

**BULGARIA - SERBIA
IPA CROSS-BORDER
PROGRAMME
2007 - 2013**



CCI Number: 2007CB16IPO006

**ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT
2009**



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1. Identification

PROGRAMME	Objective concerned: IPA Cross-border Cooperation
	Eligible area concerned: On the Bulgarian side (6 administrative units): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vidin District (11 municipalities) • Montana District (11 municipalities) • Sofia District (22 municipalities) • Pernik District (6 municipalities) • Kyustendil District (9 municipalities) • Sofia-city District (1 municipality) On the Serbian side (6 administrative units): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bor District 4 (9 municipalities) • Zaječar District (4 municipalities) • Nišava District (11 municipalities) • Pirot District (4 municipalities) • Jablanica District (6 municipalities) • Pčinja District: (7 municipalities)
	Programming period: 2007 – 2013 (financial plan 2007-2011)
	Programme number (CCI No): 2007CB16IPO006
	Programme title: Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-border Programme
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	Reporting year: 2009
	Date of approval of the annual report by the Joint Monitoring Committee:, 2010



1.1. Introduction

The overall strategic goal of the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-border Programme (hereinafter referred to as Programme) is to strengthen territorial cohesion of the Bulgarian–Serbian cross-border region, its competitiveness and sustainability of its development through co-operation in the economic, social and environmental area over the administrative borders.

The Programme attempts to promote good neighborly relations fostering stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of both countries, encouraging their harmonious, balanced and sustainable development. It contributes to the achievement of the cross-border region as an open, historically and culturally rich, environmentally clean, economically and socially prosperous European region, a centre of interconnection of East-West and North-South transport, trade and tourism routes.

The Programme will address issues mainly focusing on the capacity of the region to transgress national boundaries that hinder integration and maintain cultural, business and institutional links for sustainable economic and social development of the whole region.

In line with the overall objective, the Programme aims at supporting the following specific objectives for co-operation in the cross-border region:

- **To bolster the infrastructure enabling social and economic development and improvement of the environment on both sides of the border** through improving access to transport, information and communication services, and cross-border systems for utilities and environmental protection.
- **To increase economic synergy in the region and improve the capacity to jointly make use of common regional potential for improving regional well being**, through developing policy and social networks, a sound framework for (cross-border) business support, collaborations in particular sectors such as culture, tourism, research and development, environmental protection and education, an active exchange of best practices, and joint regional planning and the preparation of the region's economic sector for participation in the joint EU market.
- **To promote the principles of sustainable development of the cross-border region in all matters pertaining to increased mutual understanding and respect**, through developing successful models of cooperation, on the business, local stakeholder and policy levels in key priority areas.

2. Overview of the implementation of the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-border Programme

2.1. Achievement and analysis of the progress

➤ **Information on the physical progress of the Programme**

This is the first annual implementation report for the Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-Border Programme.

The Managing Authority (MA) for the Programme is the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of the Republic of Bulgaria (MRDPW), having as a counterpart the Sector for Programming, Management of EU Funds and Development Assistance at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, the National Authority (NA).

➤ **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

During the reported period a procedure has been initiated for consultation of the MoU between the programme partner countries. As a result of the conducted technical meetings and discussions between



representatives of the two countries, the MoU is in the final stage of the conciliation procedure. At present, only the approval of the Financial Statement from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria is expected.

➤ **First Call for Proposals**

During the reporting period one call for proposals was organized. It lunched on 31st of August 2009 and the call for proposal notice has been published in Bulgarian newspaper “Pari” and Serbian newspaper “Politika”. The Application package has been published on the Programme’s web site (www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/), on the web site of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria (www.mrrb.government.bg) and on the web site of the National Authority, the Ministry of Finance, Serbia (www.evropa.gov.rs).

The deadline for project proposals submission was on 30th of November 2009, 16:00 local time. In order to ensure broad visibility and information among local community, an information campaign was organized within the period 23-25 September 2009 in Sofia (BG), Vidin (BG), Pirot (SR) and Nish (SR). Detailed information about publicity is provided in section “Information and publicity” from the current annual report.

