**Final Evaluation Report I**

# COWI

**Interim Evaluation of Cross-Border Programmes between Candidate/Potential Candidate Country (Intra-Western Balkan Borders) under the Cross-Border Cooperation Component of IPA**

Report I - Governance Structures

**Date: July 2010**

**Final Report**

**26.07.2010**

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# Preface

This interim evaluation covers the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Intra Western Balkan 2007-2013. The total IPA allocation to the eight programmes in the period 2007-2009 is € 37.253.000, and by end of 2010 €18.167.700 should have been contracted.

This report was prepared by COWI A/S during the period from January 2010 to June 2010 and reflects the situation as of 31 April 2009, the cut-off date for the report. The preparation of the report was preceded by an inception phase (January and February 2010). The factual basis of this report is the monitoring reports[1], programme documentation, Financing Agreements, formal programme documentation, strategic and planning documentation and other relevant, published materials. The around 80 interviews and 6 workshops with the main parties involved in the programming and implementation of this assistance took place in the period from February to April 2010.

The report examines the progress of the CBC programme towards the objectives stated in the formal programming documents. It is intended to provide accountability, lessons learned and recommendation for the next calls for proposal and the revision of the programmes to the Commission Services, national CBC authorities, the Joint Monitoring Committee, and the beneficiaries. It draws conclusions and puts forward recommendations and provides judgement on instrument and programme performance. Comments on the draft report were requested from the following parties:

| Parties invited | Comments received |
|---|---|
| European Commission, DG Enlargement, Evaluation Unit (E-4) | |
| European Commission, DG Enlargement, CBC Coordination (D-1) | Yes |
| The European Union Delegations (see Annex 4) | Yes |
| The NIPACs (see Annex 4) | Yes |
| The Operating Structures (OSs) (See Annex 4) | Yes |
| The Joint Technical Secretariats (JTSs)/Antennas (See annex 4) | Yes |
| The Technical Assistance (TA) projects (not included in Annex 4) | Yes |
| The JMCs or JMC members (See Annex 4) | Yes |

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[1] For those programmes, where these reports are available.

# List of Acronyms

| AIR | Annual Implementation Report |
|---|---|
| AL | Albania |
| BiH | Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| CA | Contracting Authority |
| CARDS | Community Assistance to the Countries of South-Eastern Europe |
| CBC | Cross-Border Cooperation |
| CBIB | Cross-Border Institution Building |
| CCI | Cross-cutting Issues |
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| DG-ELARG | Enlargement Directorate-General |
| EC | European Commission |
| EI | European Integration |
| EIB | European Investment Bank |
| EP | European Partnership |
| EU | European Union |
| EUD | European Union Delegation |
| FA | Financing Agreement |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| FRY | Former Republic of Yugoslavia |
| FWC | Framework Contract |
| MK | Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| IPA | Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance |
| JMC | Joint Monitoring Committee |
| JPD | Joint Programming Document |
| JTS | Joint Technical Secretariat |
| HR | Croatia |

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| MIPD | Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document |
|------|-------------------------------------------|
| ME | Montenegro |
| NIPAC | National IPA Coordinator |
| NGO | Non-Government Organisation |
| NUTS | Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics |
| OS | Operating Structure |
| PRAG | Practical guide to contract procedures for EC external actions |
| RS | Serbia |
| SMART | Specific; Measurable; Accepted; Realistic; Timebound |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessments |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats |
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| WB | Western Balkan |

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# Summary

*Evaluation Objectives*

The main objective of this interim evaluation is to provide lessons learned and recommendations for the revision of the current CBC programmes. The revision will take place in 2011 and cover the last two years, 2012-2013, of the current programming period (2007-2013). The evaluation provides input for accountability with respect to the efficiency of the use of financial assistance. The evaluation will focus on the impact and likely impacts produced by the programming and implementation of the CBC programmes.

The evaluation is divided into two parts: the firsts report covering governance structures focus on the CBC programme structures and process. The second will focus on the assistance i.e. the CBC programme content. The scope of the evaluation includes the assessment of the eight IPA CBC programmes Intra Western Balkan (WB) and is focused at the overall instrument level and, where relevant, at the programme or grant scheme level.

*CBC in Western Balkan*

The initiation of CBC programmes on intra-Western Balkan (WB) borders is an important part of the reconciliation process with a European perspective. Due to the civil wars in the 1990s, the strengthening of good neighbourly relations in border areas is a prerequisite for growth and prosperity for the local region as well as for the countries involved. The objectives of the CBC programmes financed under IPA are linked to the reconciliation process as well as the European integration process: helping reconciliation and good neighbourly relations through joint local and regional initiatives; promoting EU integration; preparing future EU members to implement Structural Funds' Territorial Cooperation objective; and, promoting economic and social development of border areas.

*CBC Programme 2007-2009*

Eight intra-Western Balkan CBC programmes have been established to date as listed in the table below. The programmes were approved by the Commission in December 2007 covering initially the period 2007-2009. These programmes have been revised in the last quarter of 2009 to cover the 2010-2011 period, and finally in 2011 to cover the 2012-2013 period[2]. A minor revision was done to all the programmes in 2009 mainly focusing on strengthening the indicators.

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[2] ToR

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| | |
|---|---|
| *EQ 1 Did each programme have clear and sound intervention logic and objectives?* | **Overall there is a link between the needs assessment, the strategy, indicators and the objectives of the eight CBC programmes.** The JPDs for all programmes generally contain a link between the different parts although the strategy could be expanded in order to strengthen the link between the analysis (socio-economic and SWOT) and the priorities. While the SWOT is very comprehensive and covers most areas in relation to the programme aim and scope, the quality of the socio-economic analysis and thereby the basis of the needs assessment should in the future be improved as the current statistical basis is somewhat out of date. It was the opinion of the stakeholders interviewed that the needs assessment and strategy reflected the needs in the cross-border region. Stakeholders acknowledge that the socio-economic analysis was based on outdated statistical data often not collected at NUTS[3] 3 equivalent level. |
| *EQ 2 To what extent have the programmes supported and/or complemented the accession strategy?* | **The pre-accession strategy and objectives are reflected in the objectives of the CBC programming documents.** Overall the CBC programmes reflect the pre-accession strategy. The priorities and measures complement the objectives in the overall accession strategies as well as the individual country European Partnerships and Accession Partnerships. Especially the programmes complement priorities in environmental, economic and regional development, education, SME development, tourism etc. At a more overall level, the CBC programmes have, due to their nature as structural-funds-type programmes, introduced pre-accession on the agenda with local and regional authorities as well as made stakeholders aware that this programme is one of the first possibilities to work on an EU structural funds type programme. |
| *EQ 8 Was the allocation of funds at strategic level based on clear territorial criteria?* | **Areas included in the programmes selected are based on territorial criteria (NUTS III or equivalent).** Only Croatia as Candidate Country has introduced the NUTS system and therefore has NUTS III level regions including the relevant statistical data. For the other countries, the territorial criteria have been equivalents of the NUTS III i.e. counties, regions or lists of municipalities. The data in most of the countries are at national level and/or municipal/district level and is not fully up to date. The overall conclusion is that socio-economic analysis in the CBC programmes probably reflects the situation in the border regions but it is not yet fully based on updated statistics. |
| *EQ 3 To what extent have local and regional authorities/organisation been involved or consulted in the programming and management of the programmes?* | **Consultation processes and structures are in place involving key stakeholders in the programming.** The needs assessment and SWOT were based on extensive consultations with national, regional and local stakeholders at the time of collecting data and drafting the programme. However, no real public consultations were undertaken on the programme documents themselves after finalisation. Except for a few JPDs, these do in general not include a real description of the consultation process undertaken as part of the programming process. A number of stakeholders involved in this process are still active in the programme. However, a large part of the stakeholders interviewed knew little about the programme preparation process. Mostly central government structures are involved in programme management as only few programmes have local and regional representation in the JMCs. |

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[3] Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics.

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|---|---|
| *EQ 6 Could cross-cutting issues concerning gender equality, environmental protection and inclusion of ethnic minorities be better embedded into the new call for proposals?* | **The thematic issues/cross cutting issues were only to a very limited degree directly or indirectly included in the guidance and manuals and addressed in the applications.** Cross-cutting issues are not yet developed to any extent within the IPA CBC programmes and only to limited degree included in the documentation. Furthermore, there is a limited understanding by the stakeholder groups (both potential applicants and programming structure) on what cross-cutting issues are and how to deal with these. There is an emerging awareness among programme structures that the issue has to be addressed as part of the future programming process and revisions, and cross-cutting issues have been included in the indicators in some of the programme revisions. |
| *EQ 4 Was there a process for ensuring that award criteria were established in an appropriate way to deliver programme objectives? Was the grant size in the two main types of grant schemes appropriate?* | **Transparent and documented structures and processes in place for awarding grants secure that programme objectives are addressed.** The award criteria are included in the application packages in a transparent and clear manner. Stakeholders reflected that they had not had problems understanding the criteria. The award criteria were developed as part of the application packages and are the same for all the programmes and approved by the JMCs.

The number of applications shows that the sizes of the grants (varies between measures and programmes) have been appropriate. However, this will have to be further investigated when the spread of the grants is known and a more in-depth analysis can be made of the applications. |
| *EQ 5 Are adequate administrative procedures and organisational structures in place both jointly (e.g. JMC, JTS) and on each side ensuring efficient and effective achievement of the programme and project objectives?* | **The administrative structure that has been established, is delivering on the grant schemes, and provides adequate support to the applicants.** Overall the structures for the management of the programmes have been established and are functioning. However, there are differences both between programmes but especially between how well functioning the different parts of the structures are, in particular the JMCs, which still have to be strengthened. This is the first time that most of the stakeholders are involved in setting up the structures of a programme similar to EU an Structural funds programme. However, the time-lags in the programme implementation are by beneficiary stakeholders seen as a problem. Better management of expectations and communicating to stakeholders that this is the first time and that setting-up the structures and development of capacity time consuming would have supported this understanding. |
| *EQ 9 To what extent have the programmes' preparation and implementation helped enhancing good neighbourly relations between the participating countries and between local populations living in the border area?* | **Stakeholders perceive improved neighbourly relations as a consequence of the programme.** Many stakeholders indicated that the programme will have impact on the neighbourly relations. The overall assessment of most stakeholders groups was that the programme will be very important for future cooperation and is already assisting in re-establishing the old contacts, which existed 20 years ago and were severed due to the conflicts in the region. The large interest in the programme, seen through the number of application received, indicates that the time is ripe for increased cooperation and there is an interest in cooperation across the borders. |

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Objectives, Scope and Methodology

Objectives

1. The main **objective** of this interim evaluation is to provide lessons learned and recommendations for the revision of the CBC programmes, which will take place in 2011 and cover the last two years, 2012-2013, of the current programming period (2007-2013). The evaluation provides input for accountability with respect to the efficiency of the use of financial assistance. The evaluation will focus on the impact and likely impacts produced by the programming and implementation of the CBC programmes in terms of reconciliation, good neighbourly relations, European Union (EU) integration of national, regional, local authorities, economic and social actors, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), civil society and population, as well as the sustainability of the results achieved.

Results

2. The evaluation results in two reports of which the present is the first:

*Report I* concerning **governance structures** focus on the CBC programme structures and process**.** This report should give inputs to the programme authorities for the preparation of the 2nd call for proposals (Guidelines for Applicants), which should be published in September 2010.

*Report II* will **focus on the assistance** i.e. the CBC programme content. It should be ready by the end of the year in order to feed into the revision of the programmes for the 2012-2013 period.

Scope

3. The **scope** of the evaluation includes the assessment of the eight IPA CBC programmes Intra Western Balkan (WB) and is focused at the overall instrument level and, where relevant, at the programme level. No rating of individual programmes will be made, but good practices and examples will be identified and highlighted.

Data collection

4. The factual basis for the evaluation is desk studies of relevant programme documentation such as the annual implementation reports (AIRs) for 2007 and 2008. The implementation reports for 2009 will not be ready until 30 June 2010 and can therefore not be used for this report[4]. Project documentation from TA

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[4] For RS, BiH, MNE and AL narrative interim reports covering most of 2009 have been provided which will substitute as monitoring information for 2009.

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projects, financing agreements, formal programme documentation, strategic and planning documentation and other relevant published materials have also been used. All available requested information has been provided by the stake-holders[5]. As the evaluation of the grant applications has been ongoing and thereby confidential during this first phase of the evaluation, it has not been possible to assess the results of the grant evaluations and the grant applications themselves.

Workshops and in-terviews

5.    Primary data was collected through workshops and interviews with the stakeholders involved in the programming and implementation, and took place in the period from January to April 2010. Interviews were conducted with Commission Services, European Union Delegations (EUDs)/CA, NIPAC, Joint Monitoring Committees (JMCs), OS, JTSs and antennas, participants in train-ing for the programmes and TA Teams.

Validation

6.    The findings of this report have been validated during debriefings with EUDs and the OSs after each of the country missions. During the month of May 2010 a validation process took place where the draft report was forwarded to key stakeholders for comments[6]. The comments are attached in Annex 4.

## 1.2    CBC Programme Context

IPA

7.    Financial assistance under IPA is provided to candidate or potential candi-date countries with a view to EU membership. The objectives and priorities arise from the Enlargement Strategy, the European Partnerships and Accession Partnerships (Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) of each country as well as through the annual progress reports by the Commission. All Western Balkan countries receive IPA Component I and II. Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in addition receive IPA Component III, IV and V as these are already EU candidate countries. The present evalua-tion concerns IPA Component II - Cross-border Cooperation in Western Balkan on intra Western Balkan borders.

IPA CBC

8.    The initiation of CBC programmes on intra-WB borders is an important part of the reconciliation process with a European perspective. Due to the civil wars in ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the strengthening of good neighbourly re-lations in border areas is a prerequisite for growth and prosperity for the local region as well as for the countries involved. The objectives of the CBC pro-grammes financed under IPA are linked to the reconciliation process as well as the European integration process. The main objectives of the CBC programmes financed under IPA are[7]:

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[5] The AIRs for 2009 are not available before ultimo June and two countries do not have interim reports (Croatia and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

[6] The preface includes a list of stakeholders from whom comments were received.

[7] Regulation 1085/2006 and 718/2007 on IPA, Art. 94 IPA Implementing Regulation (and it follows the Structural Funds' Territorial Cooperation approach).

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        − helping reconciliation and good neighbourly relations through <u>joint</u> local and regional initiatives;

        − promoting EU integration;

        − preparing future EU members to implement Structural Funds' Territorial Cooperation objective;

        − promoting economic and social development of border areas.

