will be respected. Avoid answering the question with a simple, one-sentence answer - for example "*The project proposal was developed by all project partners*". You are advised to be more convincing by describing what has been the exact role of each partner organization in the project development. The same recommendation refers to the other cooperation criteria as well.

**NOTE**

When the respective column for description is filled in, the check mark for applicable of the selected cooperation criterion will appear automatically.

**1.3. Cross border impact of the project**

Describe what the long-term common benefit of the project for the partner organizations, the target groups and the Programme area will be. Please, note that a clear cross-border impact should be demonstrated by the project, e.g. wider effect that can be credibly attributed to the implemented project activities.

For more information, please refer to section 2.2 of these Guidelines.

**2. Project description****2.1. Background and demand for the project proposal**

Project partners should provide a clear description of:

- What is the project background (for example: current condition of the sector; the problem(s) that you have detected and that you are going to face; potential for development; weaknesses and constraints of the chosen target group(s) in the concrete region etc.); the needs that led the project partner to get involved in the project should be stated as clearly and specifically as possible;
- What method(s) / what strategy have you chosen for improvement of the situation/ solving the problem(s);
- What is the new approach;
- What will be the long-lasting effect /result of your project;
- Why have you chosen this specific partner organization(s) for implementation of the project;
- What will be the benefit(s) of your project proposal to the pointed target group(s), final beneficiaries and for the partner organizations?

**2.2. Description of the target groups, beneficiaries (estimated number)**

The project partners should provide clear description of the target groups, direct and final beneficiaries and their estimated number (in total for all partners).

- "Target groups" are the groups/entities who will be positively affected by the project;
- "Direct beneficiaries" are those directly involved in the project implementation;
- "Final beneficiaries" are those who will benefit from the project in a long term.

Please, do not overestimate the numbers and try to be as realistic as possible. (*For example, a project proposal with quite narrow specific overall aim and limited actions is not expected to reach hundreds or thousands of people. Nonetheless, that does not make the less significant than a project with wider overall aim and large number of activities*).

**2.3. Project activities - description and methods of implementation**

Project partners should fill in the activities planned to achieve the objectives of the project. Try to

organize the activities by types and to present their interconnection. For each activity fill in the exact location of its execution (NUTS III region). The total number of the planned activities is up to you and depends on the nature of the project. Please note that activities are limited to 15.

Project activities outside the eligible border area (if applicable)

If the project envisages the activity/ies to be implemented outside the eligible border area of the Programme, please select the "YES" button and provide detailed information for type of activity, place, involved actors, outputs and justification how activity/ies will benefit the programme area. The activities outside border area must be related mainly to participation/organization of events (seminars, trainings, business trips etc.) and budgeted only in BL3 and BL4 in the budget of the respective partner.

Project partners should answer all four questions for each activity by giving detailed information. Please, avoid answering the questions with a simple, one-sentence answers, such as "The Lead partner will be responsible for the implementation of this activity".

**NOTE**

"Formation of the project team", "Project team meetings", "Project reporting", "Preparation of tender documentation", "Project Accounting" etc. are not to be considered as separate activities since they could be incorporated within almost all project activities.

Please, have in mind that each activity should be described in a clear way so that it provides all necessary information about its execution.

Project partners need to provide at least the following information for activities like:

Organization of a seminar/ workshop/ training/ conference etc.:

- ✓ Title of the seminar;
- ✓ Purpose of the seminar;
- ✓ Location;
- ✓ Estimated number, background and nationality of participants;
- ✓ Duration;
- ✓ Necessary equipment (rent of hall, sound systems, etc.) and logistics (transportation) for the conduction of the seminar;
- ✓ Involvement of external experts (lecturers, trainers, interpreters, consultants, etc.) – if applicable;
- ✓ Provision for catering and/or accommodation of the participants – if applicable;
- ✓ Necessary (information) materials and consumables for the event;
- ✓ Responsible partner for the overall organization and reporting of the event.

Supply of materials/ equipment etc.:

- ✓ Description (including technical specification) of the materials / equipment to be supplied;
- ✓ Exact quantities;
- ✓ Purpose of the supplies (including link with other project activities);

- ✓ Provision for design – if applicable.

Consultancy/ studies/ analyses/ researches etc.:

- ✓ Title;
- ✓ Purpose of the study/ analysis (including link with other project activities);
- ✓ Expected human input in implementation of the activity (for example, number and type of experts involved and duration of their involvement);

Type of the expected product (hard copy, electronic version, number of pages etc.).

## **2.4. Communication and visibility**

### 2.4.1. Communication strategy

According to the EC Regulations and the Programme, the project partners must promote their projects and the added value of the Community funds. The communication activities should promote the fact that the project financing is provided from the European Union (under the IPA II) and ensure the adequate presentation of the project and the European cooperation.