Diagram 1

One hundred and ten (110) project proposals have been submitted within the deadline and six (6) projects after the deadline (diagram 1). From the submitted proposals within the deadline, 75 proposals have been submitted with Bulgarian Lead partner and 27 with Serbian Lead partner (diagram 2).

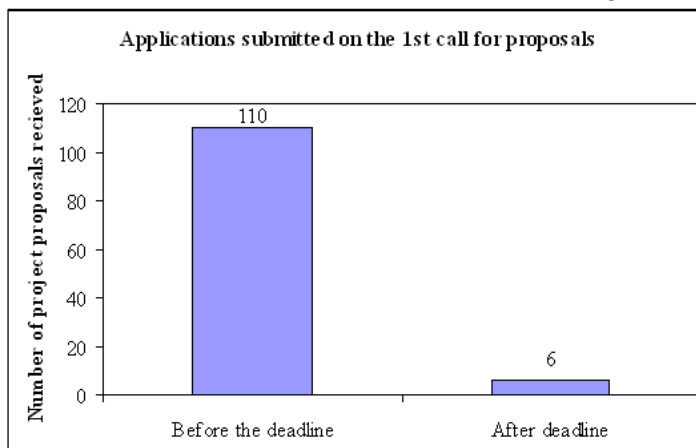


Diagram 2

During the process of statistics collection based on the information written on the submitted packages, it was found that part of the data is not clearly indicated. Additionally, there were four (4) applications, submitted by a Lead partner located outside the eligible region. Regarding these vaguenesses, precise information about project allocation among regions, origin and type of Lead beneficiary, will be available at the time of completion of the administrative compliance process.

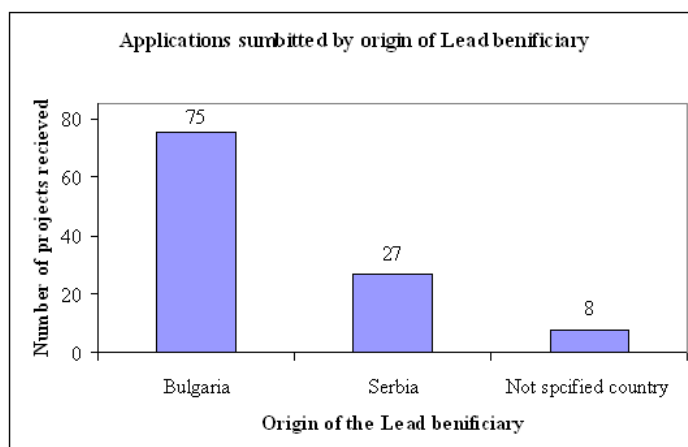


Diagram 3 shows the distribution of the submitted project proposals by country and district:



Diagram 3

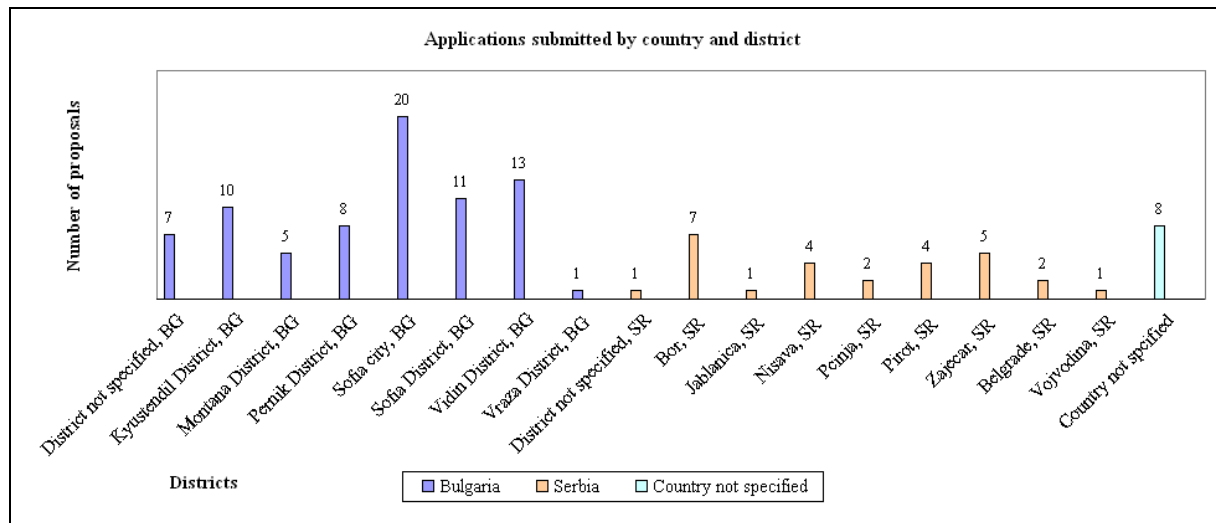
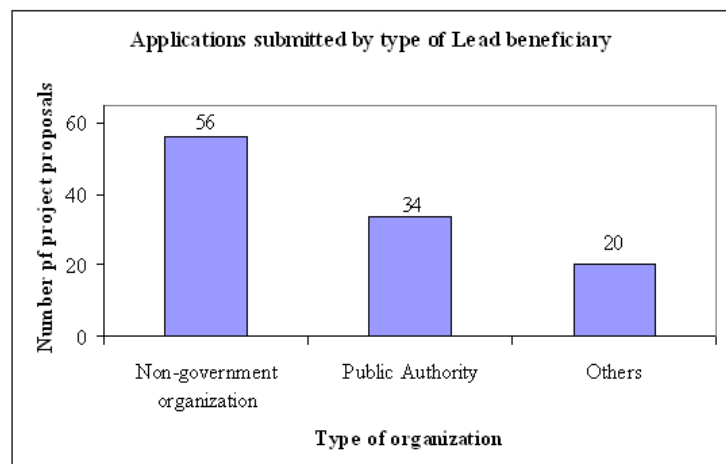


Diagram 4

Finally, diagram 4 presents distribution of the applications by type of legal entity of the Lead beneficiary:



➤ **Financial information (All financial data should be expressed in euro)**

Financial allocation of the Programme for the 2007 – 2011 programming period for all priority axes is shown in the table below.



Breakdown of priority axes by source of funding:

Priority	Community Funding	National Public funding	Total funding	Co-financing rate (%)
	(a)	(b)	c=a+b	a/c*100:b/c*100
Priority Axis 1 Development of small-scale infrastructure	11,695,422	2,063,898	13,759,320	85% :15%
Priority Axis 2 Enhancing capacity for joint planning problem solving and development	7,442,542	1,313,390	8,755,932	85% :15%
Priority Axis 3 Technical Assistance	2,126,440	375,254	2,501,694	85% :15%
Total EUR	21,264,404	3,752,542	25,016,946	85% :15%

According to the Commission Regulation (EC) 718/2007 the pre-financing payment by the EC could only be made after MA's receipt of the positive opinion on its Description of the management and control systems. In order to ensure smooth implementation of the programme (organization of technical meetings, JMC meetings, information campaign, publicity etc.), MA ensured financial allocation from the Bulgarian national budget in order to cover such expenditure. Table below indicates the expenditure made by MA for activities aiming at promoting the Programme and logistic support to the joint management structure.

During year 2009 (30 March), the Financing Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and EC has been signed. According to the Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007 signed Financing Agreement is a prerequisite for spending the Community contribution to Serbia.

During the year 2009, no expenditures were made from the budget of the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-Border Programme under Priority 1 and Priority 2. Under Priority 3 - Technical assistance, expenditures have been incurred, information for which is provided in the table below.



Information about the breakdown of use of the Funds (EUR)

	Expenditure paid out by the beneficiaries included in payment claims sent to the managing authority	Corresponding public contribution	Private expenditure	Expenditure paid by the body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries	Total payments received from the Commission
PRIORITY AXIS 1	0	0	0	0	0
PRIORITY AXIS 2	0	0	0	0	0
PRIORITY AXIS 3	0	0	0	20,708.00	20,708.00*
<u>BL1 - ADMINISTRATING COSTS</u>	0	0	0	7,200.00	
Project manager - 2 experts Sofia	0	0	0	7,200.00	
<u>BL2 - TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION</u>	0	0	0	3,688.00	
Travel costs	0	0	0	1,248.00	
Travel costs for JMC meeting (voting members, MA, NA, JTS) (incl. insurances, taxes)	0	0	0	96.00	
Travel costs for 2 technical meetings up to 12 persons (incl. insurances, taxes)	0	0	0	420.00	
Travel costs for 2 info days and training - 8 persons (incl. insurances, taxes)	0	0	0	68.00	
INTERACT and/or other events abroad - 6 for the year x 1 person (flight tickets) (incl. insurances, taxes)	0	0	0	664.00	
Daily allowance	0	0	0	990.00	
JMC meeting - 12 (voting members, MA, NA, JTS) x 2 days	0	0	0	140.00	
2 Technical meetings 12 people x 2 days	0	0	0	640.00	
Info days and training (8	0	0	0	140.00	