**CBC Programmes**

9. Eight intra-Western Balkan CBC programmes have been established to date as listed in the table below. The programmes were approved by the Commission in December 2007 with financial tables covering initially the period 2007-2009. These programmes were revised in the last quarter of 2009 to include the 2010-2011 financial appropriations[8] (revised programmes to be adopted by the Commission in mid-2010). Programmes will eventually be revised in 2011 (including possible revisions of strategy, priorities and measures) to cover the 2012-2013 period[9].

*Table 1-1 Intra-Western Balkan IPA CBC Programmes 2007-2009*

| Programme Name | Acronym | Amount |
|---|---|---|
| Albania-Montenegro | AL-ME | 4.253.000 |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina-Montenegro | BIH-ME | 3.300.000 |
| Croatia- Bosnia-Herzegovina | HR-BIH | 6.000.000 |
| Croatia-Montenegro | HR-ME | 2.700.000 |
| Croatia-Serbia | HR-RS | 5.400.000 |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia -Albania | MK-AL | 6.900.000 |
| Serbia-Bosnia-Herzegovina | RS-BIH | 5.400.000 |
| Serbia-Montenegro | RS-ME | 3.300.000 |
| Total IPA-IPA | | 37.253.000 |

**JDP**

10. Each programme is based on a multi-annual cross-border joint programming document (JPD) prepared by the joint management structures set up by the participating countries. The programmes define the eligible areas on both sides of the borders, a socio-economic description of the cooperation areas and the cooperation strategy, priorities and measures to be supported.

**Grant schemes**

11. All CBC programmes are implemented through grant schemes which award grants following joint calls for proposals. The calls for proposals are managed by the joint management structures (Joint Monitoring Committee, etc.) set-up for each CBC programme by the participating countries. The Commission (EC Delegations) is the contracting authority currently in all WB countries, except Croatia where the national authorities have been conferred management powers.

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[88] The revisions also included, for some programmes, a strengthening of the indicators and changes to the adjacent areas

[9] ToR

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Calls for proposals

12.  Calls for proposals covering 2007 and 2008 IPA CBC funds were published during 2009[10]. The selection procedures of the grant applications are currently taking place (spring 2010) and contracting is expected to be completed by the end of 2010. A second round of calls for proposals (to cover 2009 and 2008) is expected to be published in mid 2010[11].

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[10] In the case of CBC Mk- Al the funds for the 2nd CfP are covered by 2007 and 2008 allocations

[11] ToR

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# 2      Findings on the Evaluation Questions

13.  The following chapter contains the findings of the analysis of the first part of the evaluation of the CBC programmes which focuses on governance structures for the CBC programme in Western Balkan. Nine overall evaluation questions were set out in the Terms of Reference for this first part of the evaluation focusing on the overall evaluation criteria relevance and efficiency (to the extent possible). The questions concern the issues of coherence and consistency of the programmes and the socio-economic analysis, on which the needs assessment is made, the priorities chosen and the degree to which the programme supports the overall EU accession strategy. The main part of the findings concentrates on the structures, the set-up to manage the programme and how these have developed. Lastly, there are findings on how the programmes have contributed to good neighbourly relations and cross-cutting issues such as minorities, gender, and sustainable development.

14.  As the evaluation of the first calls for proposals is still ongoing, the final judgements of the questions relating to efficiency will have to be answered in the second report of this evaluation.

## 2.1      Relevance

15.  The questions concerning relevance (EQ 1, 2, 8, 4, 5 - see also Annex 1 for an overview) focus the issues of coherence and consistency of the CBC programme documents (JPDs) and the socio-economic analysis, on which the needs assessment is made, the priorities chosen and the degree to which the programme supports the overall EU accession strategy. The evaluation questions relating to relevance were assessed through document analysis of the CBC programme documents from 2007, the draft revisions prepared (but not yet adopted) in November 2009 as well as through interviews with key stakeholders. The questions were also assessed based on reports from TA available to the programmes[12].

### 2.1.1      Did each programme have clear and sound intervention logic and objectives? (EQ 1)

Consistency of documents

16.  A programme intervention logic consists of a hierarchy of objectives and associated indicators. For the assessment of the intervention logic, we have looked at the programming documents (JPD and Financing Decisions) to assess

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[12] Reports from CBIB and the TA projects to Serbia and BiH.

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if these have an internal logic and if there is consistency in the programming documents between: 1) needs assessments (socio-economic analysis and SWOT); 2) the strategy (with clear objectives and priorities which can be realised with the resources set aside); 3) coherence with other polices (see under 2.1.2 and 2.1.4) and 4) developed indicators[13]. Figure 2-1 outlines the relationships between the different parts of the programme documents. The information has been taken from one of the JPDs, which was subject to a closer analysis. The JPDs are overall very similar in structure and containing identical information, partly due to the common template and the support provided by TA teams. Where difference have been observed this is mentioned in the texts.

**2007 JPDs and 2009 revisions**

17. The programming documents for all eight CBC programmes were drawn up in Spring and Summer of 2007 with support from the regional technical assistance team from Cross-Border Institution Building (CBIB) as well as national technical assistance teams where these were present (Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH)). The programming documents were subject to a limited revision in the fall of 2009. Financial allocations, indicators, name changes, statistics and, in some cases adjustment of programming (adjacent) area were updated. The revised indicators were prepared with the support of the CBIB for four programmes[14]. National TA supported the OS in preparing the revision of the indicator for the programmes RS-BiH and RS-ME. The revisions have not been approved by the EU Commission at the time of writing this report[15].

**Socio-economic analysis and SWOT**

18. An elaborate analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) outlining the key challenges for the programming area is included in all programme documents and summarises the needs assessment based on a socio-economic analysis. The SWOTs, in most programmes, cover a number of areas such as legal & institutional framework, infrastructure, economy, employment, education, environment, culture and tourism. The socio-economic analysis is based on statistics which were available at the time. Many of these are national level statistics as NUTS 3 level statistics did and do not exist in most of the Western Balkan Countries (except Croatia). A key economic indicator such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is included in the analysis for most programmes covering the programming area.

**Strategy**

19. The strategies in the JPDs are in most cases very short, wide and primarily summarise the SWOT and state the objectives. However, they do not in many details explain why certain choices have been made and others not in relation to the socio-economic analysis and SWOT[16]. A large number of needs and issues are identified in the socio-economic analysis and the SWOT, and the strategy is therefore needed in order to choose between these needs in relation to the pro-

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[13] European Commission Draft Working Paper on Ex Ante Evaluation for 2007-2013, October 2005.

[14] CBIB - Cross-Border Institution Building - 2nd Interim Report, November 2009.

[15] Both the original and the revised versions of the Joint Programming Documents have been used for the assessments.

[16] It is not unusual for CBC programmes also in member states to have short strategies.

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gramme. The strategies therefore do not really provide the link or filter between the SWOT and the objectives.

*Figure 2-1*     *Elements of the intervention logic combined with evaluation criteria[17]*



**Needs**

Identified in the socio-economic analysis and articulated in the SWOT including:

large parts of the eligible area marginalized; poor living standards; high unemployment; migration of the skilled workforce to cities and abroad; the economic output same level as in 1991; poor state of the road and rail infras-tructure, obsolete industrial base, unskilled workforce; inadequate waste and sewage disposal, uncontrolled building, destruction of forests and extraction of raw materials.

**Overall objectives**                                                                                                          **Specific Objectives**

To bring together the people, communities and economies of the eligible area to jointly participate in the development of a cooperative area, using its human, natural and economic resources and advantages.

To stimulate the economies and reduce the relative isolation of the eligible area by strengthening joint institutional networks and the capacities of human resources.

Improving the institutional frameworks for SME development in the eligible areas; Development of tourism as a key sector of the border economy;
Promoting cross border trade cooperation and accessibility to markets;
(Re-) Establishing cross border synergies between business and trade support organisations to promote joint cooperative initiatives;
Maintaining the high quality of the environment of the eligible area as an economic resource by cooperating in joint protection and exploitation initiatives;
Strengthening cross-border people-to-people interaction to reinforce cultural and sporting links and to jointly participate in activities of common interest.

**Inputs**

Funding for grant schemes - priority 1 - Social and economic cohesion through actions to improve physical, business, social and institutional infrastructure and capacity.

Funding for programme and grant scheme management - priority 2 Technical Assistance

**Outputs**

P2 - cross border business & tourism cooperation, cross border environmental cooperation , cross border institutional and civic cooperation

P2 - JTS fully staffed and equipped throughout programme, JMC meetings, trainings for JTS staff per year, PCM related training event, events for potential final beneficiaries per year, Each awarded grant project is monitored at least twice throughout its life-time, publicity materials disseminated, events organized, website, newsletters, press articles relevant to the programme per year from 2010 and Mid-term evaluation carried out by end 2011

**(expected) Results**                                                                                                          **Likely Impacts**

P1- Existence of institutional co-operation between, Training in (business, tourism, environment, social, institutional) as a result of individual projects , Businesses are cooperating: People are cooperating

P2- Increased awareness, number of received project applications, Increased quality of project proposals

Institutions perceive benefits of cooperation: Citizens benefit from cooperation: Businesses perceive benefits of cooperation: Jobs created or maintained; Improvement of any economic, social, or environmental indicators

20.  Figure 2-1 outlines the links between the different parts of the programme documents: needs assessment, objectives, input, outputs, results and impacts. (the programme for RS-MNE has been used as an example in the figure).  As can be seen, there is an overall link between the different components of the programme documents, especially between objectives, inputs, and results.

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[17] The information for figure 2-1 has been taken from the RS-MNE programme.

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There is in general little difference between the programme documents (JDPs) of the eight programme, however some programme documents are more detailed in parts as assessed in paragraphs 18-19 and 22-22.

| | |
|---|---|
| Objectives and priorities are clear | 21.  The objectives and the priorities are clear and broad enough to address the issues of the needs assessment. The overall objectives of the eight CBC programmes are similar, focusing on the development of the cross-border region through cooperation in partnerships and networks following the guidelines and regulations provided by the Commission for IPA CBC[18]. The specific objectives focus on cooperation on development of SMEs, tourism, trade, environment, culture and sport. |
| Indicators are SMART | 22.  An initial set of indicators were included in the JPD submitted in the fall of 2007. These indicators were in general not very developed and primarily related to the performance of the technical assistance grant. The initial indicators were relatively weak and not useful for monitoring progress on the programmes. The indicators were revised for most of the programmes (except those involving Croatia, which were already more developed in the original versions) in the fall of 2009. The new sets of indicators include result and output indicators measuring whether the grant schemes and grant project are delivering. The type of indicators and the formulation are in line with indicators used for CBC programmes in the member states and focused on the development of cooperation (networks etc.) in line with the objectives. The indicators include targets, timeframe as well as sources of verification in e.g. RS-BiH programme document but not in the HR-BiH programme document. Some programmes as e.g. BiH-ME also included baselines, set a "0", which is common for this type of CBC indicators. |
| Summary of findings and assessment | 23.  **Overall there is a link between the needs assessment, the strategy, indicators and the objectives of the eight CBC programmes.**  The JPDs for all programmes generally contain a link between the different parts although the strategy could be strengthened in order to ensure the link between the analysis (socio-economic and SWOT) and the priorities. The SWOT is very comprehensive and covers most areas in relation to the programme aim and scope. The quality of the socio-economic analysis and thereby the basis of the needs assessment should in the future be improved as the current statistical basis is somewhat out of date. No significant difference was observed in the programmes apart from difference in availability of data for the socio-economic analysis. The upgrading of the indicators which has been done in the revision has improved the quality of the JPDs as well as established a real basis for monitoring. It was the opinion of the stakeholders interviewed that the needs assessment and strategy reflected the needs in the cross-border region. Although many stakeholders acknowledge that the socio-economic analysis was based on outdated statistical data often not collected at NUTS[19] 3 equivalent |

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[18] IPA Implementing Regulations 718/2007 title II.

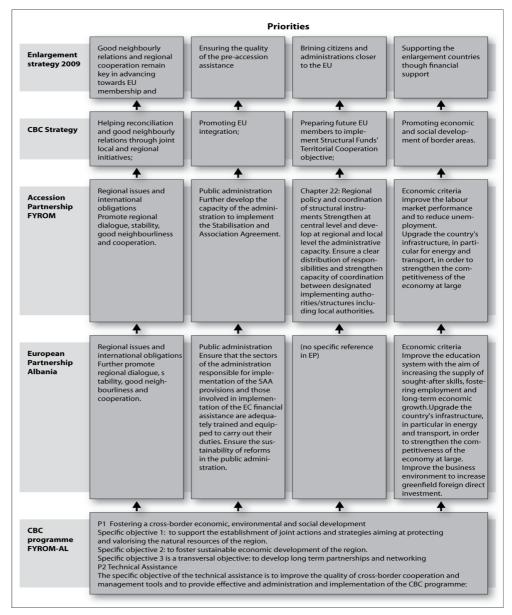[19] Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics.

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level[20]. There were relatively few who saw the need for substantial revision of the programming documents.

### 2.1.2 To what extent have the programmes supported and/or complemented the accession strategy? (EQ 2)

24. This question was assessed based on document analysis of strategic and programme objectives as well as interviews with stakeholders concerning their perception of the extent to which the programmes have contributed to EU accession and the EU accession strategy.

*Table 2-1. Links between the pre-accession strategies and the programme priorities*

| | **Priorities** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Enlargement strategy 2009** | Good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation remain key in advancing towards EU membership and | Ensuring the quality of the pre-accession assistance | Brining citizens and administrations closer to the EU | Supporting the enlargement countries though financial support |
| **CBC Strategy** | Helping reconciliation and good neighbourly relations through joint local and regional initiatives; | Promoting EU integration; | Preparing future EU members to implement Structural Funds' Territorial Cooperation objective; | Promoting economic and social development of border areas. |
| **Accession Partnership FYROM** | Regional issues and international obligations Promote regional dialogue, stability, good neighbourliness and cooperation. | Public administration Further develop the capacity of the administration to implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. | Chapter 22: Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments Strengthen at central level and develop at regional and local level the administrative capacity. Ensure a clear distribution of responsibilities and strengthen capacity of coordination between designated implementing authorities/structures including local authorities. | Economic criteria improve the labour market performance and to reduce unemployment. Upgrade the country's infrastructure, in particular for energy and transport, in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the economy at large |
| **European Partnership Albania** | Regional issues and international obligations Further promote regional dialogue, s tability, good neigh- bourliness and cooperation. | Public administration Ensure that the sectors of the administration responsible for imple- mentation of the SAA provisions and those involved in implemen- tation of the EC financial assistance are adequa- tely trained and equip- ped to carry out their duties. Ensure the sus- tainability of reforms in the public admini- stration. | (no specific reference in EP) | Economic criteria Improve the education system with the aim of increasing the supply of sought-after skills, foste- ring employment and long-term economic growth.Upgrade the country's infrastructure, in particular in energy and transport, in order to strengthen the com- petitiveness of the economy at large. Improve the business environment to increase greenfield foreign direct investment. |
| **CBC programme FYROM-AL** | P1 Fostering a cross-border economic, environmental and social development Specific objective 1: to support the establishment of joint actions and strategies aiming at protecting and valorising the natural resources of the region. Specific objective 2: to foster sustainable economic development of the region. Specific objective 3 is a transversal objective: to develop long term partnerships and networking P2 Technical Assistance The specific objective of the technical assistance is to improve the quality of cross-border cooperation and management tools and to provide effective and administration and implementation of the CBC programme: | | | |

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[20] In 2009 CBP RS-MNE JPD revision statistical data was updated and collected at NUTS III equivalent level for Serbia. For Montenegro official statistical data at NUTS III equiva- lent level does not exist yet.

