



**Interreg - IPA CBC**   
Bulgaria - Serbia

Annual Implementation Report 2014-2015  
Citizen's Summary





## ABOUT THE SUMMARY

The Summary aims to describe in a concise and informal language the main achievements of the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme in the years 2014 and 2015. Full report of activities is available at the Programme website: [www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu](http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu)

### The Summary is focused on the following topics:

- Brief Programme description;
- Programme preparation activities in 2014;
- Initial Info days in Vratsa and Toplica regions;
- Preparation and launch of the First Call for project proposals;
- Information Days and the Partner Search Forum;
- Programme media campaign and coverage;
- New Programme website and social media pages;
- Participation in external information and publicity initiatives.

## THE PROGRAMME

### Programme goal

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.

### Programme Budget

The total Programme budget is **34 102 256 euro**.

The Programme is co-funded by the European Union, from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II) fund.

### Priority Axes and specific objectives



#### Priority Axis 1: Sustainable Tourism

- 1.1: Tourist Attractiveness;
- 1.2: Cross-Border Touristic Product;
- 1.3: People-To-People Networking.



#### Priority Axis 2: Youth

- 2.1: Skills & Entrepreneurship;
- 2.2: People-To-People Networking.



#### Priority Axis 3: Environment

- 3.1: Joint Risk Management;
- 3.2: Nature Protection.

### Programme area





## PROGRAMME PREPARATION ACTIVITIES IN 2014

A total of **13 events were organized during 2014** in the format of information seminars, including 2 Regional consultative forums and **11 Regional public consultations** in regards to the preparation of the Programme document for the 2014-2020 programming period. The regional consultations were attended by 257 participants representing municipalities, regional and national administration/public institutions, regional NGOs, educational and other relevant institutions. All consultations were organized in local languages (Bulgarian and Serbian). The results from the Regional Consultations together with the situation and SWOT analysis were used as a foundation for elaboration of the Strategy of the IPA II CBC Programme Bulgaria – Serbia.

Regional Consultations took place:

- On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March in **Nis** and **Pirost**, Serbia;
- On the 6<sup>th</sup> of March in **Leskovac** and **Vranje**, Serbia;
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> of March in **Zajecar**, Serbia;
- On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March in **Pernik** and **Kyustendil**, Bulgaria;
- On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March in **Sofia**, Bulgaria;
- On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March in **Montana** and **Vidin**, Bulgaria;
- On the 14<sup>th</sup> of March in **Vraca**, Bulgaria.



## INITIAL INFO DAYS IN VRATSA AND TOPLICA REGIONS



**Town of Vratsa, Vratsa region, Bulgaria — 24.02.2015**

The goal of the event was to preliminarily present the Programme and explain the potential funding opportunities to close to 100 representatives of the local organizations. Vratsa region was included in the cross-border area in the 2014-2020 programming period. Deputy Minister Denitsa Nikolova was interviewed by the local media.

**Town of Prokuplje, Toplica region, Serbia — 21.05.2015**

Like in Vratsa, the goal was to introduce the Programme in the newly added region to the Programme cross-border area, Toplica region. More than 100 people from the Toplica region took part in the event, including many journalists. Deputy Director of SEIO, Sanda Simic, was interviewed by the local media.



## PREPARATION AND LAUNCHING OF THE FIRST CALL

In order to improve the quality of the Application package within the First Call for proposals, we have published it on the Programme website for public review. Potential applicants, as well as other interested organizations and persons, have invited to send their suggestions and comments on the application package. As a result, both the Application Form and the Guidelines for Applicants have been accordingly revised and presented for approval at the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) meeting. The JMC meeting took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 in Sofia, where the complete Application package was approved.

### Basic facts about the First Call for project proposals:

- The First Call for project proposals was **launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2015**;
- The Call was open for 5 months, with **deadlines on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2016**;
- The total amount allocated to the First Call for proposals is **€ 12,687,304.24**;
- The Call was open to project proposals under **all 3 priority axes and the 7 specific objectives**;
- In order to help the potential applicants, we have published all **326 relevant questions and answers on the website**;
- The Call was **promoted in the national newspapers** in both countries, as well as **on numerous websites**, through **social media**, and at **11 public events known as "Info days"** and the very popular "Partner Search Forum". More information about the Info days is available on the next page.