Although a special activity for promotion of the project might be planned (in section 2.3), different measures for publicity and communication could appear in the other project activities. Therefore the project partners are expected to summarize here all such activities (including exact numbers and types of activities/ products).

### 2.4.2. Communication tools

In the table project partners should fill in information for the chosen communication tools/materials contributing to the implementation of the strategy.

## **2.5. Duration and action plan**

All activities described in section 2.3. Project activities will automatically be filled in the table. Project partners have to add in which trimester these activities are going to be implemented.

Please consider carefully the time in case certain activity/ies will be subject to sub-contracting through procurement procedure/s.

## **3. Management of the project**

Project partners should describe the overall plan for management of the project. The number of the project team members, their specific positions in the project, duties and responsibilities should be clear enough to guarantee smooth project implementation and reporting.

The following information should be provided:

- The responsibilities of each project partner in view of the overall project implementation and reporting;
- The structure of the project team (both Bulgarian and Macedonian representatives);
- The responsibilities of each member of the project team.

### **NOTE**

Submission of CVs of the project team members **is not necessary!**



The Lead Partner and the project partners should sign a Project Partnership Agreement, which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each partner. A template for the Project Partnership Agreement is included in the application package, indicating the minimum standards of the Project Partnership Agreement. The concrete agreement for the project could be extended and more detailed.

A partner can never be a sub-contractor and vice versa!

## **4. Monitoring of the project**

### **4.1. Expected outputs**

Output indicators allow measuring the achievement of the quantitative targets of the Programme. When preparing their Application Form, project partners should specify to the achievement of which Programme output indicator(s) their project proposal will contribute. The project partners should fill in exact numbers which correspond to the project activities and outputs.

Please note that for each Specific Objective there are a number of pre-defined Output Indicators and each proposal must contribute to the achievement of at least one of those, although projects that demonstrate fulfilment of more than one Output Indicator will receive higher scoring during the technical assessment stage.

Firstly, you have to select Output Indicator/s from the drop-down menu in this section of the Application Form, then fill in exact quantities for achievement of the respective indicator in "Quantity" column and finally describe related activities and sources for verification of the pointed quantified values in the "Justification" column.

Please note that there must be logical connection between the project's envisaged activities and the selected Output Indicator/s, together with clear evidence that the pointed quantities are realistic and achievable.

#### **🔔 NOTE**

You may select from only these **Output indicators referred to the chosen Specific objective** of your project (the other fields will be locked for editing).

For more information on selection of Output Indicators and examples of measurement of quantities, please refer to Attachment 2 - Fulfilment of Programme Indicators and Ranking of Project Proposals.

### **4.2. Multiplier effect**

The project partners should describe the possibilities for further development of the project idea in a subsequent project. Even though the possibility for multiplying the effects may not be identified for every proposal, quite often certain project ideas and activities could be extended and upgraded in a way to form a consecutive (linked) project.

### **4.3. Sustainability**

The project partners should explain how they intend to maintain the sustainability of the project

results after the end of the project. It should be described how the activities will be continued, in which way and who will be the responsible partner.

This part should include aspects of ownerships; necessary follow-up actions and resources for maintenance of the outputs delivered under the project; built-in strategies; etc. The Lead Partner and project partners should ensure the sustainability of the project results not less than five (5) years after completion of the implementation period.

Please note that in the sustainability period the beneficiaries should ensure that all project results/deliverables shall be made available for free to all interested individual or legal persons, in a non-discriminatory way.

#### **NOTE**

The project partners should be aware that in case the **project is financed they cannot sell or otherwise transfer in any form the goods, purchased from the financing, throughout the period of 5 (five) years after the end date of the implementation period** of the project or throughout their life period, as it is stipulated by the national legislation, if this period is shorter than the implementation period of the project. **In case the project envisages direct use of supplied assets/goods by representatives of target groups, the respective project partner should ensure this use without transferring of the assets to third parties.**

### **5. Project coherence with other strategies and principles**

#### **5.1. Project coherence with other strategies**

The project partners should describe:

- The way that project proposal is coherent with the European Union strategies concerning territorial cooperation (if applicable). Please consult the Programme document, Section 1, for a list of relevant policy frameworks and strategies.
- The potential synergy of the project with other initiatives/ programmes/ strategies at national/ regional level (if applicable).

#### **5.2. Project coherence with the horizontal principles**

Here must be explained how the project will contribute towards the promotion of the three horizontal principles – sustainable development, equal opportunities and equality between men and women (section “2.3.Horizontal principles” of these Guidelines).

Please note that the coherence with the horizontal principles should be evident from the description of the project activities as well.