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25.  Many stakeholders, at all levels, saw the CBC programme as a precursor
for structural funds and thereby EU accession. It was clear to stakeholders that
the elaborate structures and requirements were important in the preparation for
structural funds and they were therefore overall accepted and appreciated. Even
though many stakeholders were concerned about the use of the English lan-
guage, they nevertheless saw this as part of the preparation for EU and there-
fore also something that potential applicants were prepared to invest in. The
realisation that programmes like CBC are precursors for EU structural funds is
not fully appreciated by all stakeholders in some of the countries in e.g. Bosnia-
Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. With regard to
the latter this was in particular the case amongst potential applicants.

*Table 2-2. Outputs contributing to the overall objectives of pre-accession Strategies[21]*

| Document | Outputs/Priorities | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Albania EP** | **Short and medium term priorities**<br>• Strengthen administrative capacity and coordination at national and local level.<br>• Further develop and implement the national water and sanitation strategy and the rural strategy for water supply and sewerage and develop and start implementing a strategy for progressive approximation to the *acquis* in the area of water supply and sanitation.<br>• Establish a full inventory of hot spots and continue efforts to address hot spots already identified.<br>• Strengthen environmental monitoring and ensure sufficiently dissuasive sanctions against polluters.<br>• Continue to implement regional and international environmental commitments. | | | | |
| **Montenegro EP** | **Short and medium term**<br>• Develop an overall environment protection strategy (water, waste, air).<br>• Adopt the Land Use Plan; adopt the Sustainable Development Strategy and sectoral strategies (integrated coastal zone management, biodiversity, climate change).<br>• Strengthen environmental management administrative capacity.<br>• Ensure a viable financial framework for implementing a mid- to long-term environmental protection policy.<br>• Continue strengthening the administrative capacity of ministries and bodies in charge of environmental planning, permitting, inspecting, enforcement and monitoring, as well as project management. | | | | |
| **Outputs of the CBC Programme Albania-Montenegro**<br><br>**Promotion of regional cohesion and competitive-ness through an approach that integrates eco-nomic, environ-mental, cultural and social devel-opment** | Joint initiatives for the protec-tion of natural resources, their protection and improvement of environ-mental man-agement im-plemented | Initiatives de-signed to deal jointly with pollution in the cross-border region and to reduce negative effects on the environment and encourag-ing environ-mentally-friendly eco-nomic activities | Initiatives sup-porting im-provements of waste water and solid waste disposal sys-tems | Initiatives for supporting integrated protection and management of sensitive eco-systems and good use of surface waters, giving priority to the protec-tion of Shkodra/Skadar Lake basin | Joint initiatives for awareness raising and provision of information on environment and cultural heritage pro-tection aimed at the popula-tion of the border region |

Priorities reflect the
pre-accession strat-
egy

26.  As all of the CBC programmes, in the choice of priories, follow the regula-
tions, there is a clear link between the accession strategies, the MIPD and the
JPDs. Funds are in general allocated to priorities which support the pre-
accession strategy. The figure above (Table 2-1) outlines the objectives and

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[21] Information used for this table has been taken from the CBC Programme Albania-
Montenegro and the European Partnerships for Albania and Montenegro.

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priorities in one of the eight programmes. As can be seen from the example[22] the objectives focus on priorities which can be found in the overall strategies and they address issues in which efforts need to be made. Except for the preparation for structural funds the CBC programme objectives and priorities can be re-found in all strategic documents and programming documents. The preparation for structural funds is not mentioned in the European Partnerships for Albania but it is present in the Accession Partnerships for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

| | |
|---|---|
| Outputs are assessed to contribute to the overall objectives of the pre-accession strategy | 27. The outputs of the grants schemes are overall expected to contribute to the pre-accession. The calls are designed to support concrete activities which at the specific level will support the pre-accession objectives in particular in environment, economic development, etc. The programmes support the promotion of cooperation between actors on both sides of the border working together on preparing one application for a common project. The table above (Table 2-2) provides an example from one of the programmes of the types of outputs and results that are expected from the programmes. The example shows that the intended output and results will contribute to the accession of Albania and Montenegro by complementing the European Partnerships on environment. |
| Summary of findings and assessment | 28. **The pre-accession strategy and objectives are reflected in the objectives of the CBC programming documents.** Overall the CBC programmes reflect the pre-accession strategy. The priorities and measures complement the objectives in the overall accession strategies as well as the individual country European Partnerships and Accession Partnerships. Especially the programmes complement priories in environmental, economic and regional development, education, SME development, tourism etc. At a more overall level, the CBC programmes have, due to their nature as structural-funds-type programmes, inserted pre-accession on the agenda with local and regional authorities as well as made stakeholders aware that this programme is one of the first possibilities to work on an EU structural funds type programme (Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are through other IPA components more exposed to structural fund type programmes). This was apparent from interviews with most types of stakeholders in most countries and programmes. |

### 2.1.3 Was the allocation of funds at strategic level based on clear territorial criteria? (EQ 8)

29. The eligible areas were established in the programme documents as part of the negotiation between the two countries involved. Support was provided by the CBIB and other TA for determining the equivalent territorial units and developing the actual maps of the eligible area which are now included in the programme documents[23].

30. All JDPs include a chapter on links to other national and EU programmes. These chapters outline that the programme is not overlapping, but complemen-

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[22] The information for the figure (Table 2-1) is taken from the MK-AL programme.

[23] CBIB - Cross-Border Institution Building I. Final Report October 2008.

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tary to the other national and EU programmes and that the programmes have been developed and complies with national strategies. There are however in most case rather limited information on this complementary and how the focus and emphasis of these programmes might have influence the choice of eligible areas as well as measures in the CBC programmes.

NUTS III or equivalent criteria were used for allocation of funds

31.  Only Croatia as Candidate Country has introduced the NUTS system and therefore has NUTS III level. For the other countries the territorial criteria used have been equivalent of the NUTS III either by listing counties equivalent to NUTS III (Serbia), statistical regions (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), regions equivalent to NUTS III with a list of municipalities (Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina) or list municipalities within an area corresponding to NUTS III (Montenegro).

32.  Adjacent regions according to the Article 97 of the IPA Implementation Regulation have also been included in some of the programmes. All of these programmes provide detailed explanation of why the adjacent areas have been included.  No revisions were made to the eligible areas as part of the 2009 programme revision however, in some programme additional adjacent areas were included for HR-BiH, BiH-ME and RS-ME. In the programmes involving Bosnia-Herzegovina the denominations of the regions were changed due to internal discussions on the regions.

The socio-economic analysis is focused on the border region reflecting the needs of the common border region

33.  Based on the selected eligible areas, the data collection (qualitative and quantitative) was done for the SWOT and the situation analysis. Qualitative data were collected using a questionnaire already developed for CBC programmes in Serbia. All quantitative data were collected using official statistics from national and local authorities. Geographically relevant strategic documents and plans were also used in the data collection phase[24].

34.  There is some difference between programmes in the manner in which the statistical data is presented as well as the statistical data. Some programmes (MK-AL) have only a few key data for the eligible area. Other programmes have included more, either in statistical data inserted in the text or in statistical annexes (BiH-ME, AL-ME and HR-BiH). For some indicators, the statistics used is from 2001 or 2003 and/or has not been collected at NUTS III or lower level, but at national level (Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina). Some analytical findings have limited statistical basis (RS-BIH and RS-ME) and in some of the JPD the statistical data is missing reference years (AL-ME). The key issue is whether the statistics and thereby the analysis fully cover the territorial areas i.e. the border region. The latter is probably mostly the case for Croatia as it has established NUTS III and provides data for many of the indicators at NUTS III level.

35.  This first intra Western Balkan CBC programmes covers very large parts of the Western Balkan so it is difficult to identify typical 'border region needs' except for cooperating across borders etc. Looking at the objectives of the programmes these definitely reflect the wish to cooperate across the borders. But

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[24] CBIB - Cross-Border Institution Building - Final Report October 2008.

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seen from the socio-economic perspective, it is almost impossible to talk about border needs as the eight programmes together covers most of the region.

Summary of findings and assessments

36. **Areas included in the programmes selected are based on territorial criteria (NUTS III or equivalent).** Only Croatia as Candidate Country has introduced the NUTS system and therefore has NUTS III level regions including the relevant statistical data. For the other countries, the territorial criteria have been equivalents of the NUTS III i.e. counties, regions or lists of municipalities. The data in most of the countries are at national level and/or municipal/district level and is not fully up to date. The overall conclusion is that socio-economic analysis in the CBC programmes probably reflects the situation in the border regions but it is not yet fully based on updated statistics.

### 2.1.4 To what extent have local and regional authorities/ organisations been involved or consulted in the programming and management[25] of the programmes? (EQ 3)

37. This question was assessed based on the JPDs, the reporting of the CBIB, the AIR from 2007-2008 and the interviews and workshops.

38. The programming documents for all eight CBC programmes were prepared during Spring and Summer of 2007 by the programming committees set up for this purpose. The process lasted maximum 6 months which is very fast compared to processes in similar programmes in member states which can last up to 18 months including the ex ante evaluations[26]. It is noted that an ex ante evaluations were not undertaken for the programmes. The Commission considered in the light of 141 IPA Implementing Regulations that an ex-ante evaluation for these CBC programmes was not required. Support for the programming process was provided by the regional TA team from CBIB and in some cases also from the national TA teams (Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Involvement of key recipient stakeholders in needs assessments and programming

39. The data collection and SWOT process involved a number of stakeholder groups. Interviews were conducted with all types of stakeholders in the eligible regions prior to making the SWOT. Stakeholders included municipalities, civil society organisations, chambers of commerce, and business communities[27]. More than 400 interviews were conducted in the five countries (Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) assisted by experts from the CBIB. In Croatia the data collection was conducted with the assistance of the national TA team[28]. In most of the eligible areas it was the first time that a programming process included a large number of local and regional stakeholders (Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania) and

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[25] This part of the question is answered in Paragraph 64.

[26] Other programming process of new programmes such as e.g. the South Baltic IVA Programme took minimum 12 months. And this programme cover regions with experience in CBC although the programme itself is new.

[27] CBIB - Cross-Border Institution Building - Final Report October 2008

[28] CBIB - Cross-Border Institution Building - Final Report October 2008

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in for example Montenegro the association of municipalities was the key representatives of the local levels due to lack of capacity with local authorities.

40. Few of the programming documents have an explicit and elaborate explanation of the consultation processes neither do the Annual Implementation Reports. Only the programmes HR-ME and HR-RS include an explanation of the consultation process where types of stakeholders are listed according to the events in which these took part.

**Initiatives to involved civil society in the planning**

41. Civil society groups were involved, as can be seen above (Paragraph 38), in the same manner as all the other stakeholder groups in the data collection and SWOT phase of the programming. No particular or separate initiatives to involve civil society were undertaken.

**Public consultation conducted**

42. Public consultations in terms of publishing the programme document and receiving comments and incorporating these as well as public hearings on the document were not carried out after the drafting of the JPDs for any of the programmes. Only in the MK-AL programme a final workshop on the draft document was conducted with participation of 80 potential beneficiaries[29] in Kicevo in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

**Summary of findings and assessment**

43. **Consultation processes and structures are in place involving key stakeholders in the programming.** The needs assessment and SWOT were based on extensive consultations with national, regional and local stakeholders at the time of collecting data and drafting the programme. However, no real public consultations were undertaken on the programme documents themselves after finalisation. Except for a few JPDs, these do in general not include a real description of the consultation process undertaken as part of the programming process. A number of stakeholders involved in this process are still active in the programme. However, a large part of the stakeholders interviewed knew little about the programme preparation process. Mostly central government structures are involved in programme management as only few programmes have local and regional representation in the JMCs.

### 2.1.5 Could cross-cutting issues concerning gender equality, environmental protection and inclusion of ethnic minorities be better embedded into the new call for proposals? (EQ 6)

44. The MIPDs for all the countries include a thorough listing of the five horizontal objectives which should be included in all activities of IPA[30]. These objectives are outlined in the Box 2-1 below. The IPA implementing regulations mention in general anti discrimination as a common provision. There is however almost no mentioning of cross-cutting issues as cross-cutting issue in any of the other documentation related to the programmes, although the cross-border issue appear in some of the JPDs as criteria.

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[29] Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013 MK-AL.

[30] Annex 4 of the MIPDs

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Specific inclusion of cross-cutting issues in programming documents and application packages

45. Some of the cross-cutting issues are themes in the measures and priorities but not applied as cross-cutting issues. The awareness and understanding of the stakeholders of the issues as cross-cutting issues in general is low and has not been addressed as part of the programming, training and awareness and calls for proposals. The JPDs in general do not refer to cross-cutting issues except for some which have included this in the indicators as part of the revision (RS-BiH, BiH-ME, HR-ME, and RS-ME, AL-ME). Only two programmes include a specific mentioning of the cross-cutting issues in the JPD i.e. CBC Programme HR-ME and MK-AL (but not in the indicators). The Financing Agreements (FAs) mention under the horizontal issues that the applications should inter alia fulfil the criteria of gender equality/mainstreaming, inclusion of minorities and sustainability.

*Box 2-1        Cross-cutting issues/Horizontal objectives[31]*

The major cross cutting issues to be reflected as horizontal objectives in all activities programmed under IPA in Serbia are:

– **Civil society** plays a major role in transition societies. Ensuring those groups' concerns are taken into account in the European development agenda and enhancing their policy dialogue with the administration and Serbia's institutions will be aspects mainstreamed within the assistance programmes. The justified balance will be kept between Western Balkans' regional activities for civil society and specific activities in Serbia under IPA programmes.

– **Environmental considerations** will be duly reflected in all IPA financed activities in addition to specific actions dedicated to environment in coherence with the European Principles for Environment, in particular as concerns environmental impact assessments. This is particularly relevant where there is a potentially high environmental impact, such as co financing of investments, new legislation, etc.

– **Equal opportunities, equality between women and men and non-discrimination** will be respected as regarding gender as well as minorities and disadvantaged people, at the programming and implementation stage, particularly in relation to socio-economic support programmes.