ЕК одобри програмата за трансгранично сътрудничество със Сърбия

Бюджетът на програмата е малко над 34 млн. евро

Европейската комисия (ЕК) одобри програмата за трансгранично сътрудничество със Сърбия, събщават от пресслужбата на представителството на ЕК в България.

Бюджетът на програмата е малко над 34 млн. евро, като близо 29 млн. евро от тях са по линия на Инструмента за предприсъединителна помощ.

Основни акценти в програмата са устойчив туризъм и околната среда, както и младежите в граничните райони.

В програмата за трансгранично сътрудничество между България и Сърбия участват областите Видин, Монтана, Враца, София, Перник и Костинброд в България и регионите Борс, Зайчарски, Перлово, Навадино, Топлица, Рибарица и Рибарица в Сърбия.

Със средствата от програмата ще се подпомага обмена на персонал, културното и историческото наследство, ще се подобрява интеракцията между различните видове транспортни услуги, използвани от туристите, ще се разработват съвместни планове за управление на туристическите територии и др.

Министерството на регионалното развитие и благоустройството на Република България (Управляващ орган по Програмата) в сътрудничество със Службата за европейска интеграция на Република Сърбия (Национален партниращ орган по Програмата)

Обявяват на 17.08.2015 г. Първата покана за набиране на проектни предложения по Програма Интеррег-ИПП за трансгранично сътрудничество България-Сърбия. Програмата е съфинансирана от Инструмента за предприсъединителна помощ II на Европейския съюз. Общият бюджет на Първата покана за набиране на проектни предложения е € 12 687 304, 24.

Общата цел на Програмата е да стимулира балансирано и устойчиво развитие на граничния регион между България и Сърбия, интегриран в европейското пространство - постигнато чрез интелигентен икономически растеж, адаптация към промените в околната среда и подобряване на културата на обучение.

Поканата дава възможност на български и сръбски партньори (бизнес, организации за подкрепа на бизнес, образователни, научни и експертни институции, неправителствени организации и др.) да кандидатстват със съвместни проекти.

Крайният срок за набиране на проектните предложения е 16:00 часа българско време на 18-ти януари 2016 г. на адрес: Министерство на регионалното развитие и благоустройството, ул. "Св. Св. Кирил и Методий, № 17 - 19, зала "Пресцентър", 1202 София, България.

Насоките за кандидатстване, както и всички други приложими документи, могат да бъдат намерени на интернет-страницата на Програмата, [www.ipabc-bgrs.eu](http://www.ipabc-bgrs.eu), както и на следните интернет-страници: [mlf.gov.bg](http://mlf.gov.bg), [www.evropa.gov.rs](http://www.evropa.gov.rs), [www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg).

Конкурс: За туризъм, млади и екологичност 12 милиона евра!

Автор: Ана Јовановиќ, дане: 18.09.2015, из: Друштво, Ударне, Нема коментари

Туризам, млади и заштита животне средине приоритети су за које је Европска унија, преко IPA програма прекограничне сарадње Бугарске и Србије одредила 12 милиона евра. Ово је први јавни позив за пројекте који ће се реализовати у периоду 2014-2020. године. Позив за прикупљање предлога пројеката отворен је до 18. јануара наредне године.

Локалне самоуправе, образовне институције, јавна и приватна предузећа, могу да конкуришу за средства које даје Европска унија, кроз програм прекограничне сарадње за период 2014-2020. године. Први позив је отворен.

Приоритети првог конкурса биће туризам, млади и заштита животне средине. За њих је одређено око 12 милиона евра. До 2020. године биће расписани конкурси за укупно шест програма.

ИПА програм прекограничне сарадње

1. децембар 2015. септембар 2015.

