



**INTERREG – IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION
BULGARIA – SERBIA PROGRAMME
2014TC16I5CB007**

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Call for Proposals

No. 2014TC16I5CB007 – 2015 – 1

Deadline for submission: January 18th, 2016

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Explanation of text-boxes

Across the following pages you will find a series of highlighted text boxes of various colors. Please see below a general explanation for these text boxes:

IMPORTANT BOX – highlights the most important elements or some specificities to be taken into account when preparing a project

WARNING BOX – draws attention of applicants to specific issues

ADVICE BOX – provides applicants with practical advice and reference to related documents

Legal Basis

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

Basic EU rules

- 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) – the IPA II general regulation;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No **447/2014** of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance – the IPA II implementing regulation (IPA II IR);
- 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 **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;

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- 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, 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;
- 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.

National legislation

Besides EU rules and rules of the Programme, national rules have to be respected (for example national legislation ruling specific fields like environmental interventions, natural and cultural heritage, construction, and others).

Suspension clause:

The applicants should take into consideration that the Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Serbia for allocation under the Programme has not been signed at the date of publication of the Call. Therefore, Subsidy contracts with the beneficiaries approved for financing will only be signed upon signature of the Financing Agreement.

Please note that all legal provisions must also be observed by the applicants during both project preparation and implementation phases.

1. General Information

The Guidelines for Applicants under the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme aim to provide practical information to the potential beneficiaries for the successful submission of a project proposal/s. These Guidelines present on one hand general information on the Programme (including overview of the Programme: eligible cross-border area, Programme strategy, objectives and priority axes, implementation structures, financial allocation for the Call for proposals, Programme indicators etc.) and on the other hand they provide the beneficiaries with concrete information about how to fill in the application form, budget and related forms, the application procedure, the project selection criteria, the decision procedure and other practical advices.

⚠ WARNING

This is a different Programme than the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-border Programme 2007 – 2013. Therefore please read carefully these Guidelines in order to avoid possible confusion!

1.1 Overview of the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme

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The Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme (the Programme) is designed in the framework of the European strategy for a smart, inclusive and sustainable growth and the relevant national strategic documents.

The Programme continues the evolution of the EU's cross-border initiatives, reflected in the Neighbourhood Programme from 2004 to 2006 and the Bulgaria – Serbia IPA Cross-border cooperation programme 2007 – 2013. Additionally the Programme contributes to and interacts with the EU macro-regional strategy for Danube Region devised for the countries and regions that share common needs and objectives in the region.

The Programme is co-financed by the European Union through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II and co-financed by Bulgaria and Serbia. The Bulgarian co-financing is provided from the state budget. The Serbian co-financing is provided through the state budget only for the Technical Assistance Priority Axis, while at the project level it is to be ensured by the beneficiaries.

The Programme document drafted jointly by the two countries through a large partnership with national, regional and local stakeholders is approved by the European Commission on 30th of July, 2015 by Decision No. C(2015) 5444. It sets out the general framework of intervention of IPA II in the Programme cross-border area. The programme document is available on <http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/>, <http://www.evropa.gov.rs> and <http://www.mrrb.government.bg>.

1.1.1 Eligible Cross-border Area

The eligible cross-border co-operation area is determined in accordance with the IPA II rules set out in Regulation 231/2014 where only NUTS III regions (or respective equivalents) are eligible for cross-border co-operation programmes. In Bulgaria the corresponding NUTS III administrative-territorial units are the districts established by the Law on the Administrative Territorial System in Republic of Bulgaria.

The eligible border area of the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme covers a territory of 43 933 sq. km, or around 22% of the both countries' territories (Bulgaria and Serbia). It borders with Romania to the North and with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the South. The border length between the two countries is 341 km. There are 5 border checkpoints operating alongside the border.

The Programme area includes 13 administrative units: **6 districts in Bulgaria**, which correspond to NUTS level III (EUROSTAT), and the equivalent NUTS III **7 districts in Serbia**.

Table 1: Eligible NUTS III

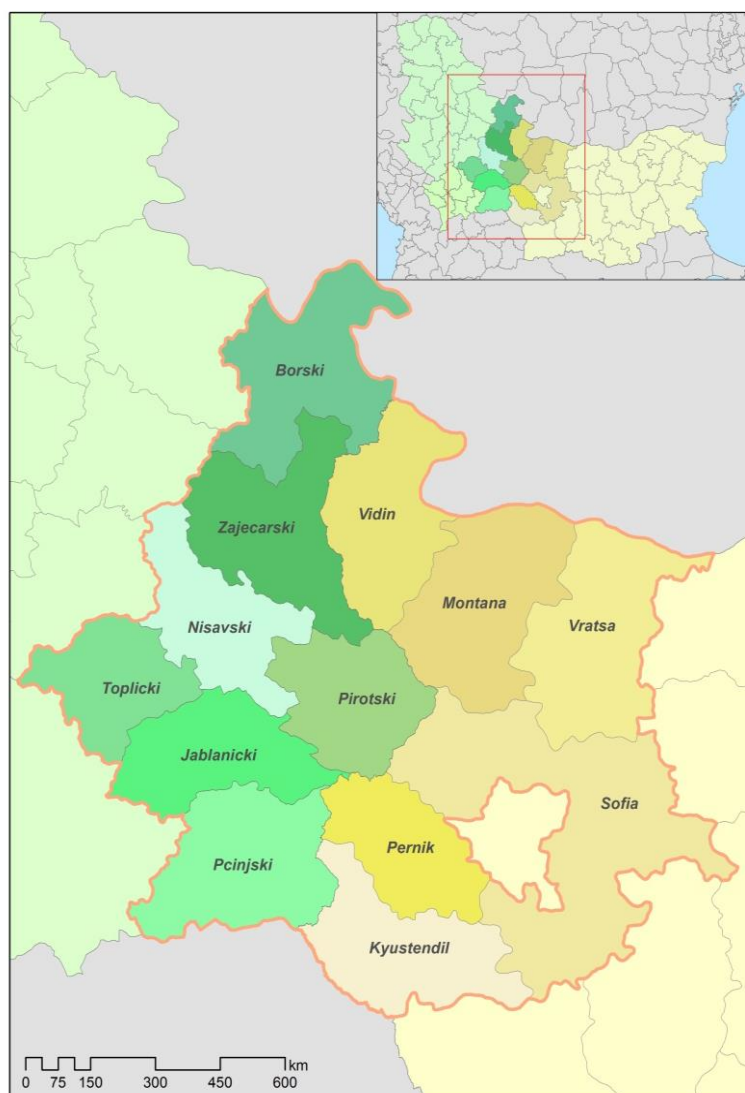
Bulgaria – NUTS III level	Serbia – NUTS III equivalent
Vidin District: 11 municipalities: Belogradchik, Boynitsa, Bregovo, Vidin, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Makresh, Novo Selo, Ruzhintsi, Chuprene	Bor District: 4 municipalities: Bor, Kladovo, Majdanpek, Negotin
Montana District: 11 municipalities: Berkovitsa, Boychinovtsi, Brusartsi, Valchedram, Varshets, Georgi	Zaječar District: 4 municipalities: Boljevac, Zaječar, Knjaževac, Sokobanja

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Damyano, Lom, Medkovets, Montana, Chiprovtsi, Yakimovo	
Vratsa District: 10 municipalities: Borovan, Byala Slatina, Vratsa, Kozloduy, Krivodol, Mezdra, Mizia, Oryahovo, Roman, Hayredin	Toplica district: 4 municipalities: Prokuplje, Kursumlija, Zitoradja, Blace
Sofia District 22 municipalities: Anton, Bojurishte, Botevgrad, Chavdar, Chelopech, Dolna banya, Dragoman, Elin Pelin, Etropole, Godech, Gorna Malina, Ihtiman, Koprivshitsa, Kostenets, Kostinbrod, Mirkovo, Pirdop, Pravets, Samokov, Slivnitsa, Svoje, Zlatitsa	Nišava District: 11 municipalities: City of Niš (Municipalities: Pantelej, Medijana, Crveni Krst, Palilula and Niška Banja), Aleksinac, Gadžin Han, Doljevac, Merošina, Ražanj, Svrlijig
<p>⚡ IMPORTANT</p> <p>The District Administration of Sofia District (Областна администрация на Софийска област), although located in Sofia-City District, is an eligible organization under this Call, since its authority and competence extends to the eligible Sofia District.</p>	
Pernik District: 6 municipalities: Breznik, Zemen, Kovachevtsi, Pernik, Radomir, Tran	Pirot District: 4 municipalities: Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot
Kyustendil District: 9 municipalities: Bobovdol, Boboshevo, Kocherinovo, Kyustendil, Nevestino, Rila, Sapareva Banya, Dupnitsa, Treklyano	Jablanica District: 6 municipalities: Bojnik, Vlasotince, Lebane, Leskovac, Medveđa, Crna Trava
	Pčinja District: 7 municipalities: Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Vranje, Preševo, Surdulica, Trgovište

⚡ IMPORTANT

The Programme shall finance activities, performed outside the eligible cross-border area and operations, involving beneficiaries located outside the eligible cross-border area, up to the limit of 20 % of the support from the Union at Programme level, ensuring that they are for the benefit of the programme area and the conditions of the Article 44(2) of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 are satisfied. Further clarifications to this exception are provided in Section 2.5.1 „Eligibility of applicants” and Section 2.5.5 “Activities location” below.



Map 1: Geographical structure of the cross-border area

1.1.2 Programme Strategy

The border regions between Bulgaria and Serbia still should be considered a noticeably segmented space from the economic point of view, where the substantial development axes do not cross or connect, while it seems to have quite a potential in social and cultural similarities.

The level of development of the cross-border region between Bulgaria and Serbia, the specificity and depth of the problems, as well as extremely serious gaps in human capital, infrastructure provision and economic activity makes it impossible to define an adequate and realistic development strategy to be implemented using standard tools for regional/sectoral interventions. The highly fragmented economy together with depopulation trend represent the main challenges to be faced by the border area when, at the perspective of Serbian accession in the EU, a major cross border dynamism is utmost required. Hence, the vision of the new Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme is to act as a tool for integrated support in the region thus seeking to achieve positive effect in the development of the border territories of both countries.

The Programme strikes to face two main challenges in order to create a positive socio-economic environment, necessary to the development of the border area:

- Investment in the effective valorisation and the efficient management of the territory;

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- Increasing cross border networks, interactions and connections at the social, economic and environmental spheres.

The IPA cross-border cooperation aims to turn borders from being a barrier to defend different and opponent interests into a dynamic contact point to develop common measures to achieve same aims.

1.1.3 Programme Objectives

The strategy, set out to address the specific needs of the border area both in the short and long term, supports the following **overall aim**:

To stimulate the balanced and sustainable development of the Bulgaria-Serbia border region integrated in the European space – achieved through smart economic growth, environmental change adaptation and learning culture enhancement.

This overall objective is the basis of the Programme's strategic framework, which refers to **three out of eight thematic priorities**, listed in Annex III of Regulation (EU) №231 / 2014, namely:

- (d) Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage;
- (e) Investing in youth, education and skills;
- (b) Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management.

👉 ADVICE

For further details on programme strategy please refer to the Programme document.

1.1.4 Programme Priority Axes

In order to achieve the objectives set out in the Programme 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: Sustainable Tourism

Specific Objectives:

- **Tourist Attractiveness:** Supporting the development of competitive tourist attractions achieved through cooperation, thus contributing to the diversification of tourist product(s) in the cross-border region;
- **Cross-Border Touristic Product:** Capturing economic benefits from development of natural and cultural heritage in the border area through creating common cross-border touristic destination(s);
- **People-To-People Networking:** Capitalising the effect of cultural, historical and natural heritage tourism on border communities through common actions.

◆ Priority Axis 2: Youth

Specific Objectives:

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- **Skills & Entrepreneurship:** Supporting the development of attractive environment for advancement of young people in the border region achieved through cooperation;
- **People-To-People Networking:** Promoting cooperation initiatives for and with young people, thus enhancing mobility of young people across borders.
- ◆ **Priority Axis 3: Environment**

Specific Objectives:

- **Joint Risk Management:** Preventing and mitigating the consequences of natural and man-made cross-border disasters;
- **Nature Protection:** Promoting and enhancing the utilization of common natural resources, as well as stimulating nature protection in the programme area, through joint initiatives across the border.
- ◆ **Priority Axis 4: Technical Assistance**

⚠ **WARNING**

Priority 4: Technical Assistance is not subject of open Calls for Proposals, as it provides funding exclusively for the management of the Programme.

📌 **ADVICE**

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

1.2 Programme Implementation Structures

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

Managing Authority (MA) – Directorate General Territorial Cooperation Management at Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of the Republic of Bulgaria is designated to perform the functions of single Managing Authority under the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme. The Managing Authority is responsible for managing and implementing the cross-border Programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management.

National Authority (NA) – Serbian European Integration Office in Republic of Serbia supports the Managing Authority in process of management and overall implementation of the Programme.

Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) – formed of representatives of MA, NA as well as other relevant national, regional and local authorities, macro-regional strategy representatives (EU Strategy for the Danube region), economic and social partners, and stakeholders from the cross-border region. The JMC shall supervise the overall effectiveness, quality and coherence of the implementation of all actions towards meeting the objectives set out in the cross-border Programme and the relevant strategy papers.

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Joint Secretariat (JS) – a common structure that assists the MA, NA and the JMC in carrying out their functions, representing main contact point between the Programme and the potential beneficiaries/project partners. The main office of JS is located in Sofia (Republic of Bulgaria), and the branch office is located in Nis (Republic of Serbia).

⚠ WARNING

The JS (main office and branch office) is the main structure responsible for providing information and support to potential beneficiaries.

1.3 Programme Financial Allocation for the First Call for Proposals

The First Call for proposals will cover the Programme budget for the **years 2015, 2016 and 2017**. The total available budget under Priority axes 1, 2 and 3 for these years is **12 687 304,24 Euro**, of which **10 784 208,60 Euro** represent the Community funding (EU contribution) and the remaining **1 903 095,64 Euro** represent the national contributions from the partnering countries.

⚠ WARNING

Please note that the Programme financial allocation is neither broken down by partner country nor by eligible region.