– **Minority and vulnerable groups' concerns** (including the rights of the child[32], disabled persons and elderly people) **and social inclusion** will be reflected when relevant in the activities programmed under IPA, in particular when it concerns public services, legislative matters and socio-economic development, and also to foster social tolerance, multicultural coexistence and conditions to reconciliation.

– **Good governance** will be fostered through introduction of monitoring, evaluation and control mechanisms, and through awareness campaigns involving wider public as a way to contribute to the **fight against corruption** and to enhance civic responsibility.

Cross-cutting issues are a part of the evaluation criteria

46. The cross-cutting issues are mentioned in the guidelines for applicants (slightly different in MK-AL and BIH-ME) as part of the evaluation criteria under the relevance criteria. There is however no explanation on how these are to be understood or inserted in the application form. And in the application guidelines (except for MK-AL and BiH-ME) there is no reference to that these are cross-cutting and how these may be different from the other criteria.

*Table 2-3. Overview of the way in which cross-cutting issues/horizontal objectives have been included*

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[31] The information for the box is taken from the MIPD for Serbia 2009-2010.

[32] Communication from the Commission: Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child [COM(2006)367 of 4.7.2006] and Serbian National Plan of Action for Children.

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| Document | Treatment of Cross-cutting/horizontal objectives |
|---|---|
| IPA regulations | Common provisions on non discrimination. |
| Multi-annual indicative planning document[33] | Annex 4 includes a thorough listing of cross-cutting issues (no other reference to cross cutting issues or horizontal objectives in the document) . |
| JPD Revision | Included in some of the programmes as part of the indicators (BiH-ME, RS-BiH) but no further explanation. HR-ME has also further explanation. |
| JPD Original | Included in the MK-AL (but not correctly and only sustainability and minorities). |
| Financing agreements[34] | (section 2.5 of Annex 1 to the FA) Horizontal issues including gender, minorities and sustainability. |
| Application Packages (guidelines and application from) | Included in some guidelines under specific added-value elements, such as promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities - no further explanation is included. |

Guidance in the manual/application packages

47.  Explanations in the manual/application packages on how to address cross-cutting issues in the application are not included in any of the guidelines. Neither in terms of what cross-cutting issues are nor on how to use and assess whether the project is addressing or should address the cross-cutting issues. Whether guidance on how to deal with cross-cutting issues during project implementation has been included in the project implementation manuals/instructions will only be addressed in the second part of the evaluation when we will look at measures put in place for grant project implementation.

Good Practices

48.  In Serbia, the national TA team has provided training on cross-cutting issues in order to introduce the concept and familiarise programme stakeholders with how to deal with cross-cutting issues.

Summary of findings and assessment

49.  **The thematic issues/cross cutting issues were only to a very limited degree directly or indirectly included in the guidance and manuals and addressed in the applications.** Cross-cutting issues are not yet developed to any extent within the IPA CBC programmes. These are only to a very limited degree included in the documentation and generally without any explanation. Furthermore, there is a limited understanding by the stakeholder groups (both potential applicants and programming structure) on what cross-cutting issues are and how to deal with these. There is an emerging awareness among programme structures that the issue has to be addressed as part of the future programming process and revisions. Likewise, cross-cutting issues have been included in the indicators in some of the programme revisions.

## 2.2    Efficiency

50.  The evaluation questions (EQ 4, 5, 9 - see also Annex 1 for an overview) relating to efficiency, focus on how the structures and process for the IPA CBC programmes have been set-up and developed. The largest part of the findings concentrates on the structures established and developed to manage the CBC

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[33] MIPD for Serbia 2007-2010.
[34] Financing Agreements for CBC Programme CRO-RS.

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programmes. The last evaluation question, under efficiency, assesses to what extent the CBC programmes have contributed to good neighbourly relations.

51.   As the evaluation of the first calls for proposal is still ongoing some of the questions in relation to efficiency will have to be finally answered in the second report of this evaluation.

52.   The evaluation questions were mainly assessed through interviews with stakeholders. A number of documents were also analysed such as the CBC programme documents from 2007, and the draft revisions prepared (but not yet adopted) in November 2009. As monitoring information, the AIRs for 2007 and 2008 were used and for those countries where an interim report on the grants were available this has also been used[35]. Reports from TA available to the programmes provided detailed information on the process and progress[36].

### 2.2.1   Was there a process for ensuring that award criteria were established in an appropriate way to deliver programme objectives? Was the grant size in the two main types of grant schemes appropriate? (EQ 4)

53.   This evaluation question was assessed based on analysis of application packages and interviews with stakeholders.

Availability of manuals

54.   As part of the preparation for the first calls for proposals an application package was developed including guidelines for applicants and an application form. The application packages were drafted in the fall of 2008 and based on the format in the Practical guide to contract procedures for EC external actions (PRAG). The financial agreements set out that the programme should use the PRAG where appropriate. As the PRAG was revised at the end of 2008, a new version of the application packages was adapted accordingly during the first months of 2009. The application packages were prepared by the OSs, and later the JTSs (after these were established), and the evaluation criteria based on the programming documents and subsequently approved by the JMCs either through written procedures or at JMC meetings[37].

Criteria linked to programme objectives

55.   The programme objectives are set out and detailed in the application package guidelines as are the measures and the types of actions which will be supported. The evaluation grids include criteria stating that the projects have to correspond to these objectives.  It is clearly explained that the projects have to correspond to one of the measures and that the actions should relate to the objectives of the programme as stated in the guidelines. An indicative (non-exhaustive) list of actions has been provided for each measure. There is no explicit mentioning of the programme document (JPDs) and although links are provided to the web-pages of the programmes or the OSs, only few potential applicants have read the JPDs. Potential applicants use the application package

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[35] Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania.

[36] CBIB, EUCORIN and TA to CBC Serbia.

[37] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

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guidelines and have generally only read these. A final assessment of this will be pending the interviews with applicants, which will be made in connection with Report II.

**Inclusion of award criteria in application packages**

56. The guidelines for applicants clearly explains the difference between the selection criteria which evaluate the applicant's financial and operation capacity and the award criteria which cover relevance, consistency with objectives of the calls for proposal, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness. An evaluation grid is presented with the evaluation questions which also links the question to the application form as well as the score which can be given to the criteria. In general, potential applicants confirmed that they had understood the award criteria and how these would be evaluated. However, a real assessment of this can only be done in Report II following an assessment of the application forms and interviews with the applicants.

**Number and total amount of application in relation to amount of programme**

57. The preliminary results of the first calls are outlined below in the table. A total of 493 applications have been submitted totalling a request of 102 MEURO (without AL-ME and MK-AL). 18 MEURO are available for the first calls. How many and which projects will be selected is still on-going and will have to be addressed in Report II. Also the amount of applications rejected due to formal mistakes[38] is unknown (to the evaluator) as is the quality of the proposals.

*Table 2-3    Overview of the results of the First CfP[39]*

| Programme | Programme Amount (2000–2009) | Amount for First CfP | Number of Applications | Total amount applied for |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AL-ME | 4.253.000 | 1 307 700 (2007 funds) | 26 | |
| BIH-ME | 3.300.000 | 1 980 000 (2007 & 2008 funds) | 38 | 9 868 914 |
| HR-BIH | 6.000.000 | 3 600 000 (2007 & 2008 funds) | 104 | 26 158 164 |
| HR-ME | 2.700.000 | 1 620 000 (2007 & 2008 funds) | 24 | 6 827 406 |
| HR-RS | 5.400.000 | 3 240 000 (2007 & 2008 funds) | 111 | 25 229 531 |
| MK-AL | 6.900.000 | 1 200 000 (2007 funds, partially) | 60 | 3.912.493[40] |
| RS-BIH | 5.400.000 | 3 240 000 (2007 & 2008 funds) | 74 | 16 970 851 |
| RS-ME | 3.300.000 | 1 980 000 (2007 & 2008 funds) | 57 | 8 680 367 |
| **Total** | **37.253.000** | **18.167.700** | **493** | **93.735.233** (without AL–ME and MK–AL) |

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[38] The proceedings for the JSC were at the time of the data collection confidential information and not made available to the evaluators.

[39] Assessment of the first calls for proposals IPA-IPA countries (CBIB) and presentations at the 3rd Regional Forum.

[40] Figures provided by EUD Tirana

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Grant size

58. As mentioned above, the CBC programme grant schemes have for the first calls for proposals received a considerable number of applications in relation to the amount available. Pre-judging the evaluation of the applications and the quality, there is an indication that both the content of the programmes and grant schemes as well as the size of the grants has been appropriate. Grant sizes are set at €50.000-200.000 for the large measures in all programmes and at 15.000-50.000 in the people-to-people actions[41]. Interviews reveal that there were large differences in perception between potential applications with regard to grant size. Some found the grant size appropriate and others found the grants too small but no stakeholder found grant size inappropriately large[42]. This finding is likely to reflect the experience and capacity of the potential applicant organisations.

59. Interviews with stakeholders and in particular interviews with potential applicants and regional and municipal authorities reveal that part of the larger interest may also be linked to that in most countries in the WB, the CBC programmes are the only funds available to local level actors. Some of the applicant may therefore not reflect a genuine interest in cross-border cooperation (RS, BiH, AL). In general, stakeholders have observed that less developed regions seemed to have submitted fewer proposals than the more developed regions[43]. Also remaining sensitivities owing to the conflicts in the past was mentioned as a reason for limited applications in some programmes. However the number of applications is considerable considering the available budget. Seven out of eight programmes had anticipating the interest and combined the funds for two years to ensure that a larger budget was available for the calls.

Summary of findings and assessment

60. Transparent and documented structures and process in place for awarding grants securing that programme objectives are addressed. The awarded criteria are included in the application packages in a transparent and clear manner. Stakeholders reflected that they had not had problems understanding the criteria. The award criteria were developed as part of the application packages and are the same for all the programmes and approved by the JMCs.

61. **The grant size reflects the implementation capacity of both the implementation structures and the applicants.** As the grants have not been awarded it is not yet possible to assess the size of the grant. In general there have been many applications for the programmes although this varies considerably from programme to programme. The number of applications hints that the size has been appropriate, but this will have to be further investigated when the spread of the grants is known.

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[41] The grant sizes are not the same in all CBC programme documents - the figures included above are the lowest and highest.

[42] This was underlined by stakeholders in Bosnia-Herzegovina

[43] The needs to be confirmed in the second part of the evaluation.

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### 2.2.2 Are adequate administrative procedures and organisational structures in place both jointly (e.g. JMC, JTS) and on each side (NIPAC, Operating Structures, EU Delegation) ensuring efficient and effective achievement of the programme and project objectives? (EQ 5)

62. This question has been assessed by document analysis of JTS manuals, AIRs, interim reports and reports by TA projects. A major part of this assessment has been done via interviews with OS, JTS, JMC, CA and other stakeholders. The assessment of the structure by applicants and project holders will be done as part of the second report. The question has three sections: programme implementing structures, awareness raising and capacity building of stakeholders.

63. The findings concentrate on the establishment and functioning of the programme implementation structures: JMC (JTS), OS, and JTS/antenna. It is important to keep in mind that at this point in time, the programme implementation structures have almost completed the first calls for proposals. The tasks and responsibilities related to these calls can therefore be assessed. However, as the results of the calls are not known (except for the quantity) the real efficiency of the structure will be the subject of the second report of this evaluation. Furthermore all the tasks and capacities relating to implementation of the grants i.e. supporting the project holders with the secondary procurement and monitoring of the grant projects has not begun yet and capacity in connection with these tasks still have to be developed.

**Programme Implementation structures**

Capacity of JMC has been developed (increased)

64. The **Joint Monitoring Committees** are responsible for overall management and monitoring the programmes. JMC has been established for all programmes and have adopted their rules and procedures. The JMC members generally come from various central government ministries as well as associations of municipalities or regions. Some programmes also have regional and some local government members. The latter has given rise to discussions concerning whether these regions or municipalities could then also be applicants. In some programmes, JMC members have resigned as they were informed that could not apply[44]. It is, however, clear from the regulations that there have to be regional and local members in the JMC in order to respect the partnership provision in the IPA regulations[45]. This is normally one of the reasons why the evaluations of grants are delegated to Joint Steering Committees. The JMCs for the programmes MK-AL, AL-ME, have local regional representatives from the eligible area, whereas HR-RS, RS-BIH and RS-ME (for Serbia and BIH only) have representatives from autonomous regions or entities, but no local levels. The other programmes have no regional representatives in the JMC while local level is represented through representative of national associations of municipalities in JMC.

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[44] Programmes involving Montenegro.
[45] IPA Regulation 718/2007 article 87.

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65. Common for all JMCs is that they have only met two to three times and that there have been cases where not enough JMC members appeared and therefore not providing quorum (AL-ME). A majority of the decisions of the JMCs in most programmes are made by written procedures[46] where documents for decision are sent to the JMC for comments within e.g. 5 days[47].

**Stakeholders' assessment of the structures for implementation**

66. The following issues were identified:

- There is a general problem concerning the level of the JMC members and their interest in the programme. Often members do not have time to read the documents and follow the programme progress either due to other obligations or that these are senior level representatives (e.g. BiH, AL). On the other hand low levels of participants (not senior officials) often result in problems with mandates of the representative in relation to taking decisions and voting in the JMCs (e.g. HR, RS). Regional and local representatives, where these exits, are more interested and engaged than central government or institutional participants (AL, BiH, RS). High turnover in the JMCs, i.e. replacement of members with other staff from the same organisation, is also an issue, resulting in a low level of participation and commitment (e.g. HR, RS and ME).

- In some of the programmes, stakeholders have expressed concern that the JMC members do not have clear instructions and guidelines from their institutions (HR, BiH, RS, AL). That membership of the JMCs is not seen as prestigious may also reflect the fact that the political level in some cases is not taking the programmes serious (BiH, AL, RS, MK). Some stakeholders have pointed to the fact that the programme amounts are small (in comparison with IPA Component I) which may limit the political interest and focus.

- JMC members know too little about the programmes, have problems understanding their roles and have not received (or been there to receive) information and training (HR, RS, BiH, MK). Many of the JMC members interviewed had not read the JPD documents either. There are cases where training has been offered to the JMC members but where few have accepted and participated in the training. This was the case in BiH and former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, whereas 50% of the JMC members in Montenegro had participated. Pre-meetings were organised in some countries (BiH, ME, RS) in order to prepare the JMC members for the meetings. Such meetings were considered very helpful by JMC members (ME) but some of these pre-meetings experienced low attendance (BiH).

- Because a substantial part of the decisions are made through written procedures, the JMC members feel "set aside" and lose interest. The amount of

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[46] In the case of CBC MK-Al most of the decisions were first discussed at the JMC meetings and then, once comments were integrated, circulated to the JMC members for approval through a written procedure.