	Expenditure paid out by the beneficiaries included in payment claims sent to the managing authority	Corresponding public contribution	Private expenditure	Expenditure paid by the body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries	Total payments received from the Commission
persons x2x3 days)					
INTERACT and/or other events abroad 6 for the year x 1 person x 4 days	0	0	0	70.00	
Accommodation costs	0	0	0	1,450.00	
2 Technical meetings 12 people x 1 night	0	0	0	1,252.00	
Info days and training (8 persons x2x2 nights)	0	0	0	84.00	
INTERACT and/or other events abroad 6 for the year x 1 person x 3 nights	0	0	0	114.00	
<u>BL3 - MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, EVENTS, etc.</u>	0	0	0	0	
<u>BL4 - INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY</u>	0	0	0	9,820.00	
Elaboration, design etc.	0	0	0	9,820.00	
<u>BL5 - EXTERNAL EXPERTISE</u>	0	0	0	0	
<u>BL6 - SUPPLY OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT</u>	0	0	0	0	
<u>BL7 - OTHER</u>	0	0	0	0	
GRAND TOTAL	0	0	0	20,708.00	

*All the activities under TA are pre-financed from the BG state budget. 85% of the total expenditures (20,708.00 euro) are expected to be reimbursed by the EC after verification and certification of expenditures.

2.2. Information about compliance with Community law

The Programme has been prepared in accordance with Community Strategic Guidelines 2007 – 2013 priorities – especially in the area of improving of the attractiveness of the cross-border region and further developing of the human resources.

The Programme is compliant with the main EU strategic documents, notably with the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies, targeting sustainable development, equal opportunities and cross-border partnership.



The overall strategic goal and the priority axes of the Programme are fully compliant with main Bulgarian and Serbian national strategies and programmes, which are indicated in the Programme document. In order to ensure sound financial management of the Programme, the MA initiated a procedure and Decree No 221 of Council of Ministries for eligibility of expenditures has been adopted on 11th of September 2009.

2.3. Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

- On the second meeting of the JMC at the end of March 2009, an issue concerning Eligibility of Partners, specifically regarding their geographic location came up. The subsequent debate between the DG Regional Policy and DG Enlargement caused 4 months delay in the publication of the First Call for Proposals, which happened at the end of August 2009. This delay had a corresponding reflection on the development of the procedures describing the Management and Control System of the Programme.
- Missing pre-financing payment by the EC before MA's receipt of the positive opinion on its Description of the management and control systems caused serious problem in terms of ensuring of national financing for establishment of the joint programme structures, such as the Joint Technical Secretariat, logistic of the programme etc.

2.4. Changes in the context of the Programme implementation (if relevant)

On 16th of September 2009, written procedure for approval of financial allocation for 2010-2011 and revision of the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA CBC Programme (in accordance with article 2 (2)h of the “Rules of Procedures of the JMC”) has been initiated. The JMC has approved the proposed amendments in the Programme on 9th of October 2009, through signing Minutes of meeting by the two co-chairpersons of the Committee. As a result of the conducted procedure, the following amendments of the Programme have been made:

- distribution of financial allocation for years 2010 and 2011;
- specification of the meaning of “national co-financing” provided by the partnering countries, which specification provided opportunity each partnering country to decide the sources of national funding (own contribution ensured by the beneficiaries or national public co-financing);
- structural changes and changes of responsibilities of the different national structure in Bulgaria involved in the process of Programme management;

2.5. Complementarity with other instruments

The complementarity of the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-border Programme with other instruments has been thoroughly analyzed already in the programming phase and it is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 of the Operational Programme Document.