The total amount (in Euro) allocated for this Call for Proposals for the three priority axes is broken down as follows:

Priority Axis	Community Funding (a)	National Funding* (b)	Total Funding (a)+(b)
	85%	15%	100%
Priority Axis 1	4 193 858,90	740 092,75	4 933 951,65
Priority Axis 2	2 995 613,50	528 637,68	3 524 251,18
Priority Axis 3	3 594 736,20	634 365,21	4 229 101,41
TOTAL	10 784 208,60	1 903 095,64	12 687 304,24

***State budget co-financing for Bulgaria and obligatory partners' co-financing for Serbia.**

The Managing Authority reserves the right not to allocate all financial resources in case of fewer projects applied or projects with insufficient quality as well as to propose to JMC the financial allocation for this Call for Proposals to be increased in case of a large number of high quality project proposals.

1.4 Programme indicators

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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 the Programme output indicators.

📌 ADVICE

When preparing the Application Form, the applicants should specify to which of the Programme output indicators their project contributes. Filling the quantities, the applicants have to strictly follow the Programme units for each indicator. (Please refer to the Programme document, Section 2.3 “Overview table of indicators per priority axis and thematic priority”).

Each project must contribute to the achievement of the programme output indicators. The choice of appropriate project output indicator/s and justification on the way the project contributes to the Programme results is important for the project assessment and its approval for financing under the Programme by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

1.5 State Aid

“State aid” is any aid, granted by the State or through state or municipal resources, or on behalf of state or municipal resources, directly or through other persons, in any form whatsoever, which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production or the trade of certain goods, or the delivery of certain services, in so far as it affects trade between Member States.

Any entity engaged in an economic activity that consists of offering goods or services on the market, regardless of its legal status and the way of financing, is considered an undertaking, by the meaning of the State aid regulations. With regard to this, public bodies are not excluded by definition, but the proposed activities are to be checked for profit generation. Commercial and profit-making **activities** are **not** eligible under this Call for Proposal.

All Bulgarian Applicants bear the responsibility to declare that the de minimis aid they apply for when accumulated with the one they have received before, will not exceed the de minimis aid ceiling, determined in § 1, point 3 of the Additional provisions of the Bulgarian State Aid Act. To this end, all Bulgarian partners under this Call for proposals must fill in the **De Minimis State Aid Declaration** (Annex A6).

All Serbian Applicants should follow the applicable national regulations regarding State aid.

1.6 Revenue Generating Projects

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In case the project generates revenue, in accordance with Article 65.8 from Regulation 1303 the total eligible expenditures of the operation selected from the present call for proposals shall be reduced by the net revenue of the operation directly generated during its implementation.

Net revenue of the operation means cash in-flows directly paid by users for the goods or services provided by the operation, such as charges borne directly by users for the use of infrastructure, sale or rent of land or buildings, or payments for services less any operating costs and replacement costs of short-life equipment incurred during the corresponding period. Where not all the investment cost is eligible for co-financing, the net revenue shall be allocated pro rata to the eligible and non-eligible parts of the investment cost.

For the purposes of the net revenue calculation, any payment received by the beneficiary arising from contractual penalties as a result of a breach of contract between the beneficiary and a third party or third parties or that has occurred as a result of the withdrawal of an offer by a third party chosen under public procurement rules (the 'deposit') shall not be considered as revenue and shall not be deducted from the eligible expenditure of the operation.

⚡ IMPORTANT

During the project implementation phase, each beneficiary, generating revenue under a project, should keep detailed, timely, adequate and traceable information concerning the generated revenues.

2. Rules of the Call for Proposals

2.1. Cross-border impact

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

Cooperation criteria

⚡ IMPORTANT

Direct cross-border impact shall be understood in terms of respecting the following cooperation criteria as they are defined below: at least joint development and joint implementation and, additionally, one of the two cooperation criteria: joint financing or joint staffing (as described below).

Joint development means that the project must be designed in close cooperation of the partners from both sides of the border. This means that project proposals must clearly integrate the ideas, priorities and actions of stakeholders on both sides of the border. The Lead Partner is the coordinator of this process but should include other partners from the beginning of the development process;

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Joint implementation 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 the project should not duplicate functions on either side of the border. Therefore, regardless of where the person is located, there should be a joint project management. The staff 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 therefore there must be one joint project budget. The budget should be divided between partners according to the envisaged activities. A project with 0.00 Euro or very small financing from one side of the border cannot be considered as having joint financing. There is also only one project bank account for the EU and national contribution (held by the Lead Partner) and the Lead Partner is responsible for administration and distribution of these funds and for reporting on their use. Complementary funding should come from both sides of the border and guarantees the commitment by each partner to the joint project.

2.2. Horizontal principles

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

Sustainable development – meeting the present needs while thinking of those of the future generations – should be regarded from the ecologic, economic and social point of view. In designing and implementing the project, the applicants should aim at a balanced use of resources, appropriate choice of logistics and raising public awareness on sustainable development issues (e.g. by inserting messages on printed materials or in the e-mails).

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination – a fundamental right, a shared value and a key objective of the European Union, referring to preventing any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation or on any other similar criterion.

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 both project and programme level.

The observance of the horizontal themes shall be taken into account during project evaluation and additional points shall be awarded to projects which propose explicit measures with positive impact on one or more of them, even in terms of raising public awareness.

2.3. Applicable law and public procurement

The beneficiaries have the possibility to award service, supply and works contracts to contractors. Contractors are neither partners nor associates. The award of contracts to them is subject to the procurement rules set out in Chapter 3 of Title II of Part Two of 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. In accordance with Art. 45(1) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014, those procurement rules apply in the whole Programme area, both on Bulgarian and Serbian territory.

📌 IMPORTANT

Beneficiaries under this Call for Proposals must refer to and use the guidelines and templates of the “Procurement and Grants for European Union External Actions – a Practical Guide” document (PRAG).

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

- 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.
- All studies or other project results shall be made available for free to all interested individual or legal persons, in a non-discriminatory way. Making the studies available only for certain individual or legal persons is strictly forbidden.

2.4. Communication and Visibility

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 projects communication activities should be properly planned. Communication should focus on the achievements and impact of the project actions. In order to maximize the impact of the communication efforts:

- 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.

The following communication and visibility activities might be foreseen by the applicants in their Application forms: press releases, press conferences, leaflets, brochures and newsletters, web sites, display panels, commemorative plaques, banners, promotional items, audiovisual productions, public events, information campaigns etc.

2.5. Eligibility Criteria

The financing under the current Programme shall be made available to potential beneficiaries through a competitive process.

The present Call for proposal has the goal of establishing solid cross-border partnerships by financing both “soft projects” (as studies, seminars, know-how exchanges, etc.) and “investment projects” (projects involving works and/or substantial supplies components).

The submission of projects is open to all potential beneficiaries that meet the eligibility criteria set below.

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 2.5.1*),
- eligibility of activities (*see section 2.5.6*),
- eligibility of expenditures (*see section 2.5.8*).

2.5.1 General Criteria for Eligibility of Applicants (Lead Partner and Partners)

1) Lead Partner and its partners must comply with all of the following general eligibility 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.

📌 IMPORTANT

Regional structures/branches of central organizations, other than local/regional/national authorities, are ineligible applicants under this Call for proposals.

For Bulgarian applicants this means that even though a regional structure/branch may have its own registration code (as an extension to the registration code of its central body), it is still not a separate legal entity and therefore only the central structure could be a project partner.

and

- be registered in the eligible cross-border region between Bulgaria and Serbia.

📌 IMPORTANT

An exception to this rule is the eligibility of Bulgarian or Serbian national/regional public authorities whose area of competence, established by legal acts, extends to the eligible area of the programme.

📌 IMPORTANT

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Further exception to this rule is the eligibility of applicants that are located outside the eligible cross-border regions, ensuring that the envisaged operations in the proposed project are for the benefit of the programme area (as specified in Article 44(2) of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014). To this end, a legally established entity (acting as Lead partner or Project partner), located outside the eligible cross-border area, but still on the territory of Bulgaria or Serbia, may participate under this Call for Proposals. The total amount allocated under the Programme to such beneficiaries shall not exceed 20% of the support from the Union at Programme level.

and

- be non-profit making organizations;

and

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

⚠ IMPORTANT

The above criteria are cumulative and must be fulfilled together.

Indicative list of potential beneficiaries under each Specific Objective is given below:

1. For applications under Specific Objective 1.1:
 - All levels of regional/local authorities;
 - Regional and sector development agencies;
 - Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/administrations;
 - Public cultural institutes (museum, library, community centres, etc.);
 - Non-government organizations;
 - Regional touristic associations.
2. For applications under Specific Objective 1.2:
 - All levels of regional/local authorities;
 - Regional and sector development agencies;
 - Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/administrations;
 - Non-government organizations;
 - Regional touristic associations;
 - Business support structures - chamber of commerce, business association, business cluster;
 - Education / Training Centres;

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3. For applications under Specific Objective 1.3:
 - All levels of regional/local authorities;
 - Regional touristic associations;
 - Civil society structure (association/foundation/NGOs);
 - Business support structures;
 - Education / Training Centres;
 - Cultural institutes (museum, library, art gallery, community centres, etc.);
 - Local Action Groups (LAGs) established and supported under measure "Leader" within the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 for Bulgaria and within IPARD for Serbia.

4. For applications under Specific Objective 2.1:
 - All levels of regional/local authorities;
 - Local and national education institutions;
 - Training service providers;
 - Vocational training institutions;
 - Universities, knowledge / research institutes;
 - Civil society structure (association/foundation)/ NGOs;
 - Business support structures;
 - Cultural institutes, local community centres.

5. For applications under Specific Objective 2.2:
 - All levels of regional/local authorities;
 - Youth organisations / Non-government organizations;
 - Local and national education institutions;
 - Training service providers;
 - Universities, knowledge / research institutes;
 - Civil society structure (association/foundation);
 - Business support structures;
 - Cultural institutes, local community centres.

6. For applications under Specific Objective 3.1:
 - Relevant local and regional structures dealing with emergency situations;
 - Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/administrations;
 - Regional and sector development agencies.

7. For applications under Specific Objective 3.2:
 - All levels of regional/local authorities;
 - Central and regional offices and structures of relevant government institutions/administrations in the sphere of their competence;
 - Regional and sector development agencies;

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- Administrations of protected areas;
- Research and academic institutes;
- Environmental NGOs;
- Local Action Groups (LAGs) established and supported under measure "Leader" within the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 for Bulgaria and within IPARD for Serbia.

Political parties, commercial entities and ideologically based organizations **are not** eligible applicants under the Programme.

2) Potential applicants are not eligible to participate in calls for proposals if:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation, arising from a similar procedure provided for in the national legislation or EU regulations;
- (b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* (i.e., against which no appeal is possible);
- (c) they are guilty of serious professional misconduct proven by any means;
- (d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of debts to the consolidated state budget;
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities or national financial interests;
- (f) they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations in connection with a procurement procedure or other grant award procedure financed by the Community or national budget.

Applicants are also excluded from participation in calls for proposals or the award of financial support if, at the time of the call for proposals, they:

- (g) are subject to a 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;
- (h) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Managing Authority/ Joint Secretariat as a condition of participation in the call for proposals or fail to supply this information;
- (i) have attempted to obtain confidential information or influence the evaluation bodies during the evaluation process of current or previous calls for proposals.

In the cases referred to in points (a), (c), (d), (f), (h) and (i) above, the exclusion applies for a period of two years from the time when the infringement is established. In the cases referred to in points (b) and (e), the exclusion applies for a period of four years from the date of notification of the judgment.

⚠ WARNING

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The Lead partner on behalf of all partners should sign a “Declaration of eligibility” (Annex A3), declaring that all project partners including Lead Partner, do not fall into any of the above categories (a) to (i).

2.5.2. Lead Partner Principle

All organizations, participating under this Call for Proposals, are called partners. For each project, a “Lead Partner” (LP) must be appointed among the project partners prior to the submission of the project proposal. The Lead Partner will be responsible for the development and submission of the project proposal and in case of positive decision for financing will sign the Subsidy contract (Annex C) with the Managing Authority and be responsible for the overall management of the project.

📌 IMPORTANT

The Lead partner must be registered on the territory of Bulgaria or Serbia at least 12 months prior to the deadline for submission of project proposals under current Call for Proposals.

The condition for registration at least 12 months prior to the submission deadline does not apply to the rest of the Project partners.

The Lead partner is responsible for:

- laying down the arrangements for all relations with the partners participating in the operation in an agreement comprising, inter alia, provisions guaranteeing the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;
- signing the subsidy contract for implementation of the operation with MA and further addenda to the contract (if any);
- ensuring the implementation of the entire operation;
- transferring the relevant budget amount to the partners participating in the operation according to the partnership agreement and verified costs;
- ensuring that the expenditure presented by the partners participating in the operation has been paid for the purpose of implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between the partners participating in the operation;
- verifying that the expenditure presented by the partners participating in the operation has been validated by the controllers;
- collecting and checking the information from the project partners and submitting the reports on progress of the project to the JS;
- informing MA/JS about project modifications.

Information about the role and tasks of the Lead Partner is provided in more detail in the **Subsidy contract** (Annex C).

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

⚡ IMPORTANT

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

Please note that all project partners (Lead Partner and Project partners) involved in the project implementation are excluded from any forms of sub-contracting to other partners within the project.

2.5.3. Limitations concerning partnership

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

All partners must sign a **Partnership agreement** that stipulates their rights and duties. The partnership agreement should be annexed to the application form. A partnership agreement template is annexed to the present Guidelines for applicants (Annex A2), indicating the minimum standards of the Partnership Agreement. The concrete agreement for the project can be further extended and/or clarified by the project partners, adding relevant supplementary provisions. The Partnership agreement should specify the role and obligations of all partners in project development and implementation.

⚡ IMPORTANT

Under the current Call for proposals an institution/organization may submit maximum one project proposals as a Lead Partner. In case an institution/organization has submitted more than one project proposal as a Lead Partner, all these proposals (submitted as Lead partner) will be eliminated at the administrative assessment stage.