[47] This time frame for comment is different in the different programmes.

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documents in written procedure is perceived as large and the size of documents as overwhelming.

- There is also a problem of English language proficiency with a number of JMC members (in most programmes). As all the documentation is in English this creates a barrier in relation to the written procedure (which is in English) as well as for the meetings in English.

- There are no real links or contact between the members across the borders - they do not know each other and meet so seldom that the contacts are not developed (all programmes).

- One of the reasons for the low attendance in the JMC meetings is according to some stakeholders that only parts of travel costs of the JMC members are covered by the TA grants. On the other hand, in some programmes, apart from the travel costs per diems are paid as well. However, different rules apply depending on the country depending on the system implemented in the administration of the country (MK, AL, BiH, ME).

| | |
|---|---|
| Good Practice | 67. In BiH, MK, ME and RS specific training and preparation has been organised in order to increase the knowledge of the JMC members. In BiH an ongoing training needs assessment is furthermore addressing the needs for training and knowledge of the JMC members. |

68. For the evaluation of the grant applications, the JMCs have set up **Joint Steering Committees** (JSCs) which, with the assistance of the JTSs, are in the process of evaluating the grant applications. The JSCs are responsible for the formal checking of the applications as well as for the procedure. For the actual evaluation of the grant applications a number of assessors have been engaged to carry out the process. The process of engaging the assessors took a considerable amount of time and in some countries as it was difficult to identify a sufficient number of suitable assessors (e.g. MK). In accordance with PRAG rules[48], the JSCs have to carry out a three steps evaluation: first administrative check, then quality check and then an eligibility check. For each step an approval is needed from the JMC and CA before they can proceed with the next step (except for MK-AL programme where the JMC only has to approve the final evaluation report). This is very time consuming, resulting in that the approval of applications will last at least eight months.

| | |
|---|---|
| Capacity of OS has been developed (increased) | 69. **Operating Structures** have been set up for all programmes in all the countries. These are often combined structures which take care of all CBC programmes: intra WB IPA, with member states and transnational programmes. The operating structures are placed in different central ministries and directorates (European integration, finance, local self government and others). OSs have been the driving force in setting-up the structures for the programmes. OSs are still the key resort of knowledge and institutional memory of the programmes and those which have the main links to the EU Delegations. |

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[48] PRAG is not a requirement but an option for CBC according to the IPA regulation

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70. The tasks and responsibilities of the OSs according to the programming documents have been listed in the table below with comments as to whether these have been implemented or initiated. The list of tasks and responsibilities is to a large extent identical for all eight programmes and in accordance with the provisions in IPA Implementing Regulations. The list below has been taken as an example from the CBC Programmes BiH-ME.
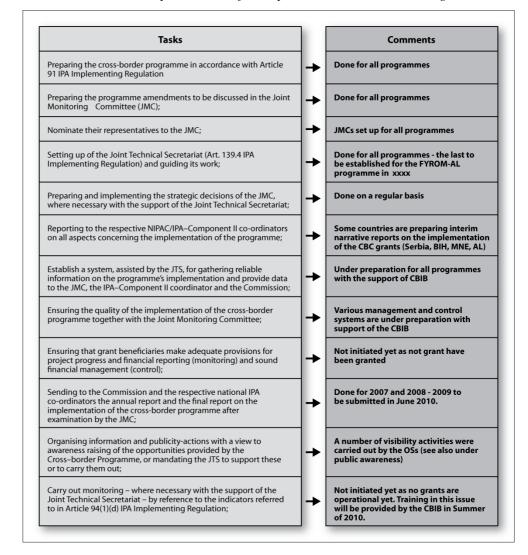
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*Table 2-4. Tasks and responsibilities of the Operation Structures according to the JPD*

| Tasks | Comments |
|---|---|
| Preparing the cross-border programme in accordance with Article 91 IPA Implementing Regulation | Done for all programmes |
| Preparing the programme amendments to be discussed in the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC); | Done for all programmes |
| Nominate their representatives to the JMC; | JMCs set up for all programmes |
| Setting up of the Joint Technical Secretariat (Art. 139.4 IPA Implementing Regulation) and guiding its work; | Done for all programmes - the last to be established for the FYROM-AL programme in xxxx |
| Preparing and implementing the strategic decisions of the JMC, where necessary with the support of the Joint Technical Secretariat; | Done on a regular basis |
| Reporting to the respective NIPAC/IPA–Component II co-ordinators on all aspects concerning the implementation of the programme; | Some countries are preparing interim narrative reports on the implementation of the CBC grants (Serbia, BIH, MNE, AL) |
| Establish a system, assisted by the JTS, for gathering reliable information on the programme's implementation and provide data to the JMC, the IPA–Component II coordinator and the Commission; | Under preparation for all programmes with the support of CBIB |
| Ensuring the quality of the implementation of the cross-border programme together with the Joint Monitoring Committee; | Various management and control systems are under preparation with support of the CBIB |
| Ensuring that grant beneficiaries make adequate provisions for project progress and financial reporting (monitoring) and sound financial management (control); | Not initiated yet as not grant have been granted |
| Sending to the Commission and the respective national IPA co-ordinators the annual report and the final report on the implementation of the cross-border programme after examination by the JMC; | Done for 2007 and 2008 - 2009 to be submitted in June 2010. |
| Organising information and publicity-actions with a view to awareness raising of the opportunities provided by the Cross–border Programme, or mandating the JTS to support these or to carry them out; | A number of visibility activities were carried out by the OSs (see also under public awareness) |
| Carry out monitoring – where necessary with the support of the Joint Technical Secretariat – by reference to the indicators referred to in Article 94(1)(d) IPA Implementing Regulation; | Not initiated yet as no grants are operational yet. Training in this issue will be provided by the CBIB in Summer of 2010. |

71. There is a very large difference in the number of staff employed in the OSs in the six different countries[49]. The number ranges from 11 in Croatia and 2 in Albania - the number is of course dependent on the number of other CBC programmes that the OS is implementing. Countries like Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia all have CBC programmes with member states as well requiring a larger number of staff which the numbers are not directly comparable.

**Stakeholders' assessment of the structures for implementation**

72. Key issues identified with the OSs.

- All OSs have a capacity problem in terms of staff to deal with the tasks related to running of the programmes. In some OSs there has been a very high staff turnover as well as lack of willingness to engage a sufficient number of staff for running the programmes. Staff turnover and lack of staff are often external to the programmes and has to do with budget allocations (low salaries) and lack of prioritisation from the ministries in questions (RS, BiH, AL, HR and ME).

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[49] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report.

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- OSs in all of the countries are overloaded with tasks and need to find a better balance between what they do and what the JTS does as well as avoid micromanagement of the JTSs. Increasingly, it will be necessary for OSs to push some of the tasks into the JTS as these gain more experience. It is often unclear who is doing what (both the OSs ad the JTSs are involved) and the OSs tends to becomes a bottleneck. Some of the problems facing the OSs have been highlighted in the human resource management audit carried out for the OS in BiH[50].

- OSs are reported to have good cooperation with the JTSs and antennas and are highly appreciated by the JTSs according to the interviews. The partner countries (in the county were the JTS is not situated) OSs supply staff (typically one) to the JTSs as well as the staff to the antenna. The relationship between the OS (which hired the staff) and the antennas is closer than that of the JTS and the antennas (general tendency for all programmes).

- There are examples of positive spill-over effects in OSs which manage several types of the IPA Component II (CBC programmes with member states, transnational programmes). Although it can be confusing at times, as the rules are not identical, there is clearly a spill-over effect between CBC programmes in terms of learning about the programmes and using the lessons learned between programmes (in particular Croatia and Serbia).

73. The work related to establishing the capacity for monitoring the IPA CBC programmes is currently on-going involving both the OSs and the JTSs[51]. The capacity has to be in place for when the first projects will be awarded grants, most probably in September 2010[52]. A common monitoring information system is being established with the assistance of the CBIB. The system is modelled on the monitoring system developed by the Baltic Sea Region[53].

Good Practices

74. The Operating Structures in Montenegro organises regular CBC meetings for all stakeholders in Montenegro to share experiences and exchange ideas and information. This provides a good opportunity to common learning process and quick exchange lessons learned and for the stakeholders to establish personal contact and thus speed up future communication.

The human resource management audit carried out for the programme structures in BiH provides an excellent overview of the type of issues facing the OSs actions to be taken in the future to strengthen the programme structure in the BiH.

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[50] Human Resource Management Audit & Gap Assessment Report. EU CORIN II. 19.02.2010.

[51] Training will be conducted by the CBIB.

[52] National TA in Serbia prepared Monitoring Manual and implemented two trainings for OS in Serbia and JTS and Antennae staff on the Serbian territory

[53] CBIB II 2nd interim report, November 2009.

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NIPAC

75.  The **NIPAC**[54] is not directly involved in the CBC programmes but has the overview of the full IPA programmes including the CBC. Generally the NIPACs were well informed about the programme purpose and programme progress. There is recognition that the CBC due to the limited financial size may not necessarily get the deserved attention from the overall structures.

Capacity of JTS and antenna has been developed (increased)

76.  **Joint Technical Secretariats and antenna** have been established for all programmes. The JTSs were established over the second half of 2008[55] and were in general fully staffed by spring 2009. The staff members have been trained in the issues and tasks till date, but are awaiting training in secondary procurement and monitoring. The JTSs appear well staffed and capable of dealing with the tasks at hand. The JTSs are at the moment slightly under-deployed (except for Croatia) but this is expected to change as soon as the first grant contract is signed and they will have to assist the grant projects with secondary procurement and monitoring projects.

77.  All the JTSs have a manual which describes key activities of the JTS. The manual is modelled on a common example so these are to a large extent very similar. The list of tasks and responsibilities is to a large extent identical for all eight programmes and in accordance with the provisions in IPA Implementing Regulations. Several OSs and JTSs have recognised that the manual will need tailoring as the programmes progress. The key activity of the JTSs in terms of monitoring of projects and assisting with secondary procurement will not begin until the fall of 2010. The list below has been taken as an example from the CBC Programmes RS-ME (JPDs) of the tasks of the JTSs' for eights programmes.

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[54] Not all NIPACs where interviewed because they did not have time and some didnot answer (former Yugoslav ).

[55] The JTS for the programme MK-AL was established later.

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*Table 2-5. Tasks and responsibilities of the JTSs according to the JPD*

| Tasks | Comments |
|---|---|
| Providing inputs to annual and final reports on the Programme; | Done for 2007 and 2008 - 2009 to be submitted in June 2010. |
| Organizing meetings of the Joint Monitoring Committee and of the joint Steering Committee, including drafting and distribution of minutes; | Done for all programmes for an average of 2 in some cases 3 meetings |
| In close co-operation with the Operating Structures, planning and implementing information campaigns and other activities related to raising public awareness on the programme; | A number of visibility activities were carried out by the JTSs (see also under public awareness) |
| Receiving and registering project applications and organizing the work of joint Steering Committees, including drafting of administrative compliance and eligibility reports; | Done for all programmes |
| Preparing, under the guidance and with the support of the Contracting Authorities and Operating Structures, standardized forms for project application, evaluation grids, guidelines for applicants, | Application packages with guidelines prepare for all programmes |
| implementation, monitoring and grant project reporting (including financial reporting) based as much as possible on templates and models included in the PRAG; | MIS under preparation for all programmes with the support of CBIB |
| Organizing programmes of info days and workshops for potential applicants, ensuring a good coverage of the eligible region; | Infodays, kick-off meeting and workshops were organised for all programmes. |
| Assisting potential applicants in partner search and project development; | Partnership forums and database organised. Training for application together with CBIB and other TA. |
| Encouraging project applications and providing guidance to the applicants; | Not allowed by the rules. |
| Advising grant beneficiaries in project implementation, for example by organizing procurement and monitoring workshops; | Not initiated yet as no grants have been allocated |
| Develop and maintain a network of stakeholders; | Done in cooperation with OSs |
| Create and update a database of potential applicants and participants in workshops and other events; | All JTSs maintain a database as well as CBIB |
| Prepare, conduct and report on monitoring visits to CBC projects; | Not initiated yet as not grant has been allocated |
| Prepare and publish publicity material on the cross-border programme; | Various materials and communications strategies have been developed for all programmes |
| Design and maintain an up-to-date programme website; | Done for 6 out of 8 programmes |
| Attendance at regular Operating Structures' meetings and training events. | JTSs meet regularity with the OSs and participate in training |

**Stakeholders assessment of the structures for implementation**

78. Key issues identified:

- JTS are now generally well established and will be able to deal with the tasks allocated to them and take over more of the tasks that the OSs are dealing with. The only exception is the JTS for MK-AL which is still not fully equipped due to serious delays in the procurement processes for equipment and the late set-up of the JTSs. In some programmes, the OSs are dealing with all the budgets and payments for the JTSs for the technical assistance grant. This often results in delays. However, in some programmes (Montenegro) the existence of CBC TA office prove to be good example functioning structures for implementation of CBC programmes.

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- Whereas the JTSs generally have limited turnover, the antennas have experienced more volatility and changes in staff. This is most probably caused by primarily two things: firstly, the links between the antennas and respective OSs are often better established due to the fact that personnel feel that to belong to the country OP more than to the JTS, not completely appreciating that they are part of the programmes structures and not the part of national administration; and secondly the "lonely" existence of the antennas which are one person structures.

- The links and regular contacts to the JTS is therefore very important in order to secure that the antenna feels as a part of the JTS. In some cases the antenna has very rarely visited the JTS and this only in connection with other programme activities and not in dedicated staff meetings (apparently due to constraints with budgets in e.g. MK-AL). But even when this is not an issue, there are antennas which are not really included in the daily work of the JTSs and do not know exactly what they are supposed to do and what the other members of the JTSs are doing. There is therefore a tendency that the antennas orient themselves more towards the OSs, which are paying the salaries, than to the JTS where the antennas organisationally belongs (all programmes).

- In some JTSs and antennas there are reports on problems relating to the salary levels as well as the payment of salaries. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, stakeholders reflected that there is a problem regarding the social insurance which was expected by the staff to be paid, but is not done, causing some discontent with JTS and antenna staff. Also there are delays in payments of staff in the JTSs and antenna in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The employment contracts are linked to the grant contracts, which has resulted in that staff has been given three month contracts creating a insecurity (MK). As Croatia had no CARDS funds left, the Croatian government has had to fund the JTS and antenna until the start of the IPA CBC programmes. In Montenegro and Albania there are some tensions because people in JTS are better paid than employees in the OSs.

Good practice

79.  The JTS for the programme HR-BiH has established good management practices with a detailed work plan and tasks for each of the staff members circulated to everybody with descriptions of overall tasks of the JTS/antenna as well as the tasks of the individual staff members with deadlines. This provides the staff with a good overview of what is going on as well as their precise tasks and how they contribute to the overall activities of the JTS/antenna. Especially when staff members are physically and geographically not in the same location, the clear communication and overview for all staff members is very important for the operation of the unit. Likewise, the manual for applicants developed for the HR-BIH program is also a good practices[56].