Complementarity with other financial instruments will be ensured through mechanisms foreseen in the programming document. Programme coordination with other financial instruments will be done by the national coordination structures in both participating countries. The representatives of national coordination structures participate in JMC sessions. Representatives from ministries managing sectoral programmes will also participate as observers in JMC sessions ensuring coordination and avoiding overlapping. Another useful tool for this purpose is the Management Information System of the Programme.

2.6. Monitoring arrangements

Monitoring of the Programme shall ensure the quality of its implementation. The development and implementation of the monitoring system of the Programme is responsibility of the Managing Authority.



The Managing Authority and the Joint Monitoring Committee are responsible for monitoring the Programme implementation in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and the indicators for output and results specified in the Programme. The Joint Monitoring Committee observes the monitoring of the Programme implementation and ensures the achievement of the Programme objectives through a rational use of the allocated resources.

➤ **Managing Authority**

On the basis of the analysis of functions and responsibilities, the existing Directorate “PHARE Implementing Agency” within the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works has been merged with part of the GD “Programming of Regional Development” (which was responsible for management of territorial cooperation programmes) in newly established General Directorate “Territorial Cooperation Management” and that General Directorate is now responsible for the management of the IPA Programmes, for which MRDPW is determined as a Managing Authority. Within the newly established General Directorate, “Monitoring, Evaluation and Risk Management” Department will be responsible for performance of monitoring at programme level, while monitoring at project level will be implemented by JTS and its branch office.

➤ **Joint Monitoring Committee**

During the reported period the following JMC meetings were carried out:

- Following approval by the European Commission in March 2008 (Commission Decision C(2008)1058, March 25, 2008), the Programme has not become operational until the first Joint Monitoring Committee meeting conducted in October 2008. Subject of approval during the meeting was basic documents necessary for implementation of the Programme, i.e. JMC Rules of Procedures, Communication strategy, job profiles for the JTS staff and eligibility of TA expenditures.
- On 30th of March 2009 – Nis – Second meeting of JMC – presentation of the Application package for 1st Call for Proposals, presentation of project selection criteria, discussion of indicative date for publication and information campaign, progress on JTS staffing, progress on Memorandum of Understanding, approval of TA budget for 2009.
- On 9th of October 2009 – Written procedure for approval of financial allocation for 2010-2011 and revision of the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA CBC Programme (in accordance with article 2 (2)h of the “Rules of Procedures of the JMC”) was initiated. As a result, distribution of financial allocation for years 2010 and 2011 was approved. The programme was amended in terms of additional specification of the national co-financing provided by the partnering countries, which amendment provides opportunity to the partnering countries to decide the nature of the sources of national funding (own contribution ensured by the beneficiaries or national public co-financing).

➤ **Joint Technical Secretariat – main office Sofia, Bulgaria**

Main office of the JTS is located in the building of the MRDPW. On 20.02.2009 the MA published announcement for selection of two experts and head of the JTS. The announcement was published on the web site of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and in the national newspaper “Pari”. Based on the low interest and high percent of administrative non compliance of applicants, only one expert was appointed for the JTC. A new procedure for expert selection was launched on 20th of April, 2009. As a result of the conducted procedure and based on the performed assessment, head of the JTS was selected. Unfortunately, by the time of contract preparation (July 2009), the selected applicant informed officially the MA, that he had been selected for a member of the Bulgarian Parliament as a result of the conducted national elections.



In order to ensure sound management of the Programme in relation to the establishment of the Joint management structure and labour relations between the MA (Employer) and JTS staff (Employees), the MA initiated procedure for determination of rules for employing Bulgarian and foreign citizens in the JTSs and info points. As a result Decree No 214 dated 27.08.2009 has been adopted by the Council of Ministries.

In accordance with the requirements of the CG 214/27.08.2009, the MA opened a new procedure for selection of the experts (2) and head of the JTS. The announcement was published on the web site of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and in the national newspaper “Pari” on 08.12.2009. Currently, the JTS is operational with two experts. The procedure for selection of Head of JTS is on-going and it is going to be completed in May 2010.

Joint Technical Secretariat – branch office, Nis, Serbia

Branch office of the JTS is located in the premises of Poslovni Centar Ambasador Nis, Serbia. During the reported period one expert and one head of office have been appointed.