Under the current Call for proposals an organization may participate in no more than 3 (three) project proposals as a partner (i.e. if an organization/institution has submitted a proposal as a Lead Partner, the same organization can be a project partner in no more than 2 (two) other projects; an organization that has not submitted a project as a Lead Partner, can participate as a project partner in no more than 3 (three) projects). In case an organization participates in more than 3 (three) project proposals, all submitted proposals will be eliminated at the opening stage of the evaluation.

2.5.4. Project duration and grant amounts

The project proposals must be in line with the indicative actions from the respective Specific objective under the relevant Priority axis as stipulated in the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme.

Under this call for proposals, the following type of projects shall be financed:

- **Soft projects** – projects that do not have any works component or that do not grant more than half of their total eligible budget to purchase of equipment, but rather involve studies, strategies, seminars, know-how exchanges etc.

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- **Investment projects** – projects that have works (construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, renovation, etc) and/or purchase of equipment components, forming at least 70% of the total eligible cost of the entire project.

Priority axis	Specific objectives	Type of projects	Grant Amounts (€) /Amount of obligatory activities(€)*/	Project Duration (min.-max. months)
Priority Axis 1 <i>Sustainable Tourism</i>	1.1. Tourist attractiveness	Investment	300.000-600.000	12-24
	1.2. Cross-border touristic product	Soft	100.000-200.000	8-15
	1.3. People to people networking	Soft	75.000-150.000	8-15
Priority Axis 2 <i>Youths</i>	2.1. Skills & entrepreneurship	Investment	300.000-600.000	12-24
		Soft	100.000-200.000	8-15
	2.2. People to people networking	Soft	75.000-150.000	8-15
Priority Axis 3 <i>Environment</i>	3.1. Joint risk management	Investment	300.000-600.000	12-24
		Soft	100.000-200.000	8-15
	3.2. Nature protection	Investment	300.000-600.000	12-24
		Soft	100.000-200.000	8-15

* Obligatory activities are covered by:

a) for Bulgarian bodies: 85% EU contribution + 15% national public co-financing, AND

b) for Serbian bodies: 85% EU contribution + 15% national own co-financing

Note: Further to the forementioned obligatory amount of the activities, each project partner (Bulgarian or Serbian) may choose to provide ADDITIONAL own co-financing for the needs of the project. For Serbian bodies, this additional own co-financing shall come as a supplement to the OBLIGATORY own co-financing of 15% of the activities. There are no limits for the amount of the additional own co-financing.

2.5.5. Activities location

In accordance with Article 39 (2) of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014, the selected operations shall involve beneficiaries from both partnering countries, at least one of which shall be from Bulgaria as a Member State. The beneficiaries and operations should be located in at least one of the eligible NUTS level III regions in Bulgaria and the equivalent NUTS III regions in Serbia covered by the cross-border programme and specified in Section 1.1.1.

📌 IMPORTANT

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An exception to this rule is the eligibility of beneficiaries that are located outside the eligible cross-border regions, ensuring that the envisaged operations in the proposed project are for the benefit of the programme area and the conditions of Article 44(2) of Commission Implementing regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 are satisfied. To this end, the Programme shall finance operations involving beneficiaries located outside the eligible cross-border area, but still on the territory of Bulgaria or Serbia.

Furthermore, the Programme shall finance activities outside the eligible cross-border area carried out by project partners located inside the eligible area, given that those activities are for the benefit of the respective project and the beneficiary has provided a detailed justification proving that those activities are necessary for achieving of the specific project objectives.

The activities outside the eligible cross-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. When identifying activities and corresponding expenditures outside the eligible cross-border 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 total amount allocated under the Programme to beneficiaries and activities outside the eligible cross-border area shall not exceed 20 % of the support from the Union at Programme level.

At Programme level, the Joint Monitoring Committee will monitor the percentage of funds allocated to both project partners located outside the eligible cross-border area and activities outside the eligible cross-border area (performed by project partners from inside the eligible area) in order to ensure compliance with the 20% rule. **At project level though, partners are not obliged to respect the 20% rule**, meaning that:

- a project proposal could include partner/s from outside the eligible cross-border area. The budget of the respective partner shall be considered in its entirety, meaning that the whole budget of that project partner shall count towards the 20% rule at Programme level, regardless of where the envisaged activities are taking place;
- a project proposal could include activities outside the eligible cross-border area (performed by project partners from inside the eligible area). In such cases, only the expenditures for those activities shall count towards the 20% rule at Programme level.

However, applicants are reminded that a strong justification is needed for the inclusion of both project partners and activities outside the eligible area, and where the necessity for such inclusion is not visible, the project proposals shall not be recommended for funding.

All project proposals, including those with partners from/activities outside the eligible cross-border area, shall be evaluated according to the assessment criteria stipulated in the Guidelines for Applicants. Based on the final ranking of the project proposals according to their technical scores, the Joint Monitoring Committee will fund proposals with partners from/activities outside the eligible cross-border area until exhaustion of the 20% Programme funding, allocated for such operations.

2.5.6. Eligible Activities

The types of activities financed under each priority axis and specific objective must demonstrate a clear cross-border effect to the eligible programme area.

Detailed description of the eligible activities under this Call for proposals is given below:

Priority Axis 1 – Sustainable tourism

Specific objective 1.1. Tourist attractiveness

It concerns supporting the development of competitive tourist attractions achieved through cooperation and thus contributing to the diversification of tourist product(s) in the cross-border region.

Under this objective, the following investment activities are eligible (indicative only!):

- **Preservation of natural and cultural heritage** such as restoration and maintenance of sites of historical and cultural importance; conservation and protection of both tangible and non-tangible natural, historical and cultural heritage, etc.
- **Development of small-scale support infrastructure to touristic attractions and additional small scale technical infrastructure, encouraging the visits to the tourist attractions** including rehabilitation of access roads; upgrade of public utilities related to natural, cultural and historic tourism sites; small touristic border crossings and related facilities; ICT facilities development/upgrade, playgrounds; recreational and sports facilities; landscaping; signing and lighting; other support facilities serving tourist attraction and visitors, etc.
- **Development of joint transport access schemes and adventure routes** (e.g. cross-border public transport to touristic sites; tourist paths and health paths, climbing, horse riding and biking routes, etc.).
- **Development of tourist attraction accessible to persons with disabilities** (e.g. encouraging the modification of access points, washrooms, stairs, transportation vehicles, rough paths, etc.).
- **Development of information access facilities** such as info-centres and/or kiosks to guide potential visitors; joint GIS platforms; joint platforms for online reservations, payment, etc.
- **Support for public awareness activities** (information campaigns), promoting the region as a tourist destination.

Specific objective 1.2. Cross-border touristic product

It concerns the capturing economic benefits from development of natural and cultural heritage in the border area through creating common cross-border touristic destination(s).

Under this objective, the following activities are eligible (indicative only!):

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- **Development of joint cross-border touristic destinations** (e.g. development strategies and action plans based on innovative service concepts and products; carrying out joint researches on tourism demand for new tourist destinations; adoption of joint visitor management plans to ensure that tourism does not damage natural and cultural resources; risk management plans for cultural and natural heritage sites exposed to climate change; elaborating joint monitoring programmes to measure trends and impacts, and facilitate adaptive management of natural, cultural and historical heritage in the region, etc.).
- **Development of sustainable cross-border touristic products and services** (e.g. research activities to identify tourist products with potential for cross-border branding; development of new and innovative tourist products and services; development of local brand/s based on natural, historical and cultural heritage of the border region; establishment of networks/clusters/entities for management of joint tourist products; creating knowledge networks for tourism innovations in the border area, etc.).
- **Joint marketing and promotion of cross-border tourist destinations and products** (e.g. joint market perception analysis with the aim to assess the customer understanding of the border region as a consistent tourism destination; application of best practices in tourism promotion; preparation and dissemination of information and advertising materials; studies of the impact of the implemented marketing and advertising activities; organisation of tourism exhibitions and fairs; visualisation of local tourist products/ brand/s/ destinations, incl. 3D visualisation; mobile applications, social networks, tailor-made internet platforms, and other innovative tools; creating multi-lingual on-line tourist platforms, etc.).

Specific objective 1.3. People-to-people networking

It concerns capitalising the effect of cultural, historical and natural heritage tourism on border communities through common actions.

Under this objective, the following activities are eligible (indicative only!):

- **Support for public awareness activities and information services** (e.g. awareness raising campaigns on the values of cross-border cultural, historical and natural heritage, incl. joint events among youth; dissemination of relevant information to the touristic providers in the border region; organizing travel forums to promote effective two-way communication; participation and involvement of local touristic enterprises in recognizing and solve common problems; organisation of different events such as conferences, forums, seminars, platforms and networking meetings in order to improve the recognition and trust among existing partners and to assure the political commitment at all levels, etc.).
- **Capacity building activities addressed to local community and business** (e.g. training and consultancy support services for tourist enterprises/establishments to improve skills and performance; organising online forums for exchange of good practices in sustainable tourism management; support the cooperation of public and private institutions in fields of competence, etc.).

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- **Organization of joint events to promote cross-border natural and cultural heritage** (e.g. promotion and cultivation of the common traditions of the borderland areas; support to activities in the fields of multiculturalism, cultural exchange and the establishment of connections on field of creative industry in order to increase cultural diversity; organisation of festivals, exhibitions, performances, etc.).

Priority Axis 2 – Youths

Specific objective 2.1. Skills & Entrepreneurship

It concerns supporting the development of attractive environment for advancement of young people in the border region achieved through cooperation.

Under this objective, the following investment and support activities are eligible (indicative only!):

- **Development of youth-related small-scale infrastructure, and training and information facilities** (e.g. construction/ reconstruction/ rehabilitation/ refurbishment of youth, education-related and recreational infrastructure and facilities – for instance: lecture facilities, libraries, laboratories, sport facilities, campuses; investments to ensure physical accessibility to youth and education-related and recreational infrastructure and facilities; investments in ICT- facilities' development and upgrade, etc.).
- **Development of small-scale “entrepreneurship” infrastructure** (business incubators, shared workspace, start-up factories and “start-up garage”, equipment provision/sharing, etc.).
- **Support to youth entrepreneurship schemes and initiatives** (e.g. initiatives to encourage learning in support of young people's innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship; students' mini-companies, school-entrepreneur/ business activities and events; simulation games [e.g. computer-based]; business skills training, guidance and counselling services such as one-stop-shops and youth enterprise centres, on-the-job training and workshops, mentor support and business coaching, online portals and web sites, etc.; support to joint market initiatives and networking, incl. promotion and marketing campaigns for youth entrepreneurs, encouraging the development of joint initiatives for research and innovations, etc.).
- **Development of the entrepreneurial competences in the formal educational system** (e.g. support for projects that fostering entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitudes of students in elementary and secondary schools; promotion of entrepreneurial activities such as: develop and work of student companies, participation in student companies competition in region and student companies fairs; development and implementation specific training programs for teachers of different subjects in the field of entrepreneurial learning.

Specific objective 2.2. People-to-people networking

It concerns promoting cooperation initiatives for and with young people, thus enhancing mobility of young people across borders.

Under this objective, the following activities are eligible (indicative only!):

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- **Support to youth networking initiatives** such as promotion of young people's participation in representative democracy and civil society; cross-border initiatives aimed at combating youth poverty and social exclusion; community initiatives to support and recognize the value of youth volunteering; supporting youth capacity and opportunities to be creative and youth access to culture; cross-border initiatives for promotion of health and well-being of young people, etc.
- **Support for public awareness activities** (e.g. awareness raising campaigns for common problems and challenges for youth; organisation of different events such as conferences, forums, seminars, platforms and networking meetings in order to improve the recognition and trust among existing partners and to assure the political commitment at all levels, etc.).

Priority Axis 3 - Environment

Specific objective 3.1. Joint risk management

It concerns preventing and mitigating the consequences of natural and man-made cross-border disasters.

Under this objective, the following capacity building and investment activities are eligible (indicative only!):

- **Establishing joint early warning and disaster management systems** (e.g. surveys of actually applied procedures, policies and measures for disaster protection, prevention and previsions; establishing spatial data base for disaster risk assessment, containing terrestrial, meteorological and sociological features; preparing joint risk assessment and mapping strategies; preparing joint plans and procedures for emergency situation liquidation and disaster force accumulation responding to the incidents and emergency situations; developing joint protocols and communication channels for risk prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters.
- **Capacity building related to disaster resilience** (e.g. conducting joint theoretical-tactical exercises and field trainings for emergency situations management; trainings in the use of ICT technologies for risk management; exchange of experience and good practice such as study visits, round-tables, conferences; joint trainings and raising awareness of public service actors and population (volunteers) for disaster resilience; measures related to risk communication and to awareness-raising of population, accompanied with specific educational actions, information-sharing, drills and training for local population; cooperation activities within river basin districts promoting natural flood risk management approach, etc.).
- **Investments in equipment related to disaster resilience** (e.g. up-to-date ICT solutions in pre-fire, fire and post-fire activities; supply of specialized fire-fighting equipment; supply of specialized equipment for floods prevention, and for search and rescue interventions; supply of system for air surveillance of the surface and real time transmission of data, etc.);
- **Support of small-scale interventions/investments** (e.g. green infrastructure for natural water retention: restoration of flood plains and wetlands, afforestation, re-meandering; sanitation of river banks; building flood defence like dikes and canals; forestation of non-permanent vulnerable land; cuttings for emergency situations, etc.).

 **IMPORTANT**

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

Specific objective 3.2. Nature Protection

It concerns promoting and enhancing the utilization of common natural resources, as well as stimulating nature protection in the programme area, through joint initiatives across the border.