### **APPLICATION FORM - PART III**

#### **Table 1 – TOTAL BUDGET PER PROJECT PARTNERS**

Table 1 – Names of project partners starting with PP1 (Lead partner), country code and total financial contribution will be automatically filled after you finish the AF part III.

**Table 2 – DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES PER PARTNER** (PP1, PP2, etc.)

All project partners fill a separate Table 2 (PP1 to PP10) – answering to their number in Table 1 (PP1, PP2, PP3 etc.) giving a breakdown of the expenditures that each of them will be responsible for during the project implementation. The figures in the column “Unit rate” should include the eligible VAT.

Before filling the application form each project partner should clarify its VAT status for each activity and determine the VAT as recoverable or non-recoverable from other sources. In case the VAT is non-recoverable from other sources it is eligible for financing by the programme and should be included by the partner in the respective unit rates.

**Note**

Unit rates in the respective partners’ budgets must be written to the second decimal place only, regardless of the fact that Excel shall automatically round them in case more decimal places are written.

Example:

10 units X 2.25 = 22.50 is the CORRECT way to write the unit rate;

10 units X 2.24875 = 22.50 is the INCORRECT way to write the unit rate, regardless of the fact that Excel shall automatically round it to 2.25.

Failure to comply with this requirement might cause technical glitches in the electronic Application Form and its proper upload in the electronic system, which in turn may lead to problems during the assessment process for the proposal!

At the beginning, the project partners should fill the direct expenditures (budget lines 3, 4, 5) and project preparation costs (budget line 6). After that the project partners should indicate the percentage of the flat rate for budget line 1 “Staff costs”, taking into account a type of the project (soft or investment) and the maximum possible percentage (15 % or 10%). The amount for staff costs will be calculated automatically.

The project partners should indicate the percentage of the flat rate for budget line 2 “Office and administrative costs” taking into account that the maximum possible percentage is 15 % from the amount of budget line 1 “Staff costs”. The amount for office and administrative costs will be calculated automatically.

In accordance with the provisions of the Programme, it is possible up to 20 % of the amount of the respective beneficiary’s budget to be spent for the activities implemented outside of the programme eligible area. These costs shall be eligible only if they are included in the partner’s budget as “expenditures outside the eligible area”. If the project partner envisages carrying out some of the activities outside of the eligible programme area, the costs necessary for implementation of these activities should be indicated in the partner’s budget, table 2, column “expenditures outside of the eligible area”.

The expenditures which will be spent outside the eligible area should reflect and should be in close connection with implementation of those activities. The activities outside border area must be related to participation/organization of events, seminars, trainings, business trips, promotion campaign etc. and should be budgeted only in BL3 and BL4 in the budget of the respective partner.

When calculating the amount of expenditures for the activities which will be implemented outside of the programme eligible area, project partners must keep in mind that:

- The place of incurring expenditures for services is the place of the performance of the service in question;
- The place of incurring expenditures for meetings, conferences, seminars, trainings, etc., is the place where the event will be held.

#### **NOTE**

**It is very important for proper evaluation, implementation and reporting of the project every project partners to fill Table 2 carefully, precisely and logically to the project activities.** The use of the right units (hour, day, month, kilometers, etc.) and number of units in the budgeting process avoid future problems in reporting and more important, in reimbursement of expenditure.

For example: two days seminar does not always mean three accommodations and four daily allowances.

**Table 2 – DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES – TOTAL** will be automatically filled after each project partner fills in its own respective Table 2 and will provide a detailed summary of the project costs per Budget lines and Sub-lines for all partners.

#### **Table 3 – SUMMARY BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES**

Table 3 will be filled automatically after each project partner fills in its own respective Table 2 providing a summary of the project costs only per BLs.

#### **Table 4 - SUMMARY BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES PER PROJECT PARTNERS**

This table will be filled automatically after each project partner fills in its own respective Table 2 providing information for the distribution (balanced/unbalanced) of the project budget between project partners. Information is generated automatically.

#### **Table 5 – PROJECT SOURCES/PARTNERS' CONTRIBUTION**

In Table 5 the sources of financing should be insert - 15% state co-financing is provided and if applicable (not obligatory) own contribution and/or other sources. In case the project partners envisage additional own contribution (co-financing), the amount of contribution must be inserted in the respective column (PP1/LP, PP2, PP3 etc.), row "Own co-financing". In such case the expenditures related to the own co-financing should be budgeted in the budget Table 2 of the related project partner.

The table generates automatically the EU co-financing rate - maximum 85% of the total project costs.

**🔔 NOTE**

**EU co-financing should not exceed 85% of the total project costs.**

**🔔 IMPORTANT**

Please note that the **following Annexes are also included in the Application form:**

**PARTNERSHIP AND CO-FINANCING STATEMENT**

The statement shall be generated for each project partner and automatically filled in (amount of own contribution, name of institution, name and position of the legal representative). It should be signed, stamped and dated for each project partner and scanned together with the Application form.

**DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND COMMITMENT**

The declaration automatically filled in contact details of each project partner (name of institution, name and position of the legal representative, name of the project, registration code etc.). Declarations should be signed, stamped, scanned and attached in a number, corresponding to the number of the project partners.

**🔔 NOTE**

**Project Summary should be filled in English, Macedonian and Bulgarian, scanned and attached to AF. In case of inconsistency between the three versions, the English version shall prevail.**

**Annexes****🔔 IMPORTANT**

All Annexes (A) and Supporting Documents (B) must **be uploaded/attached in scanned version** together with the electronic Application Form (in Excel), using **the Electronic Application System**.

The **scanned version of the Application Form** must be **signed on each page** by the Lead partner.

Each document from the lists below must be **signed, dated and stamped according to the requirements**, and then scanned and titled as a separate file.

Besides being dated and stamped, all annexes must be duly signed by the legal representative of the Lead Partner/Partners or an authorized person from the Lead partner and/or the respective project partner. The authorization document (letter of attorney, administrative order etc.) from the legal representative of the partner should be presented through the Electronic Application System.

In case a project proposal is selected for contracting, the Managing Authority shall request from the respective Applicant to present all the online submitted documents in original paper version as

well. Failure to do so on the part of the Applicant or in case discrepancies are found between the scanned and paper versions of the documents, shall result in decline of signature of Subsidy contract.

Regardless of the above, throughout the whole assessment and selection process the Managing Authority reserves its right to ask Applicants to submit the already presented scanned documents in hard copies as well, in order to verify their correctness.

## Annexes (A)

The following Annexes should be filled in English according to the templates and submitted together with the Application form in original or copy:

### **A1 - Checklist of submitted documents**

### **A2 - Project Partnership Agreement** - signed, dated and stamped by all partners

Besides being dated and stamped, all annexes must be duly signed by the legal representative or an authorized person from the Lead partner and/or the respective project partner.

**A3 - Declaration of E-mail Address of the Lead Partner** – signed, dated and stamped by the Lead partner - e-mail address declared by the Lead partner in Annex A3, shall be used by the Programme bodies as the official communication channel with the Applicant during the entire assessment, selection and pre-contracting process in terms of requests for additional clarifications, notification for selection results, etc.

### **📌 IMPORTANT**

Please note that the only official **communication channel with the Applicant during the entire assessment, selection and pre-contracting process in terms of requests for additional clarifications, notification for selection results, etc. shall be through the e-mail of the Lead Partner declared in Annex A3. The e-mail address should be functional and must be regularly used and checked by the Lead partner, as the Managing Authority shall bear NO responsibility in cases when the Applicant does not respond to a clarification request within the set deadline or fails to meet other deadlines!**

Furthermore, any requests for clarifications and notifications shall be deemed to have been received on the date upon which the Managing Authority has sent them to the Lead partner at the e-mail address.

## Annexes (B) Supporting documents

The following Annexes should be provided and submitted together with the Application form through the Electronic Application System.

### **For both types of projects:**

**B1.** Documentary evidence on the most recent legal status of all partners issued in the original language and English translation, stamped and signed by respective organization and not older than 6 months prior to the date of submission of the application. The document on the recent legal

status should indicate also the date of establishment of the organization, the place of establishment (registration) and scope of territory competence (if applicable), and it should prove the eligibility of the organization in accordance to all criteria stated above in section 2.1.1. In case the issued document does not justify all of the above circumstances, other documents could be provided, like the act of establishment or certificates from superior authorities (Agencies, Inspectorates, etc.).

In case such a document is not applicable (for example – schools, universities, etc.), an establishment act should be submitted by the candidate (in cases where the establishment act is a large document or contains information that is not relevant to the candidate, partners may submit only the cover page of the document and the page with the relevant information concerning the institution).

### **IMPORTANT**

**Legal status (Annex B1) is not required** for the **municipalities** and **ministries** located on the territories of both partnering countries and for **District governments** located on the Republic of Bulgaria and **NUTS III statistical regions** (Planning regions) located on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

**B2. Decision of Applicant's governing body** (Local Council/Board of Directors or any similar body) regarding project development and implementation - stamped and signed by respective organization. The decision for project development and implementation has to be provided in all cases, no matter whether sole or collective managing authority takes the decisions in the organization.

In the cases where the executive authority is different from the collective managing body (i.e. Mayor and Municipal Council), the decision has to be taken by the second one.

### **NOTE**

The Bulgarian partners that are **second-level budget administrators** (второстепенни разпоредители с бюджет) should present a **Letter of Support for implementation of the project** issued by the respective first level administrator (първостепенни разпоредители с бюджет).