У Градској јуни правноставе је Интеррег ипа програм прекограничне сарадње Србије и Бугарске за период од 2014. до 2020. године. Крајини гранични пројекти до краја Пројекта су даје. Општи циљ Интеррег ипа програма је подстицање узајамног развоја и одрживог развоја пограничних региона између Бугарске и Србије на даље европског простора, који ће бити постигнут кроз планирање економског развоја, поддржавање квалитетних промена и унапређење система образовања. Значајан циљ истраживања за први позив за прикупљање предлога пројеката је нешто више од 12,3 милиона евра.

Овим позивом даје се могућност потенцијалним кандидатима из Бугарске и Србије, да поднесу захтев за пројекат на територији прекограничног региона. За Бугарску то су области Видин, Монтана, Враца, София, Перник, Топлица и др. у Србији су области Борс, Зайчарски, Перлово, Навадино, Топлица, Рибарица.

Позивна област у којој се спроводи ипа програм прекограничне сарадње Бугарске и Србије је позивна област за пројекат од 40.000 евра до 12 милиона евра (јединица у региону Бугарске), и овула у Србији, који представљају ефикавније спроведене територијалне административне јединице. Циљ овог програма је значајно поддржавање развоја пограничних региона Бугарске и Србије, на истраживање истраживања и одрживог развоја кроз економско и социјално сарадње и сарадње у области заштите животне средине и др.



## INFO DAYS AND PARTNER SEARCH FORUM

Promotional campaign under First Call for proposals started with two kick-off events: in Sofia, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, and in Nis, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September. The subsequent campaign included five info days in Bulgaria, four Info days in Serbia, and the Partner Search Forum in Nis. Events were organized in local languages and the goal was to help the potential beneficiaries prepare good quality project proposals.

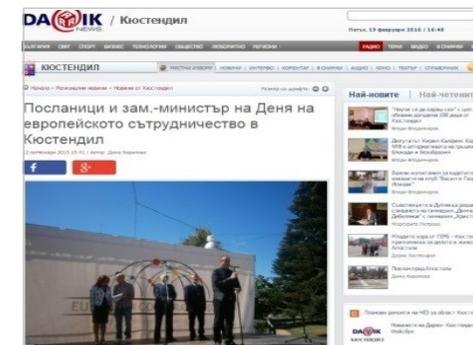
The campaign concluded with the Partner Search Forum on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October in Nis. The forum was one of the most successful events in the series, with more than 160 participants from both countries. The goal of the forum was to give the opportunity to all organizations, that would like to apply with a project proposal under the Programme, but do not have partners, to establish such relations and to realize future partnerships and joint activities. The campaign attracted significant public and media attention, especially at the kick-off events and the forum in Nis, reaching nearly **800 participants in total**.

Around **99% of the participants at the info days gave very positive feedback** regarding the campaign through the **anonymous surveys** organized at each event: **out of the 466** anonymously filled-in surveys at the Info days in Bulgaria, **409 gave the highest rating** for the event quality while 48 gave the satisfactory grade and only 5 "slightly dissatisfied" grades. Not a single participant in the survey excluded the possibility of applying with a project proposal, and most were interested in the "Youth" priority axis.





## MEDIA CAMPAIGN AND COVERAGE



### Press conferences and interviews

There had been 3 press conferences and 2 media interviews in 2015. The press conferences took place during the initial information seminars in Vratsa and Prokuplje, and at the kick-off event in Nis. The press conference in Nis attracted close to 50 journalists. The two interviews took place at the "One direction-many possibilities" Programme fair in Sofia and at the EC Day in Kyustendil. These events resulted in excellent media coverage.

### Media coverage

During 2015, more than 100 external websites have featured information about the Programme. Additionally, numerous local and some of the national TV and radio stations from both countries featured positive information about the Programme. Most of the coverage was related to the First Call for proposals and the Programme events, but some of it was focused on the successful projects as well. The First Call was advertised in 3 national daily newspapers.