Under this objective, the following activities are eligible (indicative only!):

- **Joint cooperation initiatives targeting the effective management of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas** (e.g. development and implementation of joint management plans/coordinated concrete conservation activities for protected areas based on innovative concepts; exchange of experience and capacity building for protected areas/Natura 2000 sites administrations; community involvement, visitor management and tourism development measures; coordinated management planning, implementation and evaluation; public awareness about Natura 2000 sites and protected areas, with the help of e.g. the National Ecological and Rural Networks or the European Network for Rural Development; etc.)
- **Joint initiatives towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure** (e.g. joint initiatives targeting the effective management of environmental resources; restoration activities targeting the achievement of favourable conservation status of the species and natural habitats, subject of conservation in the established in the area protected areas; education and awareness raising, as well as capacity building measures in the field of ecosystems protection and restoration, which should target predominantly the young people in the CBC region; introduction of Low Carbon practices shared for adaptation climate change, etc.)
- **Preservation and improvement of the quality of soils, air and water** (e.g. developing new governance tools and the "learning region" concepts towards multifunctional use of land and soil and inter-linkages to the regional development; cooperation initiatives and developing policy networks in the field of horizontal and vertical integration of air quality creation of "carbon proofing" tools for integrated spatial development policies, sustainable urban mobility plans, strategies and processes for setting up local/regional low carbon model areas and regions including special needs areas such as nature protection regions; small-scale infrastructure investments, provision of modern supplies, as well as awareness-raising and training about the needs of reducing and recycling waste, waste and water management; raising awareness about soil protection; actions for improvement of the quality of air, cooperation initiatives and networking tackling water pollution including Danube pollution and indirectly Black Sea pollution, etc.).

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- **Capacity building and promotion initiatives** (e.g. provision of training to local and regional authorities in the field of environment related matters, such as waste or protected areas management; establishment of help-desks with mobile expert groups helping regions and cities resolving environmental problems; creating networks for exchange of good practices; creating knowledge networks for innovations in the field of sustainable use of common natural resources; awareness raising on all levels (individual persons, organizations, businesses, public administration, schools) on issues related to environmental and nature protection, including marginalized communities and other vulnerable groups).

⚡ IMPORTANT

All works activities should be implemented on municipal or state-owned property. The property should be:

- free of any encumbrances;
- not the object of an 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, detailed Bill of Quantities and Explanatory Note (where applicable according to the relevant legislation of the country (Bulgaria or Serbia), 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.

In case of works activities for protection of cultural and historical heritage, the detailed works design for conservation/restoration/construction should be approved by the relevant national institutions for cultural heritage, prior to submission of the project proposal.

In case of infrastructural activities land acquisition has to be finalized and respective documents to be presented (if applicable).

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.

In case of small scale investments projects in the context of RES and river management, compliance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Floods Directive is required (if applicable) and Appropriate Assessment pursuant to Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive are duly carried out as early as possible.

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In case of projects that modify the hydro-morphological characteristics of a water body causing deterioration of the status, an appropriate analysis as required by Art. 4.7 of WFD shall be carried out as early as possible in the planning process (if applicable).

In case of investment projects addressing flood and fire protection interventions all appropriate environmental assessments pursuant to Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive are required to be carried out as early as possible (if applicable).

In case of infrastructure projects, a risk assessments (project's vulnerability to disaster risks including longer-term expected effects from climate change) is required (if applicable).

In case of projects related to air pollution, their objectives should be in line with the objectives of Clean Air Package of 18 December 2013. Regarding introduction of Low Carbon practices, any use of biomass should be accompanied by strict emission standards and abatement measures reducing emissions.

All supplies have to be supported by detailed technical specification, relevant unit prices and total price.

All prices concerning investment activities must be in Euro.

2.5.7. Ineligible Activities

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

- 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 without a real cross-border impact;
- Activities with provisions for financing the usual management activities of the local organizations;
- Activities that started before 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;
- Actions for which the Partner is already receiving funding e.g. from the Governmental budget, other Community programmes or other funds;
- Commercial activities;
- Actions which are ideologically, religiously or politically 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;

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

2.5.8. Eligibility of Expenditures

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for financial support. The budget is therefore both a cost estimate and a maximum ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents with the exception of costs based on flat rates. The eligibility of expenditure applies to EU and national contribution as well as beneficiaries' own contribution.

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). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Managing Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. The amount of the grant and the percentage of the EU co-financing as a result of these corrections may not be increased.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Expenditures must be made according to the following documents:

- 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) ;
- 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;
- Practical Guide to Contract procedures for External actions (PRAG);
- Specific rules approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

To be eligible for financial support under the call for proposals, expenditures must:

- be necessary for carrying out the action 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;
- be recorded in the partners' accounts and tax documents, be identifiable and verifiable, and be backed up by supporting documents;
- be verified and certified as eligible by the controllers designated by the Managing Authority and the National Authority respectively;
- be in line with the provisions of the grant contract, European and national legislation;
- have not been subject to financing from any other public funds;

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- be carried out until the end of project. In accordance with Article 43 (1) of the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 the starting date for the eligibility of expenditures for project preparation for the Bulgarian partners is the starting date of the programme period, namely January 1, 2014. For the partners from Serbia the starting date for the eligibility of expenditure for project preparation is the date after the date of submission of the Programme to EC (September 22, 2014). The ending date for eligibility of expenditures for project preparation is the date of submission of the project proposal, and this condition applies to all applicants, both Bulgarian and Serbian. The starting date for the eligibility of other expenditures is the date following the date of signing of the Subsidy contract between MA and Lead Partner.

The expenditures are generally eligible if they comply with the principles of efficient financial management and, if applicable, with the relevant rules for public procurement.

📌 IMPORTANT

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).

📌 WARNING

Please note that based on the current procedures applied in the Republic of Serbia, Serbian project partners can not claim VAT recovery even they are not exempted from VAT, in case the expenditure is incurred prior to signature of Subsidy contract (e.g. costs for project preparation). Please plan the project budget accordingly!

📌 IMPORTANT

Contribution in-kind is not eligible expenditure!

Under the authorization of JMC the MA/NA reserve the right to perform negotiations and budget reductions after the assessment stage and based on the recommendations provided by the assessors and the Assessment working group!

Direct and indirect expenditures (costs)

- **Direct costs** 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 costs** 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 submission of the project proposal.

List and description of Budget Lines and Eligible Expenditures

BUDGET LINE 1: STAFF COSTS

Staff costs shall be reimbursed by the Managing Authority to the beneficiaries as a flat rate of

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maximum 20 % of direct costs for “Soft measures” projects. For “Investment” projects the flat rate shall not exceed 10% of direct costs. 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 the supporting documents that the expenditure has been incurred and paid. The proper appointment of the project team is the sole responsibility of the beneficiaries themselves.

	Eligible expenditures
	<p>The members of the project staff for example are project manager, coordinator, accountant and assistant. 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 salaries will be specified as gross amount and should be considered accordingly. 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 contact), or by law.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The appointment of the staff by the beneficiaries has to be made in accordance with European and national legislation.</p> <p>In the beginning of the project implementation each beneficiary will be requested to present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a declaration that in the project implementation period he will keep up the necessary and qualified project staff for successful implementation of the project activities. • a nomination of the project team members – internal order, a letter, etc.

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 Budget Line 1 “Staff costs” for both “Soft measures” 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 the supporting documents that the expenditures has been incurred and paid. The spending and the proper documentation of these expenditures is the sole responsibility of the respective beneficiary. The expenditures for office and administration cover operating and administrative expenses of

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the partner organization that support delivery and implementation of project activities.	
Eligible expenditures	
Eligible expenditures	The eligible expenditures under the budget line include expenditures for rent of office (especially for the purpose of the project), overheads (expenses covering electricity, heating, water, telephone, internet, other utilities), consumables (expenses covering paper, pens, CDs, folders, toners etc.), bank charges (expenses for opening and administrating the bank account where the implementation of the project requires a separate account to be opened (only for the Lead beneficiary) and charges for transnational financial transactions (for all beneficiaries)), and maintenance costs (expenses for postal services, cleaning, security, insurances, business cards, coffee/biscuits for small project meetings).

Example for calculation of the amount of BL 1 “Staff costs” and BL 2 “Office and administrative costs”:

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) * 20/100 =
= (5 000 + 50 000 + 180 000) * 20/100 = 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) * 20/100 =
= (3 000 + 55 000 + 25 000) * 20/100 = 16 600 Euro

- Max. amount of BL 2 “Office and administrative costs” = BL 1 * 15/100 =
= 16 600 * 15/100 = 2 490 Euro.

The examples above use 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 expenses for participation in events of the <u>project staff members only</u>, as follows:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events related to the project (technical meetings, meetings of joint working groups, meetings of the project team etc., workshops, trainings & seminars) • business trips related to the project activities. 	
Sub-line	Eligible expenditures

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Travel costs	<p>Travel costs usually cover expenses for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • train tickets; • bus tickets; • airline tickets; • parking fees; • car/ mini-bus travels (expenditure for fuel/kilometer, insurances for cars, green cards, motor way taxes, vignettes, etc.); • rent of vehicle for the operation; • medical insurances. <p>⚠ IMPORTANT</p> <p>The expenditure for fuel for personal vehicle or vehicle of the organization for project staff travels must be budgeted in kilometers at a maximum rate of 0,21 euro per kilometer. The budgeted fuel shall be only for vehicles used for project events.</p> <p>The expenditure for rent of vehicle for project staff travels (car, van, minibus, etc.) must be budgeted in kilometers at a maximum rate of 1,5 euro per kilometer. Please note that personal vehicles or vehicles of the organization cannot be rented for the purposes of the project activities.</p>
Daily allowances	Expenses for in-country and out-of-country travel must be calculated in accordance with the national rules of the respective country.
Accommodation	In the eligible border area of the two partnering countries the accommodation costs are up to € 80 per night. Outside the eligible area the accommodation costs are up to € 130 per night.

BUDGET LINE 4: EXTERNAL EXPERTISE AND SERVICES COSTS

This budget line covers expenses for organization of meetings, seminars, press conferences, awareness campaigns, trainings, consultancy, studies, designs, etc.	
Sub-line	Eligible expenditures
Rent of hall for events	Expenses for rent of hall for meetings, trainings, conferences, etc. Proposed unit – per hour, per day.
Rent of audio/ video equipment for events	Expenses for rent of equipment (proposed unit – per hour, per day), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • translation equipment; • audio equipment; • video equipment; • other equipment related to the event.
Travel for events	The expenditure for rent of vehicle for participants in the events (car, van, minibus, bus, etc.) must be budgeted in kilometers at a maximum rate of 1,5 euro per kilometer. In justified cases and in close relation to the proposed activities, it is possible to budget costs for tickets – bus, train or airplane. Please note that personal vehicles or vehicles of the organization cannot be rented for

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	the purposes of the project activities.
Catering for events	Expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, lunches and dinners for participants in the events. Proposed unit – per participant. The maximum allowed rate per participant for coffee, refreshments and lunch is 20 euro per day, whereas for coffee, refreshment, lunch and dinner is 35 euro per day. Expenditures for alcoholic beverages and cigarettes are not eligible!
Accommodations for participants in the events	In the eligible border area of the two partnering countries the accommodation costs (bed and breakfast, OR overnight, OR half-board, OR full-board, etc.) are up to € 80 per night; Outside the eligible area the accommodation costs are up to € 130 per night. Proposed unit – per participant.
Preparation of materials for events	Expenses for preparation of materials for the participants in the events (invitations, agenda, presentations etc.). Proposed unit – per participant
Consumables for events	Expenses for consumables for the participants in the events, as paper, files, folders, cases, CDs, etc. Proposed unit – per participant.
Purchase of advertising materials	Expenses for purchase of only advertising materials as pens, key chains, CDs, USBs, hats, bags, note books, folders etc. Proposed unit – per item.
Elaboration, design, translation of advertising materials	Expenses for elaboration, design, written translation, publishing or printing of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information materials (concerning project documents, project events, meetings, implementation provisions, etc.); • brochures, leaflets (informing about the project's implementation and results); • manuals and guidelines (related to the project); • design of project's logo; • design and printing of advertising items with the logo of the project or with the logo of the programme (pens, key chains, CDs, USBs, hats, bags, note books, folders etc.). <p>The maximum allowed rate for written translation is 10 euro per page.</p>
Publications in mass-media	Expenses for publications in press and broadcasting in mass-media (radio, TV). Proposed unit – per publication.
Consultancy, studies, designs, website development, etc.	Expenses for feasibility studies, surveys, technical expertise, legal advice, elaboration of works design/specialized software/web-pages, etc. For expenditures planned as a lump sum, justification for calculation of the amount should be presented in a separate documents signed by the respective partner.
Interpreters, lecturers, trainers, moderators etc.	Expenses for interpreters, lecturers, trainers. Proposed unit – per day, per hour. The maximum allowed rate for interpreters is 30 euro per hour (160 euro per day).

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	<p>The maximum allowed rate for lecturers/trainers is 40 euro per hour (320 euro per day).</p> <p>The maximum allowed rate for moderators is 25 euro per hour (200 euro per day).</p>
Other	Any other specific project expenses which cannot be classified and included in any other budget lines/sub-lines.

⚠ WARNING

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

This budget line covers the expenses for works (small scale construction) and supplies, representing the investment part of the project. In case of “investment projects”, the amount of eligible expenses under sub-line “Small scale construction” and sub-line “Supply” should form at least 70 % of total eligible project costs. This threshold is obligatory for all “investment projects” involving works and/or supplies.

For “Soft measures” projects, the amount of eligible expenses under sub-line “Supply” should be less than 50 % of total eligible project costs and there should be no expenditures foreseen under sub-line “Small scale construction”.