**B2.1 Power of Attorney** (if applicable) from the legal representatives of the project partners, in case the application form and/or the annexed declarations and/or project partnership agreement are not signed by the legal representatives of the Lead Partner/project partners.

In case the signatures are of a deputy by rights, the act certifying the substitution by rights has to be presented together with the act for nomination of the person at the position of a deputy.

**B3. Justification of lump sum costs** – For expenditures planned as lump sums under Budget Line 4, sub-line "Consultancy, studies, designs, website development, etc.", each project partner should provide justification for calculation of the amount in English, signed by the legal representative or the authorized person. This justification should contain at least:

- detailed description of the proposed activity;
- calculation of the envisaged experts' input, including number and type of experts needed, days/months of involvement and remuneration unit rate. Please note that the maximum allowed rates for involvement of experts should respect the rates specified in Budget Line 4, sub-line "Interpreters, lecturers, trainers, experts, moderators, etc.;
- detailed description of the expected outcomes from the activity, including information about any printed materials (type, number of copies, number of pages) and calculation of the price;
- any other additional information the applicant may find appropriate for justification of the proposed cost.

**For project with investment activities only (works and/or permanent installation of supply/equipment):**

**B4.1 In case of investment activities on municipal or state-owned property:**

**B4.1.1** – Ownership act or certificate or legal document for municipal or state ownership of the tangible assets, which will be subject of works activities together with recent outline/design of the property - issued in the original language and translated into English. In the case the project envisages the purchase of supplies which need to be permanently installed, it is necessary to submit an ownership act for municipal or state-owned property as well.

**B4.1.2** – Consent of the owner (Decision of the Council/ Board, etc.), issued in the original language and translated into English signed and stamped by the respective partner, clearly stating that the assets are given for free right of use for the purpose of the project at least for 5 years after the end of the project.

- The consent should be signed by the person/body with the decision-making authority (e.g. the Municipal Council, not the Mayor).
- Consent of the owner is necessary in all cases even when the partner is the owner of the assets. In case the assets are owned by a partner the consent can be given in the same act (document) as the one containing the Decision for project development and implementation described in section B3.

In the case the project envisages purchase of supplies, which need to be permanently installed, it is necessary to submit consent of the owner for use of municipal or state-owned property for installation of equipment, clearly stating that the assets are given for free right of use for the purpose of the project at least for 5 years after the end of the project – in original language and English translation signed and stamped by the respective partner.

**B4.2 – In case the investment activities require passing through private territories:**

**B4.2.1** – Consent of the owners, issued in original language and English translation signed and stamped by the respective partner.

**B4.2.2** – Ownership act, issued in original language and English translation signed and



stamped by the respective partner.

**B4.3 – In case of investment activities within territories/objects with special status**

(National parks, environmental and architectural reserves, cultural monuments, protected areas and territories, areas included in Nature 2000, etc.) relevant documentation (permits, approvals, certificates, statements, etc.) required by the respective national applicable law and issued in original language and English translation signed and stamped by the respective partner.

**B5 – Positive Environmental Impact Assessment** (positive opinion from the relevant body), required by the national legislation and issued in the original language and English translation signed and stamped by the respective partner

or

**Letter issued by the relevant body clearly stated that Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary**, issued in the original language and English translation signed and stamped by the respective partner.

**B6. Documents related to works activities**

**B6.1. Approved Detailed investment projects for construction (works design)**

**B6.2. Explanatory note** – both in the original language and translation into English (signed and stamped by the respective partner);

**B6.3. Detailed Bill of Quantities** – (both in the original language and translation into English signed and stamped by the respective partner) signed and stamped by certified designers, as well as the property owner and the applicant. All items in the Bill of Quantities have to be specified in details and all unit prices and total price have to be pointed out. The amount of Bill of Quantities can be incorporated in Budget line 5 of the Application Form if it contains all the attributes described above. **If the amount in Bill of Quantities is presented in local currency, it must contain a separate column showing all unit rates and total prices in Euro** (the conversion of the national currency into Euro should be made according to the exchange rate published on the web site of the EC for the month, during which the document is prepared: <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/infoureuro/index.cfm?language=en>)

**B7. Latest photos** of the site with filled name of project partner, the exact place /location of the object and a date should be indicated (description to be filled in separate file according to photos).

**🔥 IMPORTANT**

In case of construction works, for which does not require approval of a detailed investment projects for construction, the applicants have to present a **statement by the competent institution for exception of the rule for design's approval**, concerning planned investment activities which have detailed clarification through the respective documents - developed schemes, architectural surveys and drawings, explanatory notes and bills of quantities.

The statements have to be issued in the original language and translated in English.