Capacity of CA (increased)

80.  **Contracting Authorities** are for most of the CBC programmes the EU Delegations. Whereas some delegations have dedicated staff for the CBC, there

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[56] Manual for applicants IPA CBC Programme CRO-BIH 2007-2013 (revised version).

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is a need to focus on that of the contract and finance units. It was highlighted for several programmes (BiH, ME, AL, MK) that there is a need to especially get dedicated staff in contracts and finance to support the implementation when the first contracts start. At the moment only Croatia is decentralised, all the other countries are in the process of being decentralised and road maps have/are being developed[57]. For Croatia being in decentralised system of management which means that all the contracts have to be ex-ante approved by the Delegation. This does however mean that all the files/issues that need to be approved by the CA also in DIS need to follow the full circle of approval in DEU. After examination, they are returned to the CA (CFCA/MRDFWM) as approved (or suspended). Thus, the process in Croatia is potentially more time consuming, since it goes from the CA to DEU, where it goes through the full approval circle. It has however taken a lot of commitment and cooperation to develop the right procedures in Croatia.

81. Delegation staff is highly praised by stakeholders for their support in setting up the system and assisting with the interpretation of different rules and procedures. However, the limited number of staff in all Delegations to deal with the content and contracts is a concern. Although the task managers are very prompt and very active, obtaining signatures from the delegation takes time[58] according to stakeholders as well as the assessment of the first call made by the CBIB[59].

**Lead Delegation**

82. Introducing the Lead Delegation principle has been an important solution for all programmes and has improved processes considerably. In the beginning of the IPA CBC programmes, the involvement of the two delegations from the two participating countries produced duplications hence inefficiencies. The Lead Delegation principle links the CBC programme to the delegation of the country where the JTS is located[60].

**Awareness raising**

**Awareness of programme developed with target groups through information sessions and training**

83. Awareness of the CBC programmes has been raised in a number of ways since the upstart with the programming process itself. Naturally many of the potential applicants, which initially participated in the needs assessment, are also those which are interested in the programmes today. Other potential applicants have learned about the programmes from national, local and regional authorities which have provided information on the progress of the programmes. The calls for proposals were preceded by a number of awareness raising activities carried out by the OS and JTS. The JTS especially in the latter part of the awareness raising process, as these were established in parallel with the process.

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[57] The stage of decentralisation process has not been assessed specifically in this evaluation.
[58] Inter alia MNE, BiH, AL.
[59] There are no data for approval procedures in the assessment made by the CBIB involving the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
[60] According to the EU Delegation in Skopje, the Lead Delegation principle has not been officially introduced. It is not clear, though, if the Skopje EUD is applying this principle for the AL–MK programme, as the other Delegations do for the other 7 programmes.

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- **Programme introduction sessions** and meetings with various stakeholders groups introducing the programmes were carried out by the Operating Structures early on in the programme, in order to solicit interest and encourage local stakeholders to find partners and prepare project ideas. These clearly helped to raise the initial awareness but did create frustration as potential applicants/participants had expected the programme to start earlier.

- **Information sessions and kick-off events** for all eight programmes were organized (51) in connection with the launching of the first calls for proposals, with the participation of over 2.700 potential applicants (average of 50 participants per session). Some programmes (five events in total) opted for organising the so-called kick off events promoting the published CfP i.e. RS-BIH. These events gathered high level officials from the two participating countries, EUD representatives, stakeholders from the local and regional level, relevant for the eligible area, as well as media[61].

- **Partner search forums** were organised for all programmes (minimum one per programme often more) and these had a large attendance with more than 100 participants per event[62]. The forums are highly appreciated by potential applicants which found that the events were well organised including a general part on the CBC programme and a specific part where the participants could meet with potential partners from across the border within the topics and themes of their interest.

- **Application packages** were prepared for all the eight programmes including guidelines and application formats. The key comments collected so far from various stakeholders on the package, have highlighted that the package has been a challenges for potential applicants without prior knowledge of EU and/or other donor programmes, whereas more advanced potential applicants have not found it too challenging. Especially preparing the budget, logical framework[63] and understanding which forms had to be signed by whom, have caused problems for some stakeholders[64]. The application package is adequate for a first call but some of the application package (e.g. HR-ME)[65] are very complicated and should be simplified and made more specific.

  The preparation of the application packages was a lengthy process as all stakeholders were new to the process of development of an application package for IPA-IPA CBC. Most of the draft had to be revised following the first comments from the Delegations. Most of the OSs started working on

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[61] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

[62] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

[63] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

[64] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

[65] As all the application packages involving Montenegro are very similar this comment probably covers all of the programmes.

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the packages in 2008 and these were approved between April and June 2009[66].

The final assessment of this will be made as part of Report II when the applicants have been interviewed[67]. The issue of language of the documentation has been mentioned as a barrier to local organisations who do not speak English. There is an unofficial translation circulating in some of the countries but it has overall been decided not to translate the application package as this would result in inaccuracies and very high costs in relation to translating into all the languages covered by the programmes[68].

- **Questions** to the application package were addressed partly at an info session carried out after the calls were published and partly as written procedure. Stakeholders had mixed opinions about these sessions, some found that these did not focus enough and included issues they already knew. Again these mixed opinions probably reflect that potential applicants are at different levels and have difference experiences. Written questions were also answered through a long and very complicated process with the result that the answers came very late in the application process.

Access to information

84. Some of the programme web-sites were only established after the calls were launched. Six programmes have a website (except AL-ME and MK-AL)[69] which were established between December 2008 and December 2009[70]. The application packages were typically made available on the homepage of the ministries hosting the OS. This is still the case for the two programmes which have not yet developed a web-page.

**Capacity building of the stakeholders**

Programmes are in place for further capacity development.

85. Various **trainings** have been carried out by the CBIB and national TA projects in place (in some of the countries) for both programme structures and potential applicants. Because of the long period of programme and structure development the trainings have not fully been timed to the programme cycle.

Training for potential applicants

86. Potential applicants were primarily trained in: project management cycle and preparation of grant proposals. The specific training on the CBC programmes and the preparation of applications was more appreciated than general training in topics such as project cycle management. Potential applicants also indicated that it was important to provide different levels of training as many potential applicants had some experience and were therefore capable to receive more advanced training. Many potential applicants found that the trainings were too short, but again this depended on their level and experience. Potential applicants were trained also by international organisations and local NGOs from Montenegro and Serbia. Many municipalities in e.g. BiH do not have the

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[66] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

[67] It may also by then be possible to interview some unsuccessful applicants in order to get their opinion on the package.

[68] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

[69] CBIB II 2nd interim report, November 2009.

[70] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report .

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capacities necessary to participate in the programme. Writing a grants application is a challenge when basics like English language knowledge and computer proficiency are absent. These issues should possibly be addressed through training tailored for municipalities.

Training for programme structures

87.  Substantial number of trainings have been organised by the CBIB as well as by the national TA teams for the programme structures. The programme structures have primarily been trained and coached in the topics listed below. Please note that the list has been prepared based on various TA reports and is therefore not necessarily exhaustive for all the training which has taken place:

- Programme management for OSs, JTSs and antenna
- Development of information materials
- Preparation of visibility and kick-off events
- Preparation of the application packages
- Presentation skills for JTSs
- Website development for JTSs
- Project evaluation for OSs, JTSs (and antenna), JMC members and CAs
- Preparation of annual reports.

Further training

88.  Further training is ongoing and will be continued by the CBIB and the remaining national TA (BiH). Especially the JTSs, but also the OSs and the CAs, will be facing a number of new tasks once the first grants have been awarded. The CBIB will provide training in secondary procurement and monitoring during September 2010. Few of the JTSs has had any training in these tasks to date and only few of the JTS staff have a full picture of what these tasks comprise[71].

Good Practice

89.  The national TA for BiH has undertaken a human resource management audit & gap assessment and is currently undertaking a Training Needs Assessment for the full structure of CBC implementation. This also includes the JMC for all programmes in which BiH is involved whose training needs will also be assessed in order to increase their possibilities for being active in the programme[72]. National TA in Serbia has prepared workload analysis for the CBC Unit and assessment of gaps between procedures stated in programmes guidelines and existing practices.

90.  Using experience already available was done in the programmes involving Serbia and Croatia where former applicants, which were involved or took part in the programme with e.g. Hungary, were engaged in the training of potential applicants.

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[71] JTS and Antennae staff in Serbia have been trained on procurement by certified trainer from OS for supplies and services. National TA provided training for procurement of works

[72] Human Resource Management Audit & Gap Assessment Report. EU CORIN II. 19.02. 2010

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|---|---|
| Lessons learned and preparation for second call | 91. An assessment of the first calls for proposals was undertaken by the CBIB in order to provide lessons learned and inputs to the second calls. This assessment contains important findings for the organisation and quality of the first calls which should be used for the development and preparation of the second calls. |
| TA Grant | 92. A certain part of the programme amount is set aside for running of the programmes. As several countries (ME, BIH, MK, AL, RS) had funds left from the CARDS, these funds were used to fund the initial set-up of the JTS and providing support to the OS. The issue of the grant size and the management of the grant is pertinent in most of the OSs and JTSs although there are differences in their assessment of the issues. It is significant that the countries which have no CARDS funds available for supporting the TA operations are those which do not find that the grant can cover all of the activities required (Croatia and Serbia)[73]. With regard to the management of the grant there are problems in several countries with delays in drawing down funds and there is also no common view between the countries on who should manage the grant. In some countries it is clearly the JTS, in other countries it is very centralised[74] i.e. the OS. This obviously also reflect the overall financial management system (as well as the legal status of the JTSs) in a particular country, where very centralised systems are in place, all payments have to go via central government units. In Croatia the contract of the JTS is rather complicated as it is a grant contract which means that for each expenditure the approval of the CA is needed, which is delaying the expenditures. A good example is in Montenegro where the OS delegated management of the TA grant to the CBC TA office, there is a separate contract for all the JTS staff of the CBC programmes. This has as an advantage that budget could be used efficiently (for example 1 car for several programmes). |
| Technical assistance projects | 93. In order to develop the capacity of the stakeholders of CBC a number of TA projects have been implemented[75]. |
| CBIB - regional TA | 94. The Cross-Border Institution Building (CBIB) is an EU-funded regional technical assistance project supporting the stakeholders with technical assistance within the areas of capacity building, knowledge sharing and management. The idea is to provide a coherent and harmonized assistance and guidance at regional level for programming and implementation of IPA CBC programmes in Western Balkan countries. This includes disseminating lessons learned and building the necessary capacities at national, regional and local levels of management. CBIB has five local offices in all of the WB countries, except Croatia. The CBIB has the following purpose: |

- to provide assistance and guidance at regional level for the programming and implementation of current and future IPA CBC programmes in WB;

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[73] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report (not dated).

[74] CBIB Assessment of the First Call for Proposal IPA-IPA Countries Analysis Report (not dated).

[75] A thorough assessment of the sustainability of the TA projects was not part of this evaluation.

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- to ensure a 'transmission belt' between DG Enlargement and the management structures of the IPA CBC programmes in the Region;

- to build and improve capacity of national, regional and local authorities, as well as those of non-state actors, thereby ensuring full and effective participation in IPA CBC;

- to help joint management structures overcome difficulties which may arise in the implementation of IPA CBC programmes.

95. The regional CBIB project has covered all the countries and programmes and also focused on regional coordination. It has been important for experience sharing and learning from each other. Serbia has used the CBIB less than the other countries due to lack of visibility of the Serbian OS in the CBIB actions.

National TA

96. National TA has also been available in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina funded primarily from CARDS allocations. For Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina this is still on going. National TA projects, where these have been implemented (RS, HR, BiH), have in general been more focusing on capacity building of structures especially OSs (also for other CBC programmes) whereas CBIB has concentrated on the regional aspects and only on the Intra-Western Balkan programmes.

97. The technical assistance projects have overall been very important for supporting the development of structures and capacity for the CBC programmes. In general terms the national TA projects have focused on the OSs, the CBIB has focused on the JTSs and the applicants as well as the regional approach and co-ordination. The sharing of knowledge and working together has been an important feature of the CBIB.

Summary of findings and assessment

98. **The administrative structure has been established, is delivering on the grant schemes, and provides adequate support to the applicants.** Overall the structures for the management of the programmes have been established and are functioning. However, there are differences both between programmes but especially between how well functioning the different parts of the structures are. As is acknowledged by most stakeholders, this is the first time most of the stakeholders are involved in setting up the structures of an EU Structural funds-type programme. However, the time-lags in the programme implementation are by beneficiary stakeholders seen as a problem. Better management of expectations and communicating to stakeholders that this is the first time and that setting-up the structures and development of capacity time consuming would have supported this understanding.

### 2.2.3 To what extent have the programmes' preparation and implementation helped enhancing good neighbourly relations between the participating countries and between local populations living in the border area? (EQ 9)

99. This question was assessed based on reports on the progress of the programmes and especially on interviews with involved stakeholders. The assess-

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ment is mainly focused on the effects in terms of enhancing good neighbourly relations that the programme has had on the structures for implementation as project and grant have not been awarded yet.

100. A number of objectives in relation to good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are included in the Accession Partnerships/European Partnerships as well as the Enlargement Strategy (see also table 2-1).

Local perceptions of improved neighbourly relations as a consequence of the programme

101. The interviews with stakeholders show that there in general is an interest in working together across the borders in order:

- to learn from other countries which are further on the path to EU accession and there are sought as partners for those which are not so far.

- to share experiences and address common challenges. The border areas are often faced with common problems and challenges and potential applicants are looking to find partners with which they can develop a new solution to a common problem of e.g. low economic activity or environmental issues.

- some contacts already exist in the border regions, but the CBC programmes have provided the possibility to deepen the cooperation and "get going". The programmes are probably even more important for municipalities, as NGOs, in several of the countries in the region, already have contacts and are working across borders. NGOs are also often better trained, more experienced and able to write applications. Municipalities on the other hand have to be strengthened and this is one of the first opportunities for municipalities to participate (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia) directly in an EU programme.

- The launching of the HR-ME and the RS-BiH programme was an important step in improving neighbouring relationship.

- Not all borders have been involved in conflicts in the region and some are more characterized by limited or lacking formal contact in the past (e.g. MK-AL). For these the contact and cooperation are new and not a re-establishment.

Local management structures on both sides of the border experience enhanced cooperation

102. Participation in partnerships forum has generally been reported as high, showing a large interest in finding partners and participating in the programmes. Some potential applicants indicated that they participated even though they already had connections and partners, which they could build on, but they found that the partnership forums were a good opportunity to find additional partners and maybe partners for other projects. The partner search forums are overall regarded very positive and appreciated by the potential applicants.