Sub-line	Eligible expenditures
Small scale construction	<p>Expenses for land preparation – any works aimed at making the land suitable for the purpose of the project (removal of unnecessary materials and vegetation, drainage etc.);</p> <p>Main investment (construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, widening and modernization of the building(s)/site(s) and the related installations);</p> <p>Connection to utilities: power connection, water supply and sewage connection, gas connection etc.;</p> <p>Site organization: places for workers and equipment, waste removal, fences etc;</p> <p>Expenses for land rehabilitation after completion of works and/or environment protection activities;</p> <p>Expenditure for supervision (if necessary) – in compliance with the relevant national legislation.</p>
Supply	<p>Expenditure for purchase and rental of IT equipment and office furniture;</p> <p>Expenditure necessary to bring the equipment to working condition;</p> <p>Expenditure for purchase of software;</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>

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	<p>⚡ IMPORTANT</p> <p>Depreciation costs - 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 (respectively – the period of depreciation) is longer than the project duration, only the depreciation costs for the period of project duration are eligible. The depreciation rate has to be in line with national rules. Depreciation is charged proportionally for each relevant period for which a periodical report is required and prepared. The full value of depreciated costs on equipment in relation to the total project duration cannot be charged as total amount for one particular period.</p> <p>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 properly clarified (auditable).</p> <p>The depreciation costs of equipment can never exceed the purchase price of the equipment.</p>
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BUDGET LINE 6: PROJECT PREPARATION

<p>The 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).</p>	
Budget line	Eligible expenditures
<p>Project preparation</p>	<p>The budget sub-line covers the expenses for project preparation (meetings between partners, consultancy, elaboration of technical documentation (incl. feasibility studies, detailed design, technical drawings, etc.), elaboration of project proposal and application form, translation of documents, taxes and other charges).</p> <p>⚡ IMPORTANT</p> <p>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 January 1, 2014. According to Article 43(1) of IPA Implementing Regulation, for the beneficiaries from Serbia the starting date for the eligibility of expenses for project preparation is the date after the date of the submission of the Programme (September 22, 2014) to the EC.</p> <p>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 to the Managing Authority at the latest. The expenses for project preparation should be requested for reimbursement and verified only in the first reporting period of the respective</p>

project partner and in accordance with the guidelines from the Managing Authority.

⚡ IMPORTANT

In case of sub-contracting project preparation activities, procurement rules should be observed in order for the costs to be eligible for reimbursement under the Programme (see point 2.3).

⚡ IMPORTANT

At the stage of preparation of the budget, the project preparation costs must not exceed 3% of the total project direct costs (BL3 + BL4 + BL5).

⚡ IMPORTANT

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-5/28.07.2014.

2.5.9. 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;

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- Purchase of land not built on or land built on in the amount exceeding 10% 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;
- Contracting of employees of the partner organizations as external experts (for Serbian partners only);
- Contribution in kind.

📌 ADVICE

In addition to the above, a detailed instruction on how to complete the project budget is given in Section 2.6.2, Application Form – Part III below.

2.6. How to Apply

The financing under the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme is available to potential beneficiaries through a competitive process.

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

2.6.1. How to get the Applicants' Package

The Applicants' Package contains the Guidelines for Applicants, the Application Form, the Annexes and the Supporting documents. These are the official forms that should be submitted when applying for financial support under the Programme.

The Applicants' Package is available on the following websites:

- MA website: www.mrrb.government.bg
- NA website: www.seio.gov.rs
- Programme's website: www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu
- EU Structural funds information portal of Bulgaria: www.eufunds.bg
- Information system for coordination of the development assistance to the Republic of Serbia: <http://www.evropa.gov.rs/CBC/PublicSite/Default.aspx>

Applicants may submit questions of substance 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 may be sent by e-mail or by fax to the address listed below, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

- Fax: +359 2 9405 337
- E-mail: NNikolich@mrrb.government.bg

In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Managing Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner or an action.

All the questions received by the potential applicants, together with the answers provided by the Managing Authority, will be periodically published during the submission period on the Programme website: www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu

2.6.2. How to fill in the Application Form and its Annexes

🔔 ADVICE

Please complete the Application form and its Annexes carefully and as clearly as possible in order for your Application to be assessed properly.

You should fill in all sections of the Application form consequently, starting from the Cover page.

Note that modifying the standard Application form or Annexes will result in the rejection of your Application.

Application Form

Application Form - Cover

On the cover page of the Application form you should fill in the the name of the project and then to select the Priority Axis, Specific Objective and type of project that from the drop-down menus (Please refer to item 2.5.6 “Eligible Activities” of these Guidelines). Also from a drop-down menu, you must select the Intervention Field of the project. In doing so, please choose a field to which your proposal’s objectives and expected results relate the most.

You should then fill in the Lead Partner institution and the name of its official representative (in English).

The official representative should put as well his/hers signature and the stamp of the organization.

The sections on the top of the cover page are filled in by the Joint Secretariat.

When received at the JS main office in Sofia, your Application will receive a registration number (project number). This number, together with the exact date and time of arrival of the Application will be put on the outer sealed package by representatives of the JS main office. The same project number will be filled in on the cover page of the Application by the Chairperson of the Assessment Working Group at the opening session.

Application Form - Check list

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

Application Form - PART I

Please fill the information below for every project partner starting with sheet No 1 for the Lead partner:

1. Identity

1.1. Contact information

- State the official and *full name* of the organization both in English and in the native language.
- Select the type of the organization from the drop-down menu.
- Indicate the nationality of the organization.
- Indicate the NUTS III region where the organization is registered.

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- State the official address of the organization, telephone, fax, e-mail and website (if available).
- Fill in the name and position of the legal representative of the organization.

⚠ WARNING

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. 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

Describe the organization's background and scope of competences and activities.

1.3. Partner experience

This section intends to reveal the experience of the organization in projects management/ implementation. If your organization has previously received European funds, please select the “YES” button and describe in the respective table/s these three projects, which you consider most relevant and implemented successfully.

If your organization has not previously received European funds, than skip this question and move to the next section.

2. Financial data

2.1. Detailed information

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

2.2. Financial status, capacity and equipment

Provide information concerning the annual turnover, number of full time staff, number of part time staff, number of offices and equipment for the past 3 years (2014, 2013 and 2012).

Application Form - PART II

1. Project identity

1.1. Project title

State the official and full name of the project.

The Priority axis, Specific objective and the type of project (selected on the Cover page) will appear automatically here.

Indicate the project duration in months (Please refer to the table in item 2.5.4 “Project duration and grant amounts” of these Guidelines).

1.2. Cooperation criteria

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Your proposal must respect at least Joint Development and Joint Implementation and, additionally, one of the other two cooperation criteria: Joint Financing or Joint Staffing. 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.

1.3. Cross border impact of the project

Please describe what the impact of the project on the cross-border area will be.

2. Financial information

2.1. Sources of financing (EUR)

The information concerning total value of the project, total value of the EU funds, total value of the national co-financing and if applicable - own contribution will be filled automatically after filling the Budget tables for each project partner (Table 2 from Part III of the Application form).

2.2. Breakdown of eligible expenditure (EUR)

The eligible expenditures planned will be filled automatically after filling the Budget tables for each project partner (Table 2 from Part III of the Application form).

3. Project description

3.1. Background and demand for the project proposal

In this section you are expected to explain:

- 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.);
- 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;

3.2. Consistency with the Programme Specific objective(s)

In this section you are expected to specify the specific objectives of your project proposal (general and specific) and to explain how they comply with and contribute to the achievement of the selected Programme Specific objective. The link should be as clearly described as possible. Simple, one-sentence answers, such as "The overall objective of our project proposal will contribute in high degree to achievement of the Programme Specific objective" are not acceptable.

3.3. Consistency with the Programme overall aim

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All projects financed by the IPA II CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme should contribute to the achievement of the overall Programme aim (Please refer to Section 1.1.3 “Programme objectives” of these Guidelines) through implementation of specific activities in accordance with the defined Priority axes and Specific objectives.

Explain how your project proposal will contribute to the achievement of the overall Programme aim by achieving the selected Specific objective. (Should you need additional information, please refer to the Programme document, Section 2.3 “Overview table of indicators per priority axis and thematic priority”).

3.4. Description of the target groups and beneficiaries (estimated number)

Please specify the target group(s), direct and final beneficiaries of your project proposal - state the types of these groups with a very brief description (For example, when you point out SMEs, add the sector in which they operate).

“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

Then you have to fill in the estimated numbers (in total for all partners). 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 this does not make it less significant than a project with wider overall aim and large number of activities).

3.5. Project activities – description and methods of implementation

Please note that this section requires a minimum of 600 and a maximum of 1500 characters to be filled in per activity!

Consider carefully what kind of activities you will need to achieve the project objectives. Try to organize them by types and to present their interconnection. You have the possibility to plan up to 15 activities. Then you have to entitle each activity and to fill in the exact location of its execution (NUTS III region).

The project partners located inside the eligible cross-border area should provide detailed information regarding the activity/ies that will be implemented outside the eligible cross-border area of the Programme (if applicable). The activities outside the eligible 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.

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

⚠ WARNING

“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.

👉 ADVICE

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

3.5.1. Communication and visibility

Although a special activity for promotion of the project might be planned (in section 3.5), different measures for visibility and communication could appear in the other project activities. Therefore you are expected **to summarize** here all such activities (including exact numbers and types of activities/ products). The completed section will give you the overall view on the planned measures for project popularization. This will enable you to plan which of these activities/measures could be grouped and assigned to external sub-contractor(s).

⚡ IMPORTANT

Please be aware that according to the EC Regulations and the Programme you are obliged to promote your project 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 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) and ensure the adequate presentation of the project and the European cooperation.

3.6. Duration and action plan

All activities described in section 3.5 will automatically be filled in the table. You have to add in which trimester they are going to be implemented.

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

4. Management of the project and reporting

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.

You have to provide the following information:

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

⚠ WARNING

Submission of CVs of the appointed project team members is not necessary.

5. Monitoring of the project

5.1. Expected outputs

The Output indicators allow measuring the achievement of the quantitative targets of the Programme.

In this section you are expected to specify to the achievement of which Programme output indicator(s) your project proposal will contribute. You should fill in exact numbers which correspond to the project activities and outputs.

Note that 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).

In the "Sources of verification" field you need to describe the sources for verification of the pointed quantities.

5.2. Multiplier effect

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.

5.3. Sustainability

You should explain how the sustainability of the project results will be ensured after completion of the action. Which activities will be continued, in which way and who will be the responsible partner? How would institutional and/or financial sustainability be secured?

The Lead Partner and project partners should ensure the sustainability of the project results not less than 5 (five) years after completion of the implementation period in terms for investment support projects and not less than 2 (two) years after completion of the implementation period in terms for "soft measures" projects.

6. Project coherence with

6.1. Other strategies

You should describe:

- How your project proposal fits the larger European Union strategies concerning territorial cooperation (please consult the Programme document, Section 1, for a list of relevant policy frameworks and strategies).
- The potential synergy of your project with other initiatives/ programmes/ strategies at national level.

6.2. Other projects

Explain if your project proposal is part of a bigger project or connected to another project(s) by indicating in which way.

6.3 Horizontal principles

Explain how your project will contribute to the promotion of any of the three horizontal principles – sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and equality between men and women (refer to Section 2.2 “Horizontal principles” of these Guidelines).

Application Form - Part III

Table 1 – TOTAL BUDGET PER PROJECT PARTNERS

The names of the project partners and their nationality will be filled automatically after Parts I and II of the Application Form are completed. The amount of the total financial contribution will be filled automatically after Part III of the Application Form is completed.

Table 2 – DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES (PP1, PP2, PP3 etc.)

Each project partner should fill in a separate, Table 2 in the same sequence as in Table 1 (first the PP1/LP, then PP2, PP3 etc.), providing a breakdown of the expenditures that each of them will be responsible for during the project implementation.

Before filling Table 2, each project partner should clarify its VAT (Value Added Tax) status and determine the VAT as recoverable or non-recoverable from other sources. If the VAT is non-recoverable from other sources, it is eligible for financing by the Programme. In this case the expenditures in the respective partner’s budget should include VAT.

The filling of Table 2 should start with filling of budget lines 3, 4 and 5 (the direct expenditures) and budget line 6 (project preparation costs, if applicable). After that the project partners should indicate the percentage of the flat rate for budget line 1 “Staff costs”, taking into account the type of the project (“soft” or “investment”) and the maximum allowed flat rate percentage (20 % or 10% respectively). The amount for staff costs will be calculated automatically. The project partners should then indicate the percentage of the flat rate for budget line 2 “Office and administrative costs” taking into account that the maximum allowed flat rate percentage is 15 % from the amount of budget line 1 “Staff costs” (applies to both “soft” and “investment” projects). The amount for office and administrative costs will be calculated automatically.

In accordance with p. 2.5.5 “Activities location” of these Guidelines, it is possible for the Programme to finance activities implemented outside the eligible cross-border area by partners located inside the eligible cross-border area. These costs shall be eligible only if they are included in the respective partner’s budget, Table 2, column “Expenditures outside of the eligible area”. 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 the eligible cross-border area, applicants 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.

📌 IMPORTANT

For the purposes of the proper project assessment, implementation and reporting, it is very important that each project partner fills in Table 2 carefully and in logical connection to the project activities. The use of right units (per hour, per day, per month, per kilometers, per contract etc.) and precise number of units in the budgeting process avoids future problems in reporting and more importantly, in reimbursement of expenditures.

📌 ADVICE

Try to be as specific as possible when planning and budgeting project events under Budget Line 3 “Travel and Accommodation Costs” and Budget Line 4 “External Expertise and Services Costs”. Consider carefully the number of participants and the corresponding number of daily allowances / provisions for catering and number of accommodations. Keep in mind that project staff members are entitled daily allowances, but should not be included in catering costs; on the contrary, participants (other than the project staff members) are entitled catering, but cannot receive daily allowances.

Try also to account for cases that do not necessarily follow the budgeting logic, but are nonetheless possible – for example, the budgeting logic for a one-day event is that only daily allowances and/or catering should be planned. However, if the event takes the whole day and starts early in the morning, a provision for accommodation of some team members for the previous night may be included.

Table 2 – DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES– TOTAL

The table will be filled automatically after each project partner fills in its own respective Table 2 and will provide a detailed summary of all project costs per Budget lines and Sub-lines.

Table 3 – SUMMARY BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES PER ORIGIN OF PROJECT PARTNERS

The table will be filled automatically after each project partner fills in its own respective Table 2 and will provide a summary of all project costs per Budget lines and percentages of the respective Budget lines from the total project costs.

Table 4 – SUMMARY BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET LINES PER PROJECT PARTNERS

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

Table 5 – PROJECT SOURCES/PARTNERS' CONTRIBUTION

The table generates automatically the EU co-financing rate (a maximum 85% of the total project costs), the national public co-financing for Bulgarian partners and the obligatory own co-financing for Serbian partners, both at minimum 15 %. In case the project partners envisage additional own contribution (co-financing), the amount of contribution must be inserted by the partner in its respective column (PP1/LP, PP2, PP3 etc.), row "Thereof others co-financing".