➤ **Technical meetings between representatives of Managing Authority and National Authority**

During the reported period the following technical meetings have been conducted:

- On 4th of February 2009 – Belgrade, Serbia – Programme status, establishment of JTS, preparation for 2nd JMC meeting, coordination of 1st Call for Proposals, management of TA budget, data base and monitoring system in Serbia, coordination of Memorandum of Understanding
- On 15th of July 2009 – Belgrade, Serbia – Eligibility of Applicants issue, coordination of Application Package for 1st Call for Proposals, decision on publication date and information campaign/trainings schedule, comments on Memorandum of Understanding, First level of control and irregularity reporting issues.

➤ **External expert**

According to the point 9.2 of the Programme, the external experts can be involved to assist in assessment of the application forms submitted to the JTS. In 2009 the NA carried out one public tender in order to select the best qualified experts from Serbia who could assist the JTS in application assessment. A list of Serbian assessors has been established.

2.7. National performance reserve (where applicable and only for the annual implementation report submitted for 2010)

Not applicable

3. Implementation by priority

As no projects were approved in 2009, information about programme indicators will be given in the next reporting period.

3.1 Priority Axis 1 - Development of small-scale infrastructure

The indicators that will be used to measure the progress of axes are shown in the tables below:

Measure 1.1 Physical and information infrastructure

Programme Output Indicators	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total



Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-border Programme 2007 – 2013

Number of small-scale projects addressing physical infrastructure improvement	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	0										
Number of small-scale projects addressing information infrastructure improvement	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	0										
Number of small-scale projects addressing social infrastructure improvement	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	0										
Number of small-scale projects addressing business and innovation facilities	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Number of existing facilities upgraded	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Number of institutions/bodies reached by programme activities	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	45										
	Baseline	0										
Training places created	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	0										

Measure 1.2 Infrastructure concerning environmental issue

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Number of joint friendly environmental projects	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	0										
Number of small-scale infrastructural projects concerning environmental protection	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	0										
Number of projects for pollution prevention and flood reduction	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	0										



Partnerships for cases of natural disasters established	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	0										
Number of joint eco-itineraries created/developed	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	0										
Number of institutions/bodies reached by programme activities	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	0										

Measure 1.3. Assistance for project preparation

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Feasibility studies	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	0										
Preliminary and detailed design works	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Project environmental assessments	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	0										

3.2 Priority Axis 2 - Enhancing capacity for joint planning problem solving and development

The indicators that will be used to measure the progress of axes are shown in the tables below:

Measure 2.1. Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Number of linkages between different institutions created	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Number of joint databases created	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	0										
Number of management	Achievement	0	0	0								



plans/strategies/researches developed	Target 2016	3										
	Baseline	0										
Number of education/business partnerships	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	0										
Number of common marketing initiatives	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	0										
Number of institutions participating in knowledge economy activities	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	5										
	Baseline	0										
SMEs involved/addressed in CBC projects	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Number of people involved in projects' activities	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	400										
	Baseline	0										
Management and job-related training courses	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	0										
Number of people trained	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	250										
	Baseline	0										

Measure .2.2. Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Number of common cross-border tourist products and services	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Tourist destinations created/ developed	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	2										
	Baseline	0										
Number of projects concerning common cultural heritage	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	10										



	Baseline	0										
Number of cultural events carried out	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	0										
Number of projects concerning common products and services	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	10										
	Baseline	0										
New jobs created	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	50										
	Baseline	0										
Number of projects concerning exchange and transfer of know-how	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	7										
	Baseline	0										
Number of cross-border business events, seminars, workshops carried out	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	15										
	Baseline	0										
Awareness campaigns carried out	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	30										
	Baseline	0										

Measure 2.3. People to people actions

Programme Output Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Number of people to people collaboration projects	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	50										
	Baseline	0										
Number of institutions/bodies involved	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	100										
	Baseline	0										
Number of people involved	Achievement	0	0	0								
	Target 2016	300										
	Baseline	0										



4. Major projects (if applicable)

Not applicable – no major projects were financed / implemented under the Programme during the reported period.