**📌 IMPORTANT**

Please note that **lack of approved works design (when applicable) is a reason for direct elimination** without possibility for additional supplementations.

**📌 NOTE**

In case the application is approved for funding, the **valid Construction permit** for each partner envisaging construction works (if applicable according to the relevant legislation) should be presented to the Managing Authority before signature of the contract.

In case of **Supply of equipment:**

**B8. Technical specifications for supplies** (description of envisaged supplies, including exact quantities) - in English, signed and stamped by the respective partner.

**📌 NOTE**

Please note that **trademarks and models must not be indicated** in Technical specifications!

Any other documents concerning the project may be provided as Annexes.

**📌 NOTE**

All supporting documents should be submitted in the original language and **translated in English** as well. The translation is not required to be made by a certified translator/agency but have to be certified as **"True copy"** by the legal representative or an authorized person from the Lead partner and/or the respective project partner.

**Annexes (C)**

**The following Annex is provided only for information:**

**C. Subsidy contract** - The annexed contract is template and is indicative.































**4. How to submit the project proposal**































**No paper submission of documentation** is required under this Call for Proposals. The project proposal must be submitted entirely **in electronic form using the Electronic Application System**.

















Detailed instructions for access to the Electronic Application System and submission of project proposals are provided in **Attachment 5 - Instruction for electronic submission of project proposals to these Guidelines for Applicants**.

**Instructions for presentation of the electronic documents in  
Electronic Application System:**

File/document/ format	Explanation
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	AF_ipabgmk.xlsm	The AF in Excel format ( <i>including Declaration of eligibility and commitment and Project Summary</i> )
	AF_ipabgmk.pdf	The AF in PDF format (including Project Summary), signed and stamped on the cover page and signed on each page by LP
	Partnership and co-financing statement.pdf	Submitted by each partner - signed, stamped and dated (part of the AF) and scanned
	Declaration of eligibility and commitment.pdf	Submitted by each partner - signed, stamped and dated (part of the AF) and scanned
	<b>Annexes_A</b>	
	 Annex_A1_Checklist of submitted documents_en.pdf	Submitted only by LP - signed and scanned
	 Annex_A2_Project Partnership Agreement.pdf	One document, signed by all PPs, but submitted a scanned document only by LP
	 Annex_A3_Declaration of e-mail address of the Lead partner.pdf	Submitted only by LP - signed, dated and stamped by LP - scanned
	<b>Annexes_B – B1-B3</b> (required in all cases)	
	<b>Annex_B1_Documentary and other evidence on the most recent legal status</b>	
	 B1_PP1_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned
	 B1_PP1_en.pdf	Submitted by LP in English translation - scanned
	 B1_PP2_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by Project partner 2 in original language - scanned
	 B1_PP2_en.pdf	Submitted by project partners – in English translation - scanned
	 B1_PP....pdf	And so on for all project partners
	<b>Annex_B2_Decision of Applicant's governing body/Local Council/Board of Directors</b>	
	 B2_PP1_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned
	 B2_PP1_en.pdf	Submitted by LP in English translation - scanned
	 B2_PP2_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in original language - scanned
	 B2_PP2_en.pdf	Submitted by PP2 - in English translation - scanned
	 B2_PP....pdf	And so on for all project partners
	<b>Annex B2.1 Power of Attorney from the legal representative</b> (if applicable)	
	 B2.1_PP1_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP - scanned
	 B2.1_PP2_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PPs - scanned
	<b>Annex_B3_Justification of lump sum costs</b>	
	 B3_PP1_eng.pdf	Submitted by LP in English - scanned
	 B3_PP2_en.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in English - scanned
	 B3_PP....pdf	And so on for all partners
	<b>Annexes B_B4 - B8</b> - submitted for INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES ONLY	
	<b>Annex_B4.1. – Ownership Act and Consent of Owner</b> (submitted only in case investment activities will be performed on municipal or state-owned property)	
	 B4.1_PP1_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned
	B4.1_PP1_en.pdf	Submitted by LP in English - scanned
	B4.1_PP2_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in original language - scanned