PARTNERSHIP AND CO-FINANCING STATEMENT

The Statement shall be generated automatically for each project partner. In addition, each partner must fill the name and the position of its legal representative. After printing, the statements have to be signed, dated, stamped and provided together with the Application Form.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project summary should be prepared in Bulgarian, English and Serbian languages, as the information in these three documents should be identical. In case of inconsistency between the three versions, the English version shall prevail.

Some parts will appear automatically (in the English version), but you have to fill in the other required information.

Please, try to be as concrete as possible. The project summaries will be used by the MA, NA and JS for continuous promotion of the project results through inclusion in the Programme promotional materials and initiatives such as: Programme brochures, social media pages, posters, banners, catalogues, etc.

3. Annexes

3.1. Annexes (A)

The following Annexes should be filled according to the provided templates and submitted together with the Application form:

A1. Checklist of submitted documents

A2. Partnership Agreement – signed, dated and stamped by all partners – in original

A3. Declaration of eligibility – signed, dated and stamped by the Lead partner – in original

A4. Sworn Statement – signed, dated, stamped and provided by each partner – in original

A5. Declaration of Commitment – signed, dated, stamped and provided by each partner – in original

A6. State Aid De Minimis Declaration – signed, dated, stamped and provided by each Bulgarian partner – in original (Serbian partners should follow the national regulations)

3.2. Supporting Documents (B)

📌 IMPORTANT

Unless stated differently, all supporting documents must be presented either in original (when it is possible) or in the form of copies, certified “True copy” by the legal representative or an authorized person from the Lead partner and/or the respective project partner. No notary certifications are needed at the stage of application.

Furthermore, all supporting documents should be submitted in the original language and when specifically required, translated in English as well. The translation may either be made by a certified translation agency or be certified “True copy” by the legal representative or an authorized person from the Lead partner and/or the respective project partner. The translated version will prevail for the purposes of the application assessment.

The following Supporting documents should be provided and submitted together with the Application form:

B1 – Documentary and other evidence on the most recent legal status of each project partner – not older than 6 months prior to the date of submission of the application. In the cases when the applicable document does not show the legal representative of the organization, additional document should be provided (the act of appointment/nomination, decision of municipal election commission, etc.) showing clearly the name of the person with representative power.

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 2.5.1. 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 (Ministries, Agencies, District governments, Inspectorates).

Clarification:

- **For candidates from Republic of Bulgaria** – Document for the most recent legal status (Удостоверение за актуално състояние). In case such a document is not applicable (for example – schools, municipalities, regional administrations, 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).

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- **For candidates from Republic of Serbia** – Legal document issued by the Serbian Business Register Agency (Agencija za privredne registre) stating that the institution is presently operational should be submitted or legal document issued by the institution relevant for keeping Register of organizations. In case such a document is not applicable (for example – schools, municipalities, regional administrations, 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).

B2 – Decision of Local Council/ Board of Directors/ any similar body or managing person provided by each project partner regarding the project development and implementation. 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.

B3 – Power of Attorney from the legal representatives of the project partners, in case the application form and/or the annexed declarations are not signed by the legal representatives of the Lead Partner/project partners – in original only.

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.

⚠ IMPORTANT

In addition to all annexes (A1-A6) and supporting documents (B1-B3), the project proposals that envisage investment support (works or supplies) activities must also provide the following supporting documents:

B4 – Supporting documents concerning INVESTMENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ONLY

B4.1 – In case the investment activities will be performed 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 – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners), issued in the original language and translated into English.
- **B4.1.2 – Consent of the owner (Decision of the Council, Board, etc.)**, issued in the original language and translated into English, 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 – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners)

The consent should be signed by the person/body with the decision-making authority (e.g. the Municipal Council, not the Mayor).

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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.

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

- **B4.2.1 – Consent of the owners**, issued in the original language and translated into English – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).
- **B4.2.2 – Ownership act**, issued in the original language and translated into English – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).

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 the original language and translated into English – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).

B4.4 – Positive Environmental Impact Assessment (positive opinion from the relevant body), required by the national legislation and issued in the original language and translated into English – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners);

or

Statement issued by the relevant body clearly stated that Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary, issued in the original language and translated into English – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).

B4.5 – Approved detailed works design (if applicable according to the relevant legislation), issued in the original language – original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).

Serbian partners must present Main project design (glavni gradjevinski projekat) OR Project for work design (projekat za gradjevinsku dozvolu), valid on the date of the submission deadline of the current call, in accordance with the applicable legislation in force.

All partners (Bulgarian and Serbian) must also present Explanatory note and Bill of Quantities in original (signed and stamped) and translated into English.

In case of construction works, for which the relevant legislation does not require approval of a works design, the applicants have to present a statement by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for design's approval, issued in the original language and present situatuin drawings, supported with the following documents, translated in English: Explanatory note and detailed Bill of Quantities.

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In case of works activities for protection of cultural and historical heritage, the detailed works design for conservation/restoration/construction should be approved by the relevant national institutions responsible for conservation of the cultural and historical heritage, prior to submission of the project proposal.

All construction activities should be supported by detailed Bill of Quantities – signed and stamped. 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 in 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/inforeuro/index.cfm?language=en>).

If the national legislation requires elaboration and approval of detailed works design, its submission after the deadline for application or separately from the related project proposal is to be considered unacceptable!

In case the application is approved for funding, during the pre-contracting stage and after request, the Lead Partner has to present to the Managing Authority the **valid Construction permit** (if applicable according to the relevant legislation).

📌 IMPORTANT

Please note that lack of approved works design (when applicable), is a reason for direct elimination of the project proposal without possibility for submission of additional documents.

B4.6 – Description of envisaged supplies, including exact quantities, presented in English. For supplies, payments for which may be made against invoice without prior acceptance of a tender, submission of technical specifications is not required. For all other supplies, which shall be procured through tender procedures, applicants must provide technical specifications.

📌 WARNING

Please note that brands/trade marks and models must not be indicated in the technical specifications!

📌 IMPORTANT

In case of changes in the facts and circumstances concerning one or more of the project partners in the period after submitting the project proposal, annexes A2 through A6, together with Supporting documents B1 and B3 have to be presented to the Managing Authority with the respective changed content and in the required form as per the instructions above.

3.3. Documents for information (C)

The following document is provided for information only:

C. Subsidy contract

4. Where and How to Submit the Application

4.1 Where to submit the Application:

The Application form, its annexes and supporting documents (the Application) must be received in a sealed package by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) **at the Joint Secretariat main office** at the following address:

*Joint Secretariat of the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
17-19 Kiril and Metodiy Street, Floor 1, office: 1.2
1202 Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria*

Proposals sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) and/or delivered to other addresses and/or delivered after the official deadline for submission of project proposals will be rejected.

4.2 How to submit the Application:

- The Application must be **received by the Joint Secretariat before the deadline** announced in Section 5 of the Guidelines. Any Applications received after the deadline will be automatically rejected even if the postmark indicates a date preceding the deadline or if the delay is due to the courier service.
- The Application Form and Annexes must be submitted **using the forms included in the Applicants' Package**. Modifying the standard Application form or Annexes will result in the rejection of the Application.
- The Application Form must be **filled in English**. The Supporting documents issued by national/local authorities or other bodies shall be attached in the original language accompanied by a translation into English (as described in Section 3.2).
- The Application Form must be **filled in electronically**. Hand-written applications will be rejected.
- The **Application form should be bound (together with its Annexes) in A4 format** in the way that pages could not be taken away from the whole set. All pages should be **numbered** in the lower right corner (with consequent numbers starting from the cover page of the Application Form until the last page of the last annex).
- The Application should be submitted **packed in archival cardboard box/es for the respective paper format**. The outer package must bear the following:

Programme: Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme

Call for proposals: 2014TC16I5CB007-1

Full name and address of the applicant:

Notice:



















**NOT TO BE OPENED BEFORE THE OPENING SESSION!
ДА НЕ СЕ ОТВАРЯ ПРЕДИ СЕСИЈАТА ПО ОТВАРЈАЊЕ НА
ПРОЕКТНИТЕ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЯ!
НЕ ОТВАРАТИ ПРЕ ЗВАНИЧНОГ САСТАНКА КОМИСИЈЕ!**

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A copy of the cover page of the Application Form must also be attached to the outer package for identification.

- The Application should be submitted in **2 (two) hard (paper) versions – one Original version and one Copy version, together with 1 (one) electronic version (CD, DVD or USB flashdrive)**. The electronic version must contain exactly the same proposal as the paper version enclosed. The documents issued by public authorities or other bodies should be scanned. The directories and files within the electronic carrier (CD, DVD or USB flashdrive) have to be structured according to the following predefined pattern and file formats of the appendixes (.doc, .pdf, .jpg, etc.) has to be as stated in the pattern:


















CD/ DVD/ USB	Directories, subdirectories and files	Explanations
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	 AF_ipacbcgrs.xls	The application form in Excel at the level of the main directory of the CD or DVD disk
	Annexes_A	
	 Annex_A1	
	 Annex_A.1_Checklist of submitted documents_en.pdf	This should be a scanned document
	 Annex_A2	
	 Annex_A.2_Partnership agreement.pdf	This should be a scanned document
	 Annex_A3	
	 Annex_A.3_Declaration of Eligibility.pdf	This should be a scanned document
	 Annex_A4	
	 Annex_A.4_PP1/LP_Sworn Statement.pdf	This should be a scanned document
	 Annex_A.4_PP2_Sworn Statement.pdf	This should be a scanned document
	pdf	And so on for all partners
	 Annexes_A5	
	 Annex_A.5_PP1/LP_Declaration of Commitment.pdf	This should be a scanned document
	 Annex_A.5_PP2_Declaration of Commitment.pdf	This should be a scanned document
	pdf	And so on for all partners
	 Annexes_A6	











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			Annex_A.6_PP1/LP_State Aid De Minimis Declaration.pdf	This should be a scanned document
			Annex_A.6_PP2_State Aid De Minimis Declaration.pdf	This should be a scanned document
		pdf	And so on for all Bulgarian partners
			Annexes_B1-4	
			Annex_B1	
			B1_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	The legal status of PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned
			B1_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	The legal status of PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned
		pdf	And so on for all partners
			Annex_B2	
			B2_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	The Decision of Local Council/Board of Directors of PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned
			B2_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	The Decision of Local Council/Board of Directors of PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned
		pdf	And so on for all partners
			Annex_B3	
			B3_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	The Power of Attorney of PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
			B3_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	The Power of Attorney of PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
		pdf	And so on for all partners
			Annexes_B4	Only in case of investment activities
			Annex_B4.1	
			B4.1.1_PP1_Ownership_bg/rs.pdf	Ownership act or certificate for municipal or state ownership of PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
			B4.1.2_PP1_Agreement_bg/rs.pdf	The Agreement with the owner of PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
			B4.1.1_PP2_Ownership_bg/rs.pdf	Ownership act or certificate for municipal or state ownership of PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
			B4.1.2_PP2_Agreement_bg/rs.pdf	The Agreement with the owner of PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
		pdf	And so on for all partners
			Annex_B4.2	

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			B4.2.1_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	The Consent of the owners (in Bulgarian or Serbian language) in case of passing through private territories for PP1 – scanned original
			B4.2.2_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Ownership act for PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
			B4.2.1_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	The Consent of the owners (in Bulgarian or Serbian language) in case of passing through private territories for PP2 – scanned original
			B4.2.2_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	Ownership act for PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned original
		pdf	And so on for all partners
		Annex_B4.3		
			B4.3_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	In case of investment activities within territories with special status: relevant documentation (in Bulgarian or Serbian language) required by the respective national legislation for PP1 (original or notary certified copy) – scanned
			B4.3_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Statement from the competent environment authority (in Bulgarian or Serbian language) for PP1 – scanned
			B4.3_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	In case of investment activities within territories with special status: relevant documentation (in Bulgarian or Serbian language) required by the respective national legislation for PP2 (original or notary certified copy) – scanned
			B4.3_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	Statement from the competent environment authority (in Bulgarian or Serbian language) for PP2 – scanned
		pdf	And so on for all partners
		Annex_B4.4		
			B4.4_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Positive Environment Impact Assessment or statement that it is not necessary for PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned
			B4.4_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	Positive Environment Impact Assessment or statement that it is not necessary for PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned
		pdf	And so on for all partners
		Annex_B4.5		
			B4.5_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Approved/certified detailed works design / Main project design (glavni gradjevinski projekat) OR Project for work design (projekat za gradjevinsku dozvolu), valid on the date of the submission deadline of the current call, in accordance with the applicable legislation in force of PP1 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned In case of construction works, for which the relevant legislation does not require approval of

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					a works design copy of letter issued by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for design's approval, supported with present situation drawings – scanned
				B4.5_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	Approved/certified detailed works design / Main project design (glavni gradjevinski projekat) OR Project for work design (projekat za gradjevinsku dozvolu), valid on the date of the submission deadline of the current call, in accordance with the applicable legislation in force of PP2 in Bulgarian or Serbian language – scanned In case of construction works, for which the relevant legislation does not require approval of a works design - copy of letter issued by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for design's approval, supported with present situation drawings – scanned
			pdf	And so on for all partners
				B4.5_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Explanatory note from the Approved detailed works design of PP1 in English – editable text document, not a scanned one
				B4.5_PP1_bg/rs.xls	Detailed Bill of Quantities from the Approved detailed works design and/or Estimated Bill of Quantities for the supplies of PP1 in English – editable text document, not a scanned one
				B4.5_PP2_bg/rs.pdf	Explanatory note from the Approved detailed works design of PP2 in English – editable text document, not a scanned one
				B4.5_PP2_bg/rs.xls	Detailed Bill of Quantities from the Approved detailed works design and/or Estimated Bill of Quantities for the supplies of PP2 in English – editable text document, not a scanned one
				...	And so on for all partners
			Annex_B4.6		
				B4.6_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Description of the supplies and/or technical specifications (where applicable) of PP1 in English – scanned original
				B4.6_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Description of the supplies and/or technical specifications (where applicable) of PP2 in English – scanned original
			pdf	And so on for all partners

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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. If some of the scanned files becomes too large and difficult to handle by regular computers it is acceptable the same file to be divided into several files clearly noting which part of the respective annex they contain, e.g. B4.6_PP1_en.pdf can be separated in two parts as follows: B4.6_PP1_en-part1.pdf and B4.6_PP1_en-part2.pdf.