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National management structures reflect positively about the neighbouring country

103. At the level of the programme implementation structures especially operational structures and JTS/antenna mentioned that this cooperation was strengthening the bonds between the countries. OSs are in regular contact with each other and have established working relationships on common programmes. The JMCs seem to be the part of the systems where the least contracts and links have been made across the borders.

Summary of findings and assessment

104. **Stakeholders perceive improved neighbourly relations as a consequence of the programme.** Many stakeholders indicated that the programme would have impact on the neighbourly relations. The overall assessment of most stakeholders groups was that the programme is and will be very important for future cooperation and is assisting in re-establishing the old contacts which were there 20 years ago. The large interest in the programme also on borders where armed conflicts to place during the nineties, shows that the time is ripe and there is interest in cooperation on the borders.

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# 3 Conclusions and Recommendations

105. The following conclusions derive from the findings of this report. The conclusions have been structured according to the key questions and judgement criteria. As this is the first of two reports, some conclusion may be preliminary pending data collected and analysis which will only be available in Report II. Following each conclusion we have inserted the recommendation for improvements in the programme programming and implementation. Not all the recommendations will be applicable for all programmes, as some of the recommendation may already have been implemented or refer to issues which were not an issue in a particular programme. Some of the recommendations may be partial and will be completed and/or complemented in Report II.

*There is a link between the needs assessment, the strategy, indicators and the objectives of the programmes.*

106. The joint programming documents have served the purpose of providing the basis for the first calls for proposals. The quality of the socio-economic analysis and thereby the basis of the needs assessment is acceptable but the current statistical basis is very weak and out of date (see below). The SWOT is comprehensive and covers many areas in comparison with the programme aim and scope. The strategies have a broad scope so that many activities in the border regions could fit, but few details are given in explaining why certain choices have been made and others not in relation to the socio-economic analysis and SWOT. The priorities and measures are clearly formulated focusing on the strategy. The upgrading of the indicators which has been done in the revision has improved the quality of the document as well as established a real basic for monitoring. No significant difference was observed in the eight CBC programmes apart from difference in availability of data for the socio-economic analysis. Key areas which should be updated in a programme revision:

❖ updating of the socio-economic analysis with a better statistical basis for the analysis.

❖ the strategy should better explain why certain choices have been made and others not in relation to the socio-economic analysis and SWOT.

❖ to carry out an ex ante evaluation (to be included in the document) which may be useful in checking the analysis and the strategy (future programmes).

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*Areas included in the programmes selected based on territorial criteria (NUTS III or equivalent). The socio-economic analysis made on the border region reflects the needs on the common border region.*

107. Most of the countries (except Croatia) involved in the Western Balkan IPA CBC programme have not yet implemented NUTS and thereby have NUTS III regions. All programmes have included NUTS III equivalents as territorial criteria when determining the eligible and adjacent areas. The question is to what degree the analysis reflects the border area, as much of the statistics used for the analysis is only partly on the eligible territory. Furthermore in some programmes the available statistics are from 2003 or partly missing. This problem cannot be solved in the short run but needs to be addressed in the medium term. It is therefore important for the revision of the programmes:

❖ to the extent possible, the programme needs an update of the statistics used for the analysis and to secure that the statistics reflect the eligible area.

*The pre-accession strategy and objectives are reflected in the objectives of the CBC programming documents*

108. Overall the eight CBC programmes reflect the pre-accession strategy. The priorities and measures complement the objectives in the overall accession strategies as well in the individual country European Partnerships and Accession Partnerships. Especially the programmes complement priories in environmental, economic and regional development, education, SME development etc. At a more overall level, the CBC programmes have, due to their nature as structural funds type programmes, introduced the pre-accession on the agenda with local and regional authorities, and made stakeholders aware that these programmes are the first possibilities to work on a structural funds type programme. This issue is however not fully appreciated by all stakeholders and there are difference both in-between countries and within the stakeholder groups in the countries. Additional emphasis could be made:

❖ on the importance of the CBC programmes in the pre-accession process and the fact that this is the first time the countries, and in particular the regions and local actors have the possibility of implementing a structural funds type programme.

❖ on providing stakeholders, in a targeted manner, with the knowledge that the CBC is a preparation for structural funds focusing on the groups where this is not widely understood.

*Consultation processes and structures are in place involving key stakeholders in the programming*

109. The needs assessment and strategy were based on extensive consultations with national, regional and local stakeholders at the time of writing the programme. Whereas consultations were carried out during the preparation of the programmes, no real public consultations were undertaken on the programme documents themselves after finalisation. Furthermore the JPDs do in general not include a real description of the consultation process undertaken as part of the programming process. In future programming processes, the programming document should:

❖ be subject to real public consultation after it is drafted, ensuring that the relevant stakeholders can comment on the proposed activities and correct analysis which may not reflect the border region.

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❖ clearly reflect the consultation process including an overview of who took part and the results of the consultation process.

*The thematic issues/ cross cutting issues were directly or indirectly included in the guidance and manuals and addressed in the applications*

110. Cross-cutting issues are not yet developed to any extent within the IPA CBC programmes. These are only to a very limited degree included in the documentation and generally without any explanation. Furthermore, there is a limited understanding in the stakeholder groups of what cross-cutting issues are and how to deal with these. There are some misunderstandings concerning cross-cutting issues also within the programming structures. In some programmes the revised indicators included cross-cutting issues. In the future (second call for proposals and the revision of the programmes), it will be important:

❖ to include the cross-cutting issues in all the programming documents (MIPD, JPD and application package) as well as address the issues explicitly as part of training, manuals and guidance.

❖ that the cross-cutting issues are clearly explained so that potential applicants can see how these should be addressed in the application form.

❖ that the cross-cutting are be fully incorporated via the indicators in the monitoring system.

❖ to ensure that cross-cutting issues are explicitly addressed in the guidance for grant implementation and reporting i.e. project implementation manuals or similar.

*Transparent and documented structures and process in place for awarding grants*

111. The award criteria is included in the application packages in a transparent and clear manner. The award criteria were developed as part of the application packages and are the same for all the programmes and approved by the JMCs. The criteria are explained and linked to the programme objectives in the guidelines for applicants. Stakeholders reflected that they had not had problems understanding the criteria. A final assessment as well as recommendations on this can only be made once an analysis of the first call for proposal can be made.

*The grant size reflects the implementation capacity of both the implementation structures and the applicants*

112. As the grants have not been awarded it is not yet possible to assess the size of the grants. In general, there have been many applications for the programmes although this varies considerable from programme to programme. The number of applications suggests that the size has been appropriate for the applicants but this will have to be further investigated when the spread (what size of grants have the applicants applied for) of the grants is known.

*The administrative structure has been established, is delivering on the grant schemes,..*

113. Overall the structures for the management of the programmes have been established and are functioning. However, there are differences both between programmes but especially with regard to how well the different parts of the structures are functioning. For all programmes the Joint Monitoring Committees are probably the weakest part of the structure. Lack of or limited functions combined with nomination of high ranking officials lead to low attendance at meetings and limited interest in the written procedures. JMC members have low awareness of the programme and little contact to their opposite numbers. If the JMCs are to have anything but ceremonial functions it is important to secure a commitment to participating. Therefore the following actions could be taken:

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❖ review and assess the compositions of the JMC membership in terms of representation (local and regional level) and levels in order adapt composition for improved interest and participation in the CBC programmes.

❖ ensure that the members understand their role and have meaningful functions i.e. less use of written procedure.

❖ secure the links and contacts between the JMC members from the two countries by possibly increasing the number of meetings so that these have a possibility of establishing better contacts.

114. There is an imbalance in tasks and resources between the OSs and the JTSs. The JTSs are now well functioning bodies capable of taking over more tasks from the OSs and assume full responsible of the task allocated. There is a tendency to JTSs' dependency on the OSs and a fear of transferring responsibilities to the JTSs from the OSs. This has to be addressed as there is a "bottleneck" potential in many OSs and a feeling that the JTSs have the resource but are under-deployed. The Contracting Authorities has yet to address the issue of staff to deal with the CBC programmes. The programming structures should:

❖ carry out a human resource management audit and training needs assessment for all parts of the CBC programme structure to assess workloads and training needs.

❖ transfer as many tasks (those allocated to the JTS) as possible to the JTSs including preparation for the TA grants.

❖ review staffing of OS in relation to HRM audit and consider upgrading numbers.

❖ better developed the links to the antennas and antennas should be better integrated in the daily work of the JTSs.

❖ incorporation of the seconded non-lead country staff placed in the JTS needs to be improved, and a sense of that "we are working for the same goals" needs to be developed to improve integration.

❖ urgently support the implementation of monitoring and control systems as soon as the first grants are contracted ensuring the quality of the implementation of the CBC programmes.

❖ Contracting Authorities need to assign special staff to the CBC especially in finance and contracting if they are to be able to deal with the work loads and special nature of the CBC programmes.

*..providing adequate support to the applicants*

115. The number of activities and targeted sessions that have been undertaken in order to raise awareness of the CBC programmes have been extensive and are by and large well received. Overall, the potential applicants and other stakeholder have been positive concerning both the quantity and quality of the awareness raising. Pending interviews with applicants (for Report II) there is an indication that especially the partner search forums have been very popular with stakeholders and high attendance and positive reactions have been re-

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ported. However, the grant evaluation procedure including three steps with a full approval cycle for each step is proving to be cumbersome and time consuming. In order to support better application processes:

❖ the formalities of the administrative check should be done by JTS under the supervision of the JTS and not by JSC, the eligibility check should not be at the end but should be integrated with the administrative check into one check, and there should be one approval cycle instead of three cycles.

❖ target the partnership forums better and provide opportunities for participants to participate in more than one theme.

❖ training potential applicant also needs to be more targeted recognising that the level of potential applicants is very different.

❖ direct the training more toward the preparation of CBC applications with examples from other CBC programmes and increase the use of experience already available the region.

116. For the application packages and the application process itself it will be important to address some of the issues which has already transpired from the application process:

❖ in general, simplification and clarification of the applications packages including details on cross-cutting issues as mentioned above.

❖ the budgets and log-frames needs to better explained and probably training needs to be delivered especially on this topic.

❖ answers to the questions on the application package need to be provided to the applicants earlier in the process so that the applicants can act accordingly.

*Stakeholders perceive improved neighbourly relations as a consequence of the programme*

117. Many stakeholders reflected that the CBC programmes would have impact on the neighbourly relations. The overall assessment of most stakeholder groups was that the programmes are and will be very important for future cooperation with the neighbour countries and is assisting in re-establishing the old contacts which were there 20 years ago. For other borders the programme is assisting in establishing new contacts were none or very limited has been over the last many years. Especially cooperation at the operational level (operating programme structures) as well as projects (potential applicants) seemed to be developing as was highlighted by stakeholders. The latter will have to be further explored as part of Report II. The cooperation for CBC on a more political or strategic level is more limited because of the not so active JMCs. The regional forums (organised by the CBIB) are a very important part of securing the cooperation of the various structures of CBC and securing sharing of knowledge and learning. The recommendations concerning the improvement of neighbourly relations are:

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❖ that the key focus should be on the JMCs as the political level of the CBC programmes.

❖ the JMC has in future programmes to play a much more active role in the overall management of the programmes like the role the JMCs play in the member states.

❖ the JMC is an important forum for promoting the CBC cooperation and to address overall issues in common between the countries of the programme.

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# 1. Evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators

| Question | Judgement criteria | Indicator |
|---|---|---|
| **Relevance** | | |
| 1. Did each programme have clear and sound intervention logic and objectives? | *There is a link between the needs assessment, the strategy, indicators and the objectives of the programmes.* | 1. Consistency of programming documents<br><br>2. Objectives and priorities are clear and operational<br><br>3. Indicators are SMART |
| 2. To what extent have the programmes supported and/or complemented the accession strategy? | *The pre-accession strategy and objectives are reflected in the objectives of the CBC programming documents.* | 4. Fund allocations and priorities reflect the pre-accession strategy<br><br>5. (expected) Outputs are assessed to contribute to the overall objectives of the pre-accession strategy |
| 8. Was the allocation of funds at strategic level based on clear territorial criteria? | *Areas included in the programmes selected based on territorial criteria (NUTS III or equivalent). The socio-economic analysis made on the border region reflects the needs on the common border region.* | 20. Degree of focus of the socio-economic analysis on the border region<br>21. Degree of focus of the priorities in the grant schemes on the border region |
| 3. To what extent have local and regional authorities/organisation been involved or consulted in the programming and management of the programmes? | *Consultation processes and structures are in place involving key stakeholders in the programming.* | 6. Involvement of key recipient stakeholders in needs assessments and programming<br><br>7. Public consultation conducted<br><br>8. Initiatives to involved civil society has in the planning have been undertaken |
| 6. Could cross-cutting issues concerning gender equality, environmental protection and inclusion of ethnic minorities be better embedded into the new call for proposals? | *The thematic issues were directly or indirectly included in the guidance and manuals and addressed in the applications.* | 17. Specific inclusion of cross-cutting issues in programming documents and application packages.<br><br>18. Guidance in the manual/application packages on how to address cross cutting issues in the application as well as during project implementation.<br><br>19. Cross-cutting issues are a part of the evaluation criteria when selecting grant applications. |
| Efficiency | | |
| 4. Was there a process for ensuring that award criteria were established in an appropriate way to deliver programme objectives? Was the grant size in the two main types of grant schemes appropriate? | *Transparent and documented structures and process in place for awarding grants securing that programme objectives are addressed. The grant size reflect the implementation capacity of both the implementation structures* | 9. Availability of manuals and links to programme objectives<br><br>10. Inclusion of award criteria in application packages<br><br>11. Number and total amount of application in relation to amount of programme |

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| | *and the applicants* | |
|---|---|---|
| 5. Are adequate administrative procedures and organisational structures in place both jointly (e.g. JMC, JTS) and on each side (NIPAC, Operating Structures, EC Delegation) ensuring efficient and effective achievement of the programme and project objectives? | *The administrative structure has been established, is delivering on the grant schemes and providing adequate support to the applicants.* | 12. Stakeholders assessment of support provided to target groups in preparation for the application process.<br><br>13. Stakeholders (JMC, OS, JTS, Delegation/CA) assessment of the functioning of the programme implementation structures (Call for Proposals and later monitoring of grants).[76]<br><br>14. Capacity of staff (in JMC, JTS, OS, CA) has been developed (increased)[77] and training programmes are in place for further capacity development.<br><br>15. Awareness of programme developed with target groups through information sessions and training.[78]<br><br>16. Quality of proposals appropriate (taking onto account the development stage of programme).[79] |
| 9. To what extent have the programmes' preparation and implementation helped enhancing good neighbourly relations between the participating countries and between local populations living in the border area? | *Stakeholders perceive improved neighbourly relations as a consequence of the programme.* | 1. Local perceptions of improved neighbourly relations as a consequence of the programme.<br><br>2. Local management structures on both sides of the border experience enhanced cooperation.<br><br>3. National management structures on both sides of the border reflect positively about the neighbouring country. |

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[76] Adapted from Indicator from cross–border programmes Measure II Technical Assistance.