		B4.1_PP2_en.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in English - scanned
		B4.1_PP....pdf	And so on for all partners
	<b>Annex B4.2. – Consent of Owner and Ownership Act</b> (submitted only in case of investment activities required passing/access through private territories)		
		B4.2.1_PP1_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned
		B4.2.1_PP1_en.pdf	Submitted by LP in English - scanned
		B4.2.1_PP2_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in original language - scanned
		B4.2.2_PP2_en.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in English - scanned
		B4.2.2_PP....pdf	And so on for all partners
	<b>Annex B4.3. – Relevant documentation</b> , required by the respective national applicable law (submitted only in case of investment activities within territories/objects with special status)		
		B4.3_PP1 .pdf	Submitted by LP in both original language and EN
	<b>Annex B5 Positive Environmental Impact Assessment or Letter issued by the relevant body clearly stated that EIA is not necessary</b>		
		B5_PP1_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned
		B5_PP1_en.pdf	Submitted by LP in English - scanned
		B5_PP2_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in original language - scanned
		B5_PP2_en.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in English - scanned
		B5_PP....pdf	And so on for all partners
	<b>Annex B6 Approved Detailed Works Design and supporting documents</b>		
		B6.1_PP1_Work _design_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned or statement issued by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for design's approval – scanned in original language and in English
		B6.1_PP2_Work_design_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in original language - scanned or statement issued by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for design's approval – scanned in original language and in English
		B6.1_PP..._Work_design_bg/mk.pdf	And so on for all partners
		B6.2_PP1_Explanatory_note_bg/mk.doc	Submitted by LP in original language - word format
		B6.2_PP1_Explanatory_note_en.doc	Submitted by LP in English - word format
		B6.2_PP2_Explanatory_note_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in original language - word format
		B6.2_PP2_Explanatory_note_en.doc	Submitted by LP in English
		B6.2_PP....Explanatory note_bg/mk.pdf	And so on for all partners
		B6.2_PP1_Explanatory_note_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned
		B6.2_PP1_Explanatory_note_en.pdf	Submitted by LP in English - scanned
		B6.2_PP2_Explanatory_note_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in original language - scanned
		B6.2_PP2_Explanatory_note_en.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in English - scanned
		B6.2_PP1_Explanatory_note_bg/mk.pdf	And so on for all partners

		B6.3_PP1_Bill_of_quantities_bg/mk.xls	Submitted by LP in original language - excel format
		B6.3_PP1_Bill_of_quantities_en.xls	Submitted by LP in English - excel format
		B6.3_PP2_Bill_of_quantities_bg/mk.xls	Submitted by PP2 in original language - excel format
		B6.3_PP2_Bill_of_quantities_en.xls	Submitted by PP2 in English - excel format
		B6.3_PP....Bill_of_quantities_bg/mk.xls	And so on for all partners
		B6.4_PP1_Bill_of_quantities_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in original language - scanned
		B6.4_PP2_Bill_of_quantities_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in English - scanned
		B6.4_PP....Bill_of_quantities_bg/mk.pdf	And so on for all partners
	<b>Annex_B7_Latest photos of the site/s subject of investment activities</b>		
		B7_PP1.jpeg	Submitted by LP - description of the construction site
		B7_PP1.jpeg	Submitted by PP2 - description of the construction site
		B7_PP....jpeg	And so on for all partners
	<b>Annex_B8_Technical specifications for supplies</b>		
		B8_PP1_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by LP in English - scanned
		B8_PP2_bg/mk.pdf	Submitted by PP2 in English - scanned
		B8_PP....._bg/mk.pdf	And so on for all partners

**NOTE**

Please note that the documents have to be scanned by **conventional scanning machine** and not photographed by camera, mobile phone or other picture taking device.

Annexes and Supporting documents have to be provided in separate files, as described above.

**They should not be provided all in one file.**

#### 4.1. Deadline for submission of the project proposal

The deadline for the receipt of Project proposals is **11<sup>th</sup> of May 2018, 17:00 h. Bulgarian local time**. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

#### 5. Assessment and selection of project proposals

The financing under the current Call for Proposals shall be made available to potential beneficiaries through a competitive process. All projects will be assessed and selected according to the evaluation criteria previously approved by JMC.

**NOTE**

**Detailed information about the assessment process** and the grids for administrative compliance and eligibility check and technical and quality evaluation containing the selection criteria is **provided in Attachment 1**.

The results of each assessment step will be summarized in the form of reports and presented to the JMC for approval. Based on the received technical scores, proposals will be ranked in descending order for each Output Indicator in each Priority Axis. The JMC shall select projects for

financing until exhaustion of all funding available under the Programme, including funding allocated for this Call for Proposals and generated savings from the projects contracted under the previous Call for Proposals. The available funds shall be allocated with priority towards the achievement of the target values of those Programme Output Indicators in need of more contracted projects, whereas projects fulfilling only Output Indicators that have already been achieved shall only be contracted in case some funding still remains available.

### 📌 **IMPORTANT**

**Detailed information about fulfilment of Programme indicators and the rules for ranking of project proposals is provided in Attachment 2.**

The JMC will approve the list with the rejected proposals (proposals, which either did not cover the administrative and eligibility criteria or have received less than 65 points at the technical and quality assessment) and may also decide on creating reserves lists for project proposals, which have passed the administrative compliance and eligibility check and have received more than 65 points at the technical and quality assessment, but for which funding under the present Call for Proposals is unavailable.