5. Deadline for Receipt of Applications

⚡ IMPORTANT

The deadline for the receipt of applications is 18.01.2016, 16:00 h. local time

Any Applications received after the deadline will be automatically rejected even if the postmark indicates a date preceding the deadline or if the delay is due to the courier service.

6. Assessment and Selection of Applications

The project assessment and selection criteria prepared by the Managing Authority together with the National Authority and the Joint Secretariat are approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC). The assessment is performed by Assessment Working Group (AWG) and is divided into two parts:

1. Administrative compliance and eligibility check;
2. Technical and quality assessment.

⚡ IMPORTANT

In order to be proposed for financing, a project must fulfil all the administrative and eligibility criteria and receive at least 65 points at the technical and quality assessment.

Taking into account the Good Administrative Practices, the Assessment Working Group can exclude an applicant at any stage of the evaluation process whenever it is obvious that the latter does not meet the eligibility criteria.

The results of each assessment step will be summarized in the form of reports by the AWG and presented to the JMC for approval. Based on the received technical scores, proposals will be ranked in descending order for each Priority Axis and the JMC shall select projects for financing until exhaustion of the funding available under each Priority Axis for this Call for Proposals. Simultaneously, 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 point at the technical and quality assessment) and may also decide on creating reserves lists for project proposals, which have passed the administrative and eligibility criteria and have received more than 65 point at the technical and quality assessment, but for which funding under the present Call for Proposals is unavailable.

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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. Upon receipt of the letter and in case of disagreement with the outcome, each Lead partner may issue a complaint towards the decision of the JMC, following the standart complaint procedure described in Section 6.3 below.

Potential applicants may find below the project assessment and selection criteria for each assessment stage.

6.1 Administrative compliance and eligibility check

The following will be assessed:

- The deadline has been respected. If the deadline has not been respected the proposal will automatically be rejected;
- An organization does not participate as a Lead partner in more than one project proposal, as specified in section 2.5.3 of these Guidelines. If this condition has not been respected, all project proposals in which the respective Lead partner participates will automatically be rejected;
- All project partners (including the Lead partner) do not participate in more than 3 (three) projects proposals in total under this Call for proposals, as specified in section 2.5.3 of these Guidelines. If this condition has not been respected, all project proposals in which the respective project partner participates will automatically be rejected;
- The project proposal satisfies all the criteria mentioned in the Table for administrative compliance and eligibility check.

📌 IMPORTANT

At the stage of administrative compliance and eligibility check, the Assessment Working Group could request clarification or justification of information/documents submitted with the project proposal. Please have in mind that additional information/clarification must not lead to the improvement of the project proposal.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK

ADMINISTRATIVE PART	
Project Registration No	2014TC16I5CB007-1-
Project title	
Name of Lead Partner	
Name of Partner/s	

No	SECTION I: CRITERIA FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE	YES	NO
1.	The project proposal has been delivered within the deadline.		
2.	The identification details are clearly stated on the outside of the sealed package.		

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3.	The Lead partner has not submitted any other project proposal as a Lead partner under this Call for proposals.		
4.	Each project partner (including the Lead partner) does not participate in more than 3 project proposals in total under this Call for proposals		
5.	All parts of the Application Form, Annexes and Supporting documents are submitted in one original and one printed copy, together with a full electronic version of the submitted documents.		
6.	Project summary is submitted in the 3 (three) languages - English, Bulgarian and Serbian, duly completed in compliance with the templates.		
7.	The Application Form is duly completed in compliance with the template. All lists of the Application Form are dated prior to the submission of the Application form.		
8.	All sections of the Application Form are typed in English		
9.	Partnership and co-financing statement is provided by each partner - signed, dated and stamped		
10.	Partnership agreement between all partners is provided - signed, dated and stamped (Annex A.2)		
11.	Declaration of eligibility is provided by the Lead partner - signed, dated and stamped (Annex A.3)		
12.	Sworn statement is provided by each partner – signed, dated and stamped (Annex A.4)		
13.	Declaration of Commitment is provided by each partner – signed, dated and stamped (Annex A.5)		
14.	De Minimis State Aid Declaration is provided by each Bulgarian partner – signed, dated and stamped (Annex A.6)		
	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	YES	NO
15.	Documentary and other evidence on the most recent legal status of each project partner (original or “True copy” for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
16.	Decision of Local Council/ Board of Directors/ any similar body or managing person regarding the project development and implementation is provided by each project partner (original or “True copy” for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
17.	Power of Attorney from the legal representative of the project partner (in case the application form and/or annexed declarations are not signed by the legal representatives of the Lead Partner/project partners) is submitted in original by the respective partner.		
	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS CONCERNING INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES	YES	NO
18.	In case investment activities will be performed on municipal or state-owned property		
18.1.	Ownership act or certificate or legal document for municipal or state		

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	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 is submitted in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
18.2.	Consent of the owner, 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, issued in the original language and translated into English, is submitted in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
19.	In case of investment activities required passing through private territories		
19.1.	Consent of the owners, issued in the original language and translated into English, is submitted in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
19.2.	Ownership act, issued in the original language and translated into English, is submitted in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
20.	In case of investment activities within territories/objects with special status (National parks, environmental and architectural reserves, cultural monuments, protected areas, areas included in Nature 2000 etc.)		
20.1.	Relevant documentation (permits, approvals, certificates, statements, etc.) required by the respective national applicable law are submitted in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
	For all cases		
21.	Positive Environmental Impact Assessment (positive opinion from the relevant body), required by the national legislation and issued in the original language and translated into English is presented in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners) OR Letter issued by the relevant body clearly stated that Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary, issued in the original language and translated into English, is presented in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).		
22.	Approved Detailed Works Design, issued in the original language, is		

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	<p>presented in original or officially certified copy (notary certified for Bulgarian partners and certified by the responsible administrative body - for Serbian partners).</p> <p>Serbian partners must present Main project design (glavni gradjevinski projekat) OR Project for work design (projekat za gradjevinsku dozvolu), valid on the date of the submission deadline of the current call, in accordance with the applicable legislation in force.</p> <p>All partners (Bulgarian and Serbian) must also present Explanatory note and Bill of Quantities in original (signed and stamped) and translated in English</p> <p>OR</p> <p>In case of construction works, for which the relevant legislation does not require approval of a Detailed Works Design: Statement issued by the relevant institutions for exception of the rule for design's approval, supported with present situation drawing and the following documents is submitted in original (signed and stamped). The following documents are presented as well in original (signed and stamped) and translated in English: Explanatory note and Bill of Quantities.</p>		
23.	Technical specifications for supplies (in English) – description of the envisaged supplies, including exact quantities.		
SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA		YES	NO
24.	All partners are registered on the territory of Republic of Bulgaria or Republic of Serbia.		
25.	At least one partner from each side of the cross border region is involved.		
26.	The Lead partner is registered at least 12 months before the deadline for submission of project proposals under current Call for Proposals		
27.	All partners meet eligible criteria defined in the Guidelines section 2.5.1		
28.	The implementation period does not exceed the maximum project duration per specific objective and type of project as indicated in the Guidelines for applicants.		
29.	The amount of the eligible expenditures requested is in line with the limits for the respective specific objective and type of project as indicated in the Guidelines for applicants.		
30.	The project proposal meets the criteria for Joint development, Joint implementation and at least one of the other two conditions: Joint staffing or Joint financing.		
31.	For investment projects - The minimum rate of 70 % for works and/or supplies is observed. For soft projects – The maximum rate of 50 % for supply is observed.		
32.	The maximum rate for Staff costs is observed for each partner		

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33.	The maximum rate for Office and administrative costs is observed for each partner		
34.	The maximum rate for Project preparation costs is observed		
COMMENTS:			
THE PROJECT PROPOSAL SATISFIES ALL CRITERIA FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY COMPLIANCE			

📌 IMPORTANT

Only proposals that satisfy all the administrative and eligibility criteria mentioned in the above checklist will be subject to technical and quality assessment.

If your project proposal does not comply with each of the above criteria (with the only exception of Question 17 concerning the Power of Attorney), it could be rejected at this stage. That means that even if one answer “NO” appears in this checklist (with the pointed exception), the project proposal may not be evaluated further.

6.2 Technical and quality assessment

All project proposals which have passed successfully the administrative compliance and eligibility check (with at least 65 points) will be subject to a technical and quality assessment. This assessment allows the quality of the project proposals to be evaluated in relation to the set objectives and priorities, and ensures that the selected operations comply with the Programme specific objectives and guarantee the visibility of the Community funding.

The technical and quality assessment will be performed on the basis of specific **selection criteria**, grouped in four general sections in the technical and quality assessment grid:

- Management capacity;
- Project’s context and consistency with the Programme and other strategies;
- Methodology;
- Budget.

The first three sections give maximum 80 points and the last one – maximum 20 points. The maximum overall score of a project proposal is 100 points.

TECHNICAL AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT GRID (to be filled by the Assessor)			
Project registration No:			
Lead Partner:			
Partner/s:			
Project title:			
SECTION I: MANAGEMENT CAPACITY			
No	Selection criteria	Max. score	Reference
1.	Partnership relevant to the proposed project	5	Part I

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	<i>The partnership is relevant to the proposed project in view of partners' profiles.</i>	5 points		p. 1.2
	<i>The partnership is partially relevant to the proposed project in view of partners' profiles, but the partners complement each other.</i>	3 points		
	<i>One of the partners is not relevant to the proposed project in view of its profile.</i>	2 points		
	<i>The project partnership is not relevant to the proposed project in view of partners' profiles.</i>	0 points		
2.	The partners are experienced in project management in EU funded projects		5	Part I p.1.3
	<i>The same partnership has implemented at least 1 EU funded project</i>	5 points		
	<i>All partners have implemented 2 or 3 EU funded projects</i>	4 points		
	<i>All partners have implemented at least 1 EU funded project</i>	3 points		
	<i>Only one of the partners has implemented EU funded project/s</i>	2 points		
	<i>None of the partners has experience in management of EU funded projects</i>	0 points		
3.	The project partners have the necessary experience in the field addressed by the project		4	Part I p.1.2 p.1.3
	<i>All project partners have implemented projects/ actions in the field addressed by the project</i>	4 points		
	<i>At least one of the project partners has implemented projects/ actions in the field addressed by the project</i>	2 points		
	<i>None of the project partners has implemented projects/ actions in the field addressed by the project</i>	0 points		
4.	Staff, technical capacity and financial stability of the project partners		3	Part I p.2.2
	<i>All partners have permanent staff, good technical capacity and financial stability</i>	3 points		
	<i>Some partners have permanent staff, good technical capacity and financial stability</i>	2 points		
	<i>None of the project partners has permanent staff, good technical capacity and financial stability</i>	0 points		
	SUBTOTAL SECTION I		17	
SECTION II: PROJECT'S CONTEXT AND CONSISTENCY WITH THE PROGRAMME AND OTHER STRATEGIES				
No	Selection criteria		Max.	Reference

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		score	
5.	The project is relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the border region	6	Part II p.1.3 p.3.1 p.3.2
	<i>The envisaged activities in terms of needs of the border region are very well described and well justified: they are timely and appropriate</i>	6 points	
	<i>The envisaged activities in terms of needs of the border region are described and partially justified</i>	4 points	
	<i>Insufficiently described and not well justified activities in terms of needs of the border region</i>	1 points	
6.	The project contributes to the achievement of the Programme' specific objectives and output indicators	6	Part II p.3.2 p. 5.1
	<i>The project contributes to the achievement of the specific objective and more than one output indicator (the pointed quantities are well justified).</i>	6 points	
	<i>The project contributes to the achievement of the specific objective and one output indicator (the pointed quantities are well justified).</i>	4 points	
	<i>The contribution to the achievement of both the specific objective and output indicator/s is vague/ not well described.</i>	1 point	
7.	Coherence of the project with European Union strategies concerning territorial cooperation and other programmes/ initiatives/ strategies at national/ regional level	4	Part II p.6.1
	<i>The project demonstrates clear coherence with European Union strategies concerning territorial cooperation and with other national/ regional strategy(ies)</i>	4 points	
	<i>Unclear/ vague coherence of the project with European Union strategies concerning territorial cooperation and with other programmes/ initiatives/ strategies at national/ regional level.</i>	2 points	
	<i>The project demonstrates coherence with programmes/ initiatives/ strategies at national/ regional level only.</i>	1 point	
	<i>The project does not demonstrate coherence with European Union strategies concerning territorial cooperation and with other programmes/ initiatives/ strategies at national/ regional level.</i>	0 points	
8.	The target groups, direct and final beneficiaries are relevant to the project activities, clearly defined and quantified	5	Part II p.3.4
	<i>Relevant, clearly defined and realistically quantified target</i>	5 points	

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	<i>groups, direct and final beneficiaries</i>			
	<i>Relevant and clearly defined, but not realistically quantified target groups, direct and final beneficiaries</i>	4 points		
	<i>Partially relevant, not clearly defined and/or not realistically quantified target groups, direct and final beneficiaries</i>	2 points		
	<i>Undefined target groups, direct and final beneficiaries (lack of relevant description and lack of quantification)</i>	0 points		
9.	Multiplier effect of the project		3	Part II p.5.2
	<i>The project has clear and justified potential for further development.</i>	3 points		
	<i>The project has no clear potential for further development, some ideas exist however.</i>	1 points		
	<i>The project does not possess potential for further development.</i>	0 points		
10.	The project makes positive contribution to the Programme horizontal principles: sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women		3	Part II p. 6.3
	<i>The project is coherent with all 3 horizontal principles.</i>	3 points		
	<i>The project is coherent with 2 of the horizontal principles.</i>	2 points		
	<i>The project is coherent with only 1 of the horizontal principles.</i>	1 points		
	<i>No coherence with the horizontal principles</i>	0 points		
11.	Connection of the project to bigger or to another project/s		1	Part II p. 6.2
	<i>The project is part of a bigger project or connected to another project</i>	1 points		
	<i>The project is not a part of a bigger project or connected to another project</i>	0 points		
SUBTOTAL SECTION II			28	
SECTION III: METHODOLOGY				
No	Selection criteria		Max. score	Reference
12.	Project activities are well defined, realistic and achievable		5	Part II p.3.5.
	<i>All project activities are well-structured, clearly defined, realistic and achievable.</i>	5 points		
	<i>The project activities are realistic and achievable, but could have been structured and defined better.</i>	3 points		
	<i>The description of project activities and methods for achievement are quite vague.</i>	1 points		