5. Technical Assistance

The goal of the Technical Assistance (TA) is to provide effective and efficient administration and implementation of the Programme. The Technical Assistance will be used only for activities directly related to the Programme management. Technical Assistance will be invested in the overall management and promotion of the Programme, awareness raising, pro-active project generation, etc.

For the period 2007-2009 approximately 1.2 million Euro Community Funding is available for this priority axis, matched by 0.2 million Euro national contributions.

The framework of the TA budget of the Programme was approved on 22.10.2008 during the 1st JMC meeting with the amount of 432 600.00 EUR planned to be spent in 2009. The detailed TA budget for 2009 was approved during the 2nd JMC meeting held on 30.03.2009.

In 2009 the following expenses were covered from the TA budget while implementing activities related to Priority 3 of the Programme:

- Salaries of the JTS expert;
- Translations for the Programme and the JTS needs;
- Mission costs of the JTS staff and MA staff;
- Expenditures related to the organization of the JMC meetings (travel of JMC members to / from meetings and their accommodation costs during the meetings, catering during the meetings);
- Programme information and publicity activities (information brochures, leaflets, paper holders, pencils, information blinds etc.).

The amount of 20 708.00 euro was spent from the TA budget of the Programme during 2009.

6. Information and publicity

During the reporting period various information and publicity activities were carried out both on national, as well as local and regional levels.

➤ Detailed communication plan

Detailed Communication Plan for the Programme was elaborated in early 2008 and was approved on 22nd of October 2008 during the 1st JMC meeting in Sofia. The Communication Plan is the main outline for publicity, communication and information activities for the Programme and contains the following information:

- the aims and target groups;
- the strategy and content of the information and publicity measures;
- an indicative budget for the implementation;
- the administrative departments / agents responsible for its implementation;
- indication of how the information and publicity measures are going to be evaluated;

The goal of the activities related with the Communication Plan is to disseminate information about the Programme and thus to increase the participation of potential beneficiaries, which will result in increased absorption capacity and transparency, and will increase the awareness of the population of the eligible region.



➤ Web site

In the reporting period the Programme official website was created: www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu

The website includes information on the Programme and its Priority axes, accompanied by all documents concerning Programme implementation. The website was constantly updated with relevant information on the Programme (events, news, documentation etc.) and with new elements like frequently asked questions and technical support. The website also includes tool for partners search with project ideas database, thereby facilitating the integration among actors and promoting joint activities and ideas. 21 partners from Bulgaria and 40 partners from Serbia were placed in partner search forum by the end of 2009.

Furthermore, in order to ensure broad publicity, information on the Programme was disseminated among others through regional and national websites as well as on the websites at the European level:

www.mrrb.government.bg - Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works

www.bgregio.eu - Managing Authority

www.eufunds.bg - Bulgarian Ministry of Finance

www.evropa.gov.rs - Sector for Programming, Management of EU Funds and Development Assistance at Ministry of finance of the Republic of Serbia

➤ Information and promotion events

• Launch conference and information days

- Sofia (Bulgaria) and Nis (Serbia), 23 September 2009 - conference officially opening the Programme, with 117 participants in Sofia and 94 participants in Nis. The conference was addressed to all target groups, especially potential beneficiaries as well as to the local and regional bodies, public administration bodies, institutions engaged in the Programme implementation and the media. The aim of the event was to present the Programme, its goals and expected outcomes to the public and to potential beneficiaries. The meeting gave the opportunity to potential beneficiaries to find out about the experiences and best practices from the implementation of the previous territorial cooperation programmes. The first call for proposals was also officially announced.
- Vidin (Bulgaria), 24 September 2009 and Pirot (Serbia), 25 September 2009 - following the conference, information seminars for potential beneficiaries, stakeholders and the public were organized, focusing on the Programme objectives and its expected outcomes. 43 participants took place in the event in Vidin (BG) and 58 participants in Pirot SR).

• Trainings for potential beneficiaries

Trainings for potential beneficiaries were performed by the external consultancy company on the following dates and themes:

- 12-14 October 2009 – Sofia (Bulgaria) “Identification and project planning – Filling in the Application Form”
- 20 October 2009 – Pirot (Serbia) “Partner Search Forum”
- 3-5 November 2009 – Sofia (Bulgaria) “Implementation of a project”
- Additionally, Ministry of Finance in Serbia with support of the JTS antenna office in Nis, performed training on “Identification and project planning – Filling in the Application Form” in Vranja and Zajechar on 22 and 23 of October, 2009.

