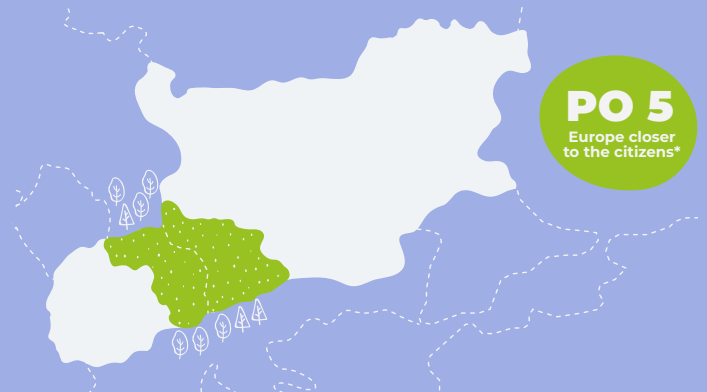


INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL STRATEGY

that aims to stimulate the development of the territory through a set of joint operations implemented on both sides of the border.



*One of the objectives set in the 2021-2027 EU Cohesion Policy.

NEEDS AND POTENTIALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY

The analysis is selective and focuses on the needs and potentials of the territory that are suitable to be addressed through cross-border investments. The needs and potentials are divided conditionally into two sections:

Increasing the competitiveness of the local economy and improving the business environment:

- overcoming the differences between the settlements and managing depopulation;
- bringing out SMEs with focus on family business through support for improving the staff knowledge and skills;
- increasing the resource and energy efficiency of SMEs using the methods of circular economy;
- continuous renewal of SMEs by developing new knowledge and skills and implementing digital technologies;
- implementing measures to overcome shortage of qualified staff and to increase the executive and management staff qualification;
- improving the company culture of cooperation between SMEs;
- encouraging economically inactive people to look for work experience or education and supporting the business in opening new job positions;
- **relatively good educational infrastructure in terms of territorial coverage, universities within the territory;**
- **rich cultural-historical and natural heritage.**

Developing an attractive all-season tourist product through joint intelligent solutions:

- developing a system for alternative modes of transport;
- implementing joint actions to reduce domestic and transboundary environmental pollution in order to adapt to climate change;
- organising coordinated joint actions in cases of natural disasters and accidents;
- improving the awareness of the local inhabitants about the impact of human activity on the environment and stimulating the motivation to preserve the cultural-historical and natural heritage;
- developing and maintaining the infrastructure of the cultural-historical sites and the natural landmarks;
- adapting the strong seasonal nature of the tourist services within the territory to an all-season tourist product that is available during the whole year;
- implementing target measures for development of ecological tourism;
- providing financial support for cultural activities and exchanges;
- **opportunity to increase competitiveness by encouraging the development of sustainable four-season tourism within the territory.**

SpO

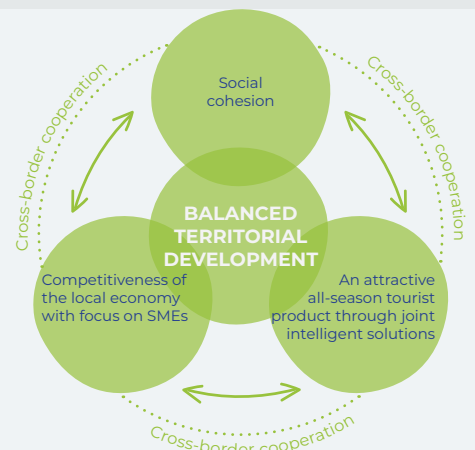
Social development and cohesion through sustainable economic growth based on "knowledge-based economy" that aims to overcome the existing significant gaps between the settlements at different hierarchical levels within the territory.

SpO 1.1.

Increasing the competitiveness of the local economy and improving the business environment.

SpO 1.2.

The cultural and historical heritage of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia: a prerequisite for the development of an attractive, all-season tourism product by means of smart solutions that ensure universal access and participation.



LIST OF OPERATIONS TO BE CARRIED WITHIN THE CROSS-BORDER AREA:

- ✓ Potential for cross-border implementation of the idea for the project.
- ✓ Connection with the needs and potential for development of the territory.
- ✓ Adequacy to the financial resources of the programme.

Positive cumulative effect on the needs identified in the strategy and potential for development of the territory as a result of the implementation of the integrated package of projects with focus on territorial and thematical aspects.

MORE INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS

STRATEGY