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	<i>The project activities are poorly described and their achievement looks unrealistic.</i>	0 points		
13.	The intervention logic “project objective – activity – result/output” is kept	5	Part II p.3.5.	
	<i>The project is well-thought and structured in way that shows clear consistency between the project objectives, activities and expected results/outputs.</i>	5 points		
	<i>Although the level of consistency between the project objectives, activities and expected results/outputs is satisfactory, a better structure of the activities and intervention logic could have been identified.</i>	3 points		
	<i>The intervention logic is not well-thought and the consistency between the project objectives, activities and expected results/outputs is somewhat vague.</i>	1 point		
	<i>The project shows lack of clear-thought structure and there is no consistency between the project objectives, activities and expected results/ outputs.</i>	0 points		
14.	Sustainability of the project’s main results/ outputs	5	Part II p. 3.5 p.5.3	
	<i>The project’s main results/ outputs are expected to provide significant and long-term contribution to solving the targeted challenges.</i>	5 points		
	<i>The project’s main results/ outputs are expected to have positive effect to solving the targeted challenges, but in short term</i>	3 points		
	<i>The project’s main results/ outputs have no potential for long-lasting sustainability</i>	1 point		
15.	Communication and visibility activities	5	Part II p.3.5 p.3.5.1	
	<i>The project envisages communication and visibility activities to wide audience (regional and national level)</i>	5 points		
	<i>The project envisages some communication and visibility activities, but to restricted audience (local community)</i>	3 points		
	<i>The project does not envisage communication and visibility activities</i>	0 points		
16.	Cross-border impact of the project	5	Part II p.1.3	
	<i>The cross-border impact refers to the specific area, covered by the project (NUTS III regions and equivalents)</i>	5 points		
	<i>The cross-border impact refers to the project partners only</i>	3 points		
	<i>The project does not have cross-border impact</i>	1 points		
17.	Action plan in accordance with the project activities	5	Part II	

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	<i>The action plan is realistic and in accordance with the partners' responsibilities</i>	5 points		p.3.6
	<i>The action plan is not well connected to the partners' responsibilities, but still has potential to be kept</i>	3 points		
	<i>The action plan is not realistic, not connected to the partners' responsibilities and needs reconsideration</i>	1 point		
18.	Level of involvement and participation of project partners in activities		5	Part II p.3.5 p. 3.5.1
	<i>Project activities and responsibilities are distributed evenly between all partners and the two countries.</i>	5 points		
	<i>Project activities and responsibilities are distributed evenly between all partners, but not between the two countries.</i>	3 points		
	<i>Unbalanced distribution of activities and responsibilities between all project partners, but still all partners are involved</i>	1 points		
	<i>One partner/country is not involved in project activities and responsibilities</i>	0 point		
SUBTOTAL SECTION III			35	
SECTION IV: BUDGET				
No	Selection criteria		Max. score	Reference
19.	Estimated expenditures are necessary for the implementation of the project and the prices are realistic and market based.		10	Part III Table 2
	<i>All estimated costs fully correspond to the proposed activities and are necessary for the implementation of the project. All prices are realistic and market based. No budget reduction/revisions are needed.</i>	10 points		
	<i>Planned expenses correspond to the proposed activities and are necessary for the implementation of the project, but partial reductions (up to 10 % of the total project budget) of budget items and/or item prices is needed to optimize cost effectiveness.</i>	8 points		
	<i>Planned expenses correspond to the proposed activities and are necessary for the implementation of the project, but serious reduction of budget items and/or item prices (from 10 to 25 % of the total project budget) is necessary for optimizing the expenditure performance.</i>	6 points		
	<i>Project expenses highly exceed the expected benefits for the target area and the target groups. Some costs are not relevant to the activities proposed. A significant reduction</i>	4 points		

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	<i>of budget items and/or item prices (more than 25 % of the total project budget) is necessary.</i>			
	<i>Costs envisaged are totally inconsistent with project activities. Most prices are not realistic and not market based. The budget needs full re-design in this aspect.</i>	<i>1 point</i>		
20.	The breakdown between the budget lines is in line with the intervention logic and the specific rules for each budget line are respected		5	Part III Table 2
	<i>The breakdown between the budget lines is in line with the intervention logic and the specific rules for each budget line are respected</i>	<i>5 points</i>		
	<i>The breakdown between the budget lines and the specific rules for each budget line are partially respected</i>	<i>3 points</i>		
	<i>The breakdown between the budget lines and the specific rules for each budget line are not respected</i>	<i>1 point</i>		
21.	Budget breakdown between partners and countries		5	Part III Table 4
	<i>Even budget breakdown between partners and countries.</i>	<i>5 points</i>		
	<i>Balanced budget breakdown between partners and countries (in case partner's/country's budget exceeds the budget of another partner/country from 25 to 50 %)</i>	<i>4 points</i>		
	<i>Unbalanced budget breakdown between partners and countries (in case partner's/country's budget exceeds the budget of another partner/country from 50 to 80 %)</i>	<i>3 points</i>		
	<i>Unfair budget breakdown between partners and countries (in case partner's/country's budget exceeds the budget of another partner/country more than 80 %)</i>	<i>1 point</i>		
	SUBTOTAL SECTION IV		20	
	GRAND TOTAL		100	
COMMENTS				
Recommendation				
Assessor's name:	Assessor's signature:	Date of evaluation:		

6.3 Complaint procedure

Upon receipt of the letter from the MA about the decision of the JMC on the approval/placement on the reserves list/rejection of the respective project proposal, in case of disagreement with the outcome each Lead partner may issue a complaint towards the decision of the JMC.

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In order to initiate a complaint, the Lead partner must officially request from the MA the Administrative compliance and eligibility check and/or the Technical and quality assessment grids not later than 5 working days after it has been officially notified about the results of the project selection process.

After carefully examining the received grids, the application of the selection criteria and the reasons for rejection of the proposal and/or the reasoning behind the technical scores, the Lead partner may officially lodge a complaint not later than 3 working days after official receipt of the assessment grids from the MA.

⚠ IMPORTANT

Failure to comply with any of the two deadlines specified above shall automatically result in rejection of the complaint without any further consideration.

Lodging a complain without the prior request of the Administrative compliance and eligibility check and/or the Technical and quality assessment grids shall also result in rejection of the complaint without any further consideration

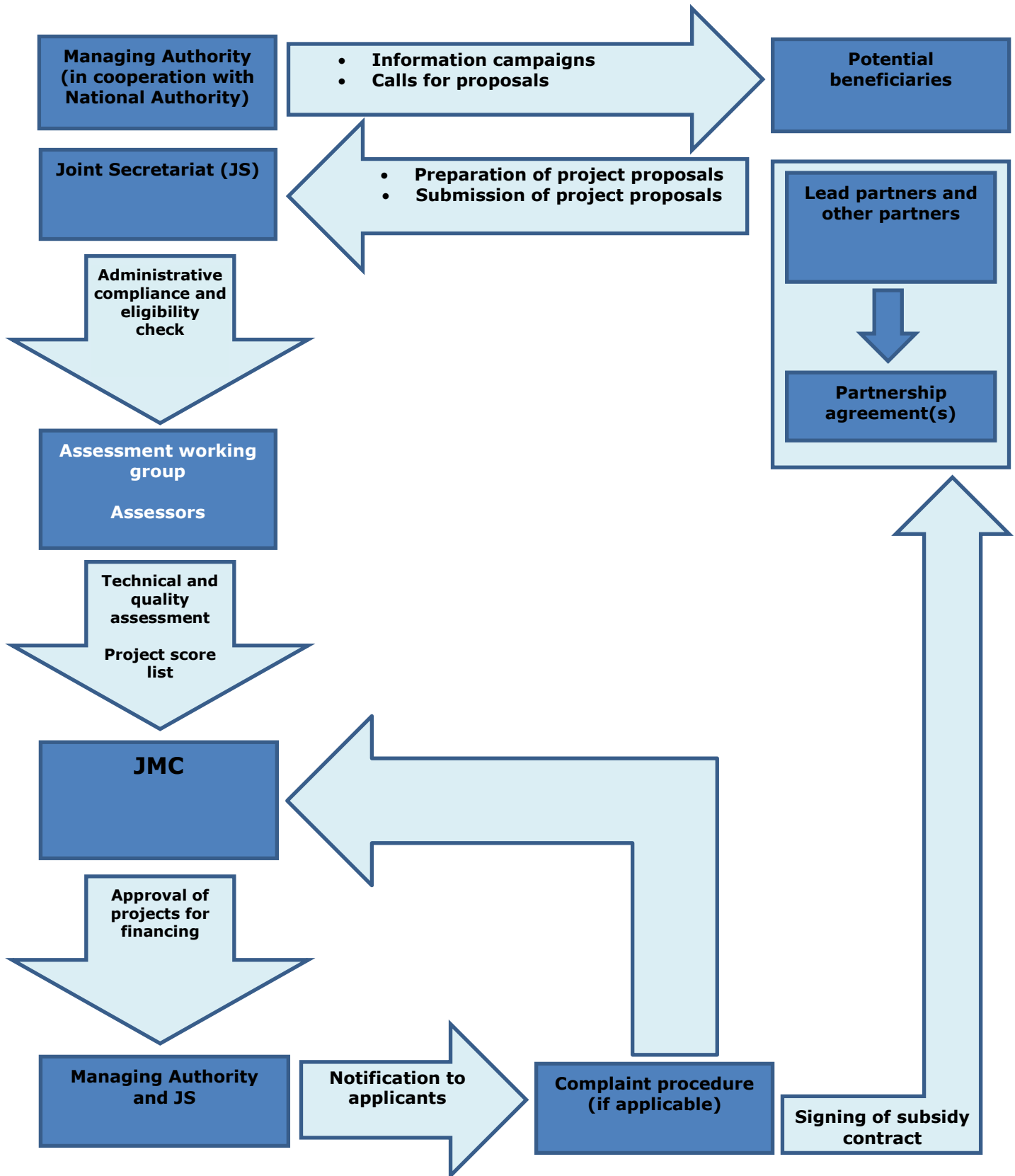
The complaint can only be lodged in cases the Lead partner claims that:

1. The rejection of the proposal on administrative compliance and eligibility check is not in line with either the specific requirements and the selection criteria outlined in these Guidelines, or the relevant information and the supporting documents provided by the Applicant;
2. The scores received by the proposal on technical and quality assessment are not in line with either the selection criteria outlined in these Guidelines, or the relevant information and the supporting documents provided by the Applicant.

The complain must clearly state the name and address of the Lead partner, the reference number of the project proposal in question, clearly described reasons for the complaint, including listing of all elements of the assessment which are being complaint in regards to points 1 and 2 above, the signature of the legal representative and the Lead partner and any other supporting documents the Lead partner may feel relevant. However, **all the supporting documentation shall be provided for the sole purpose of supporting the complaint and may not in any case alter the quality or content of the assessed application.**

The whole complaint procedure – from the official receipt of the complaint by the MA to the official communication of the final JMC decision to the Lead partner shall take a maximum of 90 calendar days.

Evaluation and selection procedure:



7. Contracting

Contracts with the Lead partners of the approved projects will be prepared on the standard template. Draft **Subsidy contract** is presented in **Annex C to these Guidelines for applicants**.

Implementation of the projects may start only after the contracts are signed by both - the MA and the lead beneficiary.

The Lead Partner of an approved operation shall sign a **Subsidy Contract** for the total IPA II funds with the Managing Authority.

Before signing the contract, the Managing Authority will have the right to carry out negotiations for budget revision (if necessary), as well as site visits to all investment support project proposals.

Before signing this contract, the Managing Authority will up-date the contract details and set in the annexes the specific and explicit binding elements to be respected by the final beneficiary.

After signing the IPA II Subsidy Contract, the Lead Partner is responsible for implementing the EU co-financed operation.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Applicant	Any legal entity meeting the eligible criteria which submits an application to be financed by the Programme
Beneficiary	Any applicant whose application has been approved for financing
Eligible expenditure	Expenditures made by a Beneficiary, related to the operations financed through the Programme, which could be financed from the structural instruments, as well as from the state budget and/or own Beneficiary contribution
Eligible area/region	The border area of Bulgaria comprises the following districts: Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Sofia, Pernik and Kyustendil. The border area of Serbia comprises the following districts: Bor, Zaječar, Toplica, Nišava, Pirot, Jablanica and Pčinja.
Lead Partner	An applicant designated by the partners involved in a project responsible for coordinating the process of development, submission and implementation of that specific project
Managing Authority	The structure responsible for managing the Programme is the “Territorial Cooperation Management” Directorate General at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (Republic of Bulgaria).
National Authority	Serbian European Integration Office - the counterpart of the Managing Authority in the partner state (Republic of Serbia)
Priority Axis	A strategic priority within the operational Programme, including a group of interconnected specific objectives.
Partner	Any applicant involved in a project
Project	The operation for which funding is being sought under the Programme, expressed in the application form and its annexes.

Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Audit Authority
AF	Application Form
BG	Republic of Bulgaria
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross-border Cooperation
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
DG	Directorate General
GD	Government Decision
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPA	Instrument for pre-accession assistance
IT	Information Technology
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MF	Ministry of Finance (Republic of Bulgaria)
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Member State
NA	National Authority
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OP	Operational Programme
OPRD	Operational Programme Regional Development
PC	Personal Computer
PR	Public Relations
PRAG	Procurement and Grants for European Union External Actions – a Practical Guide

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RDA	Regional Development Agency
R&D	Research and Development
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMEs	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
SOP	Sectoral Operational Programme
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
TA	Technical Assistance
VAT	Value Added Tax
WFD	Water Framework Directive