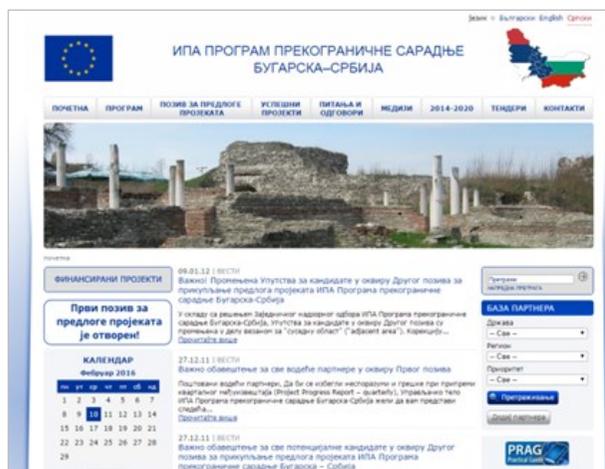
## NEW PROGRAMME WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

[www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu](http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu)

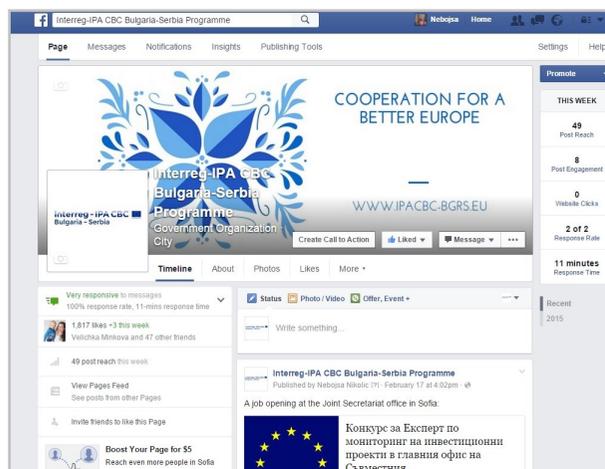
The website was completely redesigned in 2015, featuring modern interactive design, simplified user-friendly interface, and the new visual identity. The website was launched on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. New features include: “Responsive design”, “Featured News”, “Beneficiary portal” (under development), and a variety of “Share” options.

In 2015 there was a significant increase in the number of website visits, totalling 44 570, or approximately 57% increase compared to 2014. The daily peak of the number of visits, 1055, was registered, as expected, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August – the day the First Call was launched.

In order to reach wider audience and ensure transparency on the Programme level, we created two official social media pages: on Facebook and Twitter. The two pages were created on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2015, and have been continuously maintained and promoted. The use of social media for promotion of the Programme has proven to be a very efficient and cost-efficient. The Programme Facebook page attracted **1793 Likes in 2015**.



Old Programme website home page (left) and the new Programme website homepage (right)



Programme page on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bgrsipacbc.eu](http://www.facebook.com/bgrsipacbc.eu); and Twitter: [@ipacbcgrs](https://twitter.com/ipacbcgrs)



## EXTERNAL INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY INITIATIVES

The Programme was promoted in 4 major external initiatives during 2015.

- “One direction—many possibilities” Programme fair was co-organized with other EU funded programmes, and coordinated by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. The fair took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May in Sofia, Bulgaria, and was visited by hundreds of people. JTS Communication Officer represented the Programme and the section devoted to the cross-border Programmes overall, answered the questions from the public and the attending journalists, and distributed Programme promotional materials such as brochures, pens, post-it sets, notebooks and other;
- Meeting of the Regional Council for development of North-West Bulgaria took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June in Varshets, Bulgaria. JTS communication officer took part in the event as a speaker, presenting the basic facts and project funding opportunities in the programming period 2014-2020;
- South-East Europe Economic Forum took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June in Sofia. Head of JTS took part in the event as a speaker, presenting the basic facts and project funding opportunities in the programming period 2014-2020;
- The “25 Years of Interreg” conference took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September in Luxembourg. The high-level international event included an exhibition of large posters, illustrating the stories of the European Territorial Cooperation programmes. JTS communication officer designed a special poster for the occasion, which was printed in A0 format and delivered to the event organizers for the exhibition. Additionally, one of projects implemented under the Bulgaria-Serbia Programme was featured at the event as one of the best project practices on EU level, and was featured as such in the sub-sequent press releases.





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