The aim of the events was to inform potential beneficiaries on the Programme priorities, expected outcomes and projects, as well as on the application procedure. Moreover, potential beneficiaries had



the opportunity to look for or meet partners and to develop joint projects ideas. Those looking for partners showed the biggest demand in the fields of tourism, sports and health, object-renovation or construction, business and tourism trainings, youth occupation as well as preservation and fostering of historical and culture heritage. The participants of the Partner search forum were over 150 organizations. Total of 20 organizations have filled in applications for searching a partner for activities under Priority 1, from which 16 from Serbia and 4 from Bulgaria. Under Priority 2 partner searching organizations from Serbia are 32 and from Bulgaria – 10.

- **Publications and promotional materials**

Tender procedure for elaboration and preparation of promotional materials was conducted and a service contract was signed on 27th of March 2009. Based on the contract the following materials were produced and delivered:

- 500 brochures containing basic Programme information – 250 in Bulgarian and Serbian language;
- 250 brochures presenting general summary of PRAG – in English language;
- 500 paper bags;
- 500 cardboard files;
- 200 folders;
- 50 blocks format A4;
- 2 portable banners;
- 300 CDs – information on programming documents;
- 500 ball-pens with printed logo of the Programme.

The programme brochures were disseminated on various occasions and focused on information about the Programme, requirements that are to be fulfilled in order to get co-financing within the Programme and on procedure of filling in the application form. The brochure is published in printed version and on the website as a file to download. The promotion materials promoted the Programme in various events (Launch conference, info days, seminars for potential applicants, etc.) and for other occasions.

➤ **Media**

- **Electronic media**

- DARIK radio, 20 May 2008 - an interview after the official approval of the programme by EC, covering information on eligible area of the Programme, Programme priorities, possibilities to apply and main decisions of the first JMC.
- Fokus radio, September 2009 - an interview after the launching of the First Call for Proposal giving information about Programme priorities, Programme budget, who may apply, size of grant, eligible activities, etc.

- **Press**

Information concerning the info-days was published in newspapers:

- “SuPernik” (Pernik), “NIE” (Vidin), “Mont Press” (Montana) – Bulgaria
- Blic and Narodne Novine - Serbia

Indicators for communication and publicity measures

	Activity	Indicator	2007	2008	2009	210	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Programme Website	General information	Number of web-site visits	0	0	8034								
		Target 2016	500 per year										
		Baseline	0										
	Partners' search facility	Number of new partnerships established	0	0	62								
		Target 2016	20										
		Baseline	0										
	Contact details	Number of web-site visits	0	0	8034								
		Target 2016	500 per year										
		Baseline	0										
	Information for mass media	Public awareness raised	0	0	0,24								
	Target 2016	2 %											
	Baseline												
Promotional Materials	Leaflets	Number of leaflets produced	0	0	1000								
		Target 2016	500 per call										
		Baseline	0										
	Brochures	Number of brochures produced	0	0	750								
		Target 2016	500 per year										
		Baseline	0										
	Posters & banners	Number of posters	0	0	2								
		Target 2016	2										
		Baseline	0										
	Other promotional materials (gadgets)	Number of materials prepared	0	0	3000								
	Target 2016	100 of each kind											
	Baseline	0											
Seminars	Info-days	Number of organizations/bodies attending	0	0	300								
		Target 2016	40 per call										
		Baseline	0										
	Thematic seminars/ workshops	Number of people attending	0	0	650								
		Target 2016	40 per event										
	Baseline	0											



Publicity campaign	Print media campaign	Number of newspapers publishing issue(s) concerning the programme	0	0	4									
		Target 2016	4 per year											
		Baseline	0											
	Press conferences	Information concerning decisions concerning the programme	0	1	1									
		Target 2016	1 per call											
		Baseline	0											
	Press releases	Information concerning decisions concerning the programme	0	2	6									
		Target 2016	1 per call											
		Baseline	0											
	Press Advertisements	Information concerning the definite call	0	0	5									
		Target 2016	1 per call											
		Baseline	0											