After conducted JMC meeting each Lead partner will be informed with an official letter, signed by the MA on behalf of JMC, about the decision of the JMC on the approval/placement on the reserves list/rejection of their project. For the approved projects this letter will also provide information on the next steps.

## 6. Complaint procedure

Upon receipt of the notification letter and in case of disagreement with the outcome, each Lead partner may lodge a complaint towards the decision of the JMC, following the standard complaint procedure described in the Attachment 3 to these Guidelines for Applicants.

### 📌 **NOTE**

Detailed information about the **Complaint procedure** is provided in **Attachment 3**.

## 7. State aid

### 📌 **NOTE**

Within Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Bulgaria - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia **no state aid is granted**.

Activities of economic character could be financed only **under the de minimis rule**. In this case the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid shall apply.

### 📌 **NOTE**

All activities planned by **Bulgarian applicants** within the projects proposed for financing will be

subject to check for **compliance with the state aid and de minimis rules**.

Macedonian applicants should follow the applicable national regulations regarding State aid.

**NOTE**

Detailed information about the state aid rules applicable to the projects financed under the Programme is provided in **Attachment 4**.

## 8. Pre-contracting procedures

Prior to signature of Subsidy contracts with the projects, proposed for financing by the JMC, the Programme Managing bodies shall conduct a series of pre-contracting procedures with the selected applicants, including the following:

- 1) Documentary check of presence/lack of double financing – assessment of whether or not the proposed action/s has not already been financed under other EU funded Programmes;
- 2) Check for compliance with the State Aid rules – applicable for Bulgarian project partners only. Detailed information about State Aid rules is provided in Attachment 4;
- 3) Performance of on-the-spot visit of the projects, which include works components – assessment of whether or not the object, subject to the proposed investment, really exists and is in a physical condition as described in the project proposal and/or has not already been developed or is currently under development;
- 4) Budget optimization and projects' content modifications – final review of the budgets of the proposed projects, including seeking additional justifications for proposed costs and making revisions of unit rates, based on both the recommendations of the external assessors and the good practices of the MA and NA in terms of transparent and market-oriented financial allocations. Additionally, a verification procedure concerning additional documents will be conducted as specified during the previous stages in cases where additional documentation was requested prior to contract signature.

Based on the performed pre-contracting procedures, a final Pre-contracting Report shall be submitted for approval to the JMC, outlining individual findings for each project proposal, which may recommend:

- Signature of Subsidy contract based on the proposed budget optimization and projects' content modification (if any) and the additional documents presented (if any), as there is no evidence of double financing as well;
- Declining signature of Subsidy contract in any of the following circumstances – lack of common agreement on the proposed budget optimization; additional documents as requested are not provided; there are substantial discrepancies between the physical condition of the object, subject to investment activities, specified in the project proposal

and its present status (as identified during the on-the-spot check); there is an indisputable evidence of double financing.

## 9. Contracting

Contracting is the procedure carried out in order to conclude a Subsidy contract between the Lead Partner and the MA for the implementation of a project, approved for financing by decision of the JMC. This means that the Lead partner is responsible for implementation of the whole project.

### 🔔 NOTE

For the needs of preparation of the Subsidy contracts, the Lead partners will be requested to present the electronically submitted documents in original paper version and to provide additional documents like: Financial identification form of the project bank account for the Lead Partner, Certificate for lack of obligations for each project partner issued not later than 3 months prior the date of contract signature or plan for rescheduling of the debts if existing, Specimen of the legal representative of the Lead Partner, State aid de minimis declaration for Bulgarian partners, Declaration for awareness with definition for irregularity and fraud and procedure for reporting, etc.

### 🔔 IMPORTANT

Each Lead partner shall sign a Subsidy contract for the whole amount of the approved budget (including the total IPA funds) with the Managing Authority.

The implementation of each project may start only after the respective Subsidy contract is signed by both the MA and the Lead partner and is registered in the Registry system of the MA.

Draft Subsidy contract is presented in Annex C to these Guidelines for applicants.

<b>Indicative schedule for selection and contracting of the project proposals</b>	
<b>Type of procedure</b>	<b>Term for implementation*</b>
Administrative compliance and eligibility check of project proposals	Up to 3 months after the deadline for submission of project proposals
Technical and Quality assessment of project proposals	Up to 3 months after publication of the results from Administrative compliance and eligibility check
Pre-contracting procedures with the projects, proposed for financing by the JMC	Up to 2 months after publication of the JMC decision for approval of the final list of projects, proposed for financing under respective Call for proposals
Contracting	Up to 2 months after completion of the pre-contracting procedures of the projects proposed for funding

\* Please note that the term for implementation of the respective procedure is indicative and depends on the number of the project proposals received under respective Call for proposals