[77] Indicator from cross–border programmes Measure II Technical Assistance.

[78] Indicator from cross–border programmes Measure II Technical Assistance

[79] Indicator from cross–border programmes Measure II Technical Assistance

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# 2. List of interviewed stakeholders

| Organisation | Name of Interview Persons | Date |
|---|---|---|
| **EC Commission** | | 01.2010 |
| Gianni Ballette | Financial Instruments and Contracts Unit | 01.2010 |
| **Albania** | | 1-5.03.10 |
| Workshop | Delegation, CA, OS, JTS, JMC (list available) | 01.03.10 |
| Delegation/Contracting Authority | Ardian Hackaj | 02.02.10 |
| OS Programme Albania-Montenegro | Greta Rakaj, Sonja Mati, Kebjana Haka | 02.02.10 |
| OS Programme MK-Albania | Greta Rakaj, Sonja Mati, Kebjana Haka | 02.02.10 |
| CBC TA | Evis Disha, Marco Manetti | 02.02.10 |
| JMC Member Programme Albania-Montenegro | Thoma Rusha, Suela Kusi, Ilir Zhilla | 02.02.10 |
| JSC for AL-ME | Fioralba Shkodra, Head of JSC | 02.02.10 |
| NIPAC | Jorida Tabaku | 02.02.10 |
| JTS Programme Albania-Montenegro | Shpetim Quku, Andi Cekaj, Edin Mehmeti, Jerina Gradeci, Agron Camaj | 03.03.10 |
| JMC Member Programme Albania-Montenegro | Gjovalin Kolombi | 03.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Rubin Mandia – Shkodra Gallery of Arts | 03.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Djana BEJKO - REC Shkodra | 03.03.10 |
| JTS Programme MK-Albania [Antenna] | Muhamet Aliçka | 04.03.10 |
| JMC member Programme MK-Albania | Ilia Milo - Regional Council of Korca Lulzim Shahinaj - Regional Council of Elbasan | 04.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Ervin Bebeti – Municipality of Elbasan | 04.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Rajmonda Duka – Partners Albania | 05.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Erisa Cela – Institute for Democracy and Mediation | 05.03.10 |
| **Bosnia-Herzegovina** | | 15-19.03.10 |
| Workshop | Delegation, CA, OS, JTS, JMC (list available) | 15.03.10 |
| JTS, Antenna Mostar HR-BIH | Emica Mušić, Mostar | Telephone |

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| Delegation/Contracting Authority | Nadja Ohranović and Jochen Hesse | 16.03.10 |
|---|---|---|
| OSs for all 3 programmes (Directorate for European Integration) | Zara Halilović, Assistant director, Division for EU Assistance Coordination; Nada Bojanić, Head of Department for Cross-border | 16.03.10 |
| JMC Member all three programmes and JMC Member BIH-ME programme, | Branimir Gojković (all programmes); Senad Lulo (BiH-ME). Directorate for European Integration | 16.03.10 |
| JMC Member all three programmes | Zada Muminović, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, | 16.03.10 |
| NIPAC | Petar Kraljević, NIPAC, BiH Ministry of Finance, | 16.03.10 |
| JTS  BIH-ME programme | Snežana Tomašević, head of JTS | 16.03.10 |
| JTS, Antenna Tuzla RS-BiH | Danijela Konjić, Task Manager | 17.03.10 |
| Training participant/Potential Applicant | Enver Sarvan, Director, Independent Development Bureau | 17.03.10 |
| Training participant/Potential Applicant | Robert Martić, Director, Innovation and Technology Foundation BIT Tuzla | 17.03.10 |
| JMC Member RS-BIH | Hasan Muratović, Mayor of Živinice municipality | Not available |
| JTS, Antenna Banja Luka  HR-BiH | Dragan Saric, Task Manager | 18.30.10 |
| JMC Member RS-BIH (replacement of Dragoljub Davidović, mayor of Banja Luka) | Milovan Topolović, Mayor of Laktaši | 18.30.10 |
| JMC Member | Aida Bogdan, Assistant to the minister , Ministry for Economic relations and co-ordination, | Telephone interview pending |
| Training participant/potential Applicant | Miloš Kuprešanin, Turist organisation of Republika Srpska | 18.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential Applicant | Milena Lepir, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Banja Luka Region | 18.03.10 |
| Delegation and OS | Jochan Hesse, Nadja Ohranović, Nada Bojanić | 19.03.10 |
| **Croatia** | | 02-05.03.10 |
| Delegation/Contracting Authority | Marko Perić | 02.03.10 |
| Workshop | Delegation, CA, OS, JTS, JMC (list available) | 02.03.10 |
| OS Croatia BiH | Marija Rajaković, MRDFWG, | 02.03.10 |
| OS Croatia-Serbia and Croatia Montenegro | Marija Rajaković, MRDFWG, | 02.03.10 |
| NIPAC | Ana Beban, CODEF, | 02.03.10 |
| JTS Croatia-BIH | Normela Radoš, MRDFWM, | 03.03.10 |

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| Training participant/potential applicant | Veljko Vorkapić, Institute Hrvoje Požar, | 03.03.10 |
|---|---|---|
| Training participant/potential applicant | Zoran Grgić, Faculty of Agronomy, | 03.03.10 |
| JTS Croatia-Serbia | Emina Štefičić, MRDFWM, | 04.03.10 |
| JMC Croatia-Serbia | Ivo Zinić,MRRŠVG | 04.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Development Agency Hrast, Vukovar, Mirta Štrk, | 04.03.10 |
| EU Delegation and OS | Andrea Horvat, Task Manager Ivo Žinić, Darko Stilinović and Nevena Tutavac | 05.03.10 |
| JMC Croatia-Montenegro | Ivo Zinić,MRRŠVG | 05.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | SIMORA Development Agency, Sisak, Julije Katancevic | 05.03.10 |
| **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** | | **15-18.03.10** |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Blerim Zlatku, Chamber of Commerce | 15.03.10 |
| JMC Member | Mimoza Vujosevic, Trade Union | 15.03.10 |
| Workshop | Delegation, CA, OS, JTS, JMC (List available) | 15.03.10 |
| Delegation/Contracting Authority | Paolo SCIALLA | 16.03.10 |
| OS Programme MK-Albania | Saska Mamucevska, Zupan Martinovski and Aleksandar Gumberovski | 16.03.10 |
| JMC Member | Lovacev Hristo, SEP | 16.03.10 |
| JMC Member | Ertan Gjelili, Tetovo Municipality | 16.03.10 |
| Struga JTS Programme MK-Albania | Goce Toleski, Marin Beluli, Ardita Istrefi, Anita Poposka | 17.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Professor Jagoda Strezovska, Faculty for Tourism Ohrid | 17.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Marina Pulejkova, NGO Struga | 17.03.10 |
| JMC member | Goce Simonovski, Ohrid municipality | 17.03.10 |
| Debriefing Delegation and OS | Paolo SCIALLA, Saska Mamucevska and Emanuel | 18.03.10 |
| CBC TA team | Jasmina Taseva Jankovic, Remy Reymann | 18.03.10 |
| **Montenegro** | | 22-26.03.10 |
| Workshop | Delegation, CA, OS, JTS, JMC (list available) | 22.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Marina Vukovic, CRNVO | 23.03.10 |
| OSs for CBC programmes HR-ME and AL- ME | Marija Maraš, National coordinator, Ratka Sekulović, Deputy Minister | 23.03.10 |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| JMC Member | Saša Šćekić, Union of municipalities | 23.03.10 |
| JMC Member | Dragan Kujovic, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy | 23.03.10 |
| Antenna Podgorica - Programme AL-ME | Agron M. Camaj, Project Officer | 24.03.10 |
| CBC TA | Ms Ranka Bartula-Mušikić , Project Manager | 24.03.10 |
| Delegation/Contracting Authority | Enrique Aguado, Task manager | 24.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Jelena Cabarkapa, Environmental Protection Agency | 24.03.10 |
| JMC Member | Bosiljka Vuković, Advisor, Office for Sustainable Development | 24.03.10 |
| JTS Programme HR-ME | Dragan Đurišić, Head of JTS; Biljana Vujanić, Financial Officer; Sanja Todorović, Project Officer | 25.03.10 |
| CBIB officer | Marijana Ivanova CBIB Officer, | 25.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Danijela Djurovic, Municipality of Herceg Novi | 25.03.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Biljana Gligoric, Expedito | 25.03.10 |
| Debriefing | Delegation and OS | 26.03.10 |
| OSs for CBC programmes RS-ME and BIH-ME | Ms Ljiljanic and Ms Ulic, Coordinators of CBC Programmes | 26.03.10 |
| NIPAC | Aleksandar Drljevic | 26.03.10 |
| **Serbia** | | 22-26.03.10 |
| *Workshop* | Delegation, CA, OS, JTS, JMC. Attendance list attached. | 22.02.10 |
| Delegation/Contracting Authority | Luka Manunta, Project Manager, Konstantinos  Soupilas, Programme Manager | 23.02.10 |
| OS Programme HR-RS, RS-BiH, RS-ME | Jelena Stojovic; Ivana Davidovic; Jaroslava Bozanic - Programme. Coordinators | 23.02.10 |
| JTS, Programme Serbia – ME, | Denis Latina, Head of JTS | 23.02.10 |
| JMC Member | Marko Tomasevic; Dragan Vujcic, SCofTM | 23.02.10 |
| NIPAC | Ognjen Miric, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the European Integration | 23.02.10 |
| CBIB | Natasa Godspodjinacki, Team Leader | 23.02.10 |
| JMC member Programme RS-BiH, HR-RS | Andrija Aleksic; Vladimir Pandurov; Drazen Lovric,  Executive Council of Vojvodina | 24.02.10 |
| JTS Antenna Programme Croatia-Serbia | Darko Cvejic | 24.02.10 |

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| Training participant/potential applicant | Aleksandar Vascanin, Volleyball club Srem 2006 | 24.02.10 |
|---|---|---|
| Training participant/potential applicant | Sasa Bosnjak, University of Subotica/Department of economy; Slobodan Stevancev, Chamber of Commerce, Sombor | 24.02.10 |
| JTS Programme Serbia-B&H | Ljiljana Rsumovic, Head of JTS; Irena Markovic; Zana Vejnovic; Vladislav Vlajic - Task Managers | 25.02.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Milos Radojevic - Regional Develop-ing Agency Zlatibor | 25.02.10 |
| Training participant/potential applicant | Sasa Savic - Regional Chamber of Commerce Uzice | 25.02.10 |
| Debriefing | Delegation and OS Luka Manunta, Project Manager; Gordana Lazarevic, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Fi-nance; Sanda Simic, Head of CBC Department, Ministry of Finance | 26.02.10 |
| CBC TA Team | Florian Hauser, Team Leader, Inter-Regional Co-operation Support Pro-gramme, MoF; Andrijana Paric, Team member | 26.02.10 |

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# 3. List of documents

| No. | Type of document | Title | Author | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | **EU Strategies** | Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006-2007 | European Commission | 08.11.2006 |
| | | Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2007–2008 | European Commission | |
| | | Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008–2009 | European Commission | |
| | | Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010 | European Commission | 14.10.2009 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework 2008–2010 (COM/672 Final) | European Commission | 08.11.2006 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework 2009–2011 (COM/689 Final) | European Commission | 6.11.2007 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework 2010–2012 (COM/705 Final) | European Commission | 5.11.2008 |
| | | IPA Regulation 718/2007 (as amended by Regulation (EU) 80/2010) | European Commission | 12.06.2007 |
| | | IPA Regulation 1085/2006 | European Commission | 17.07.2006 |
| **Cross-border Programmes** | | | | |
| 2. | **Albania-Montenegro** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2009 | Ministry of European Integration (AL) & Secretariat for European Integration (ME) | 03.09.2007 |
| | | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| | | Annual Implementation Report 2007-2008 | JTS/OS | June 2009 |
| 3. | **Bosnia-Montenegro** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2009 | Directorate for European Integration (BiH) & Secretariat for European Integration (ME) | 10.09.2007 |
| | | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| | | Annual Implementation Report 2007-2008 | JTS/OS | June 2009 |
| | | JTS Manual of Procedures | JTS | July 2008 |
| 4. | **Croatia-Montenegro** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2013 | HR, ME | 05.2007 |
| | | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| 5. | **Croatia-Serbia** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2013 | HR, RS | 05.2007 |
| | | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| | | Annual Implementation Report 2007-2008 | JTS/OS | June 2009 |
| 6. | **Croatia-** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2013 | HR, BiH | 05.2007 |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Bosnia** | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| | | JTS Manual of Procedures | JTS | 08.2008 |
| | | Annual Implementation Report 2007-2008 | JTS/OS | June 2009 |
| **7.** | **MK-Albania** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2009 | Ministry of Self-Government (MK) & Ministry of European Integration (AL) | |
| | | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| | | Annual Implementation Report 2007-2008 | JTS/OS | June 2009 |
| **8.** | **Serbia-Bosnia** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2009 | Ministry of Finance (RS) & Directorate for European Integration (BiH) | 02.08.2007 |
| | | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| | | Annual Implementation Report 2007-2008 | JTS/OS | June 2009 |
| **9.** | **Serbia-Montenegro** | Cross-border Programme 2007-2013 | Ministry of Finance (RS) & Secretariat for European Integration (ME) | 30.05.2007 |
| | | Guidelines for Grant Applicants | JTS/OS | |
| | | Annual Implementation Report 2007-2008 | JTS/OS | June 2009 |
| **Countries** | | | | |
| **10.** | **Albania** | European Partnership (EC/210/2008) | European Commission | 18.02.2008 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007-2009) (2008–2010) (2009–2011) | European Commission | 31.05.2007 -.-.2008 -.-.2009 |
| | | Stabilisation and Association Agreement | European Community | |
| | | National Plan for the implementation of SAA | Republic of Albania | 08.2007 |
| | | National Strategy for Development and Implementation | Republic of Albania | 03.2008 |
| | | Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009 | European Commission | 6.11.2007 5.11.2008 14.10.2009 |
| | | Ad-Hoc Evaluation of the CARDS Programme | European Commission | 17.12.2008 |
| **11.** | **Bosnia and Herzegovina** | European Partnership (EC/210/2008) | European Commission | 19.03.2008 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007-2009) (2008–2010) (2009–2011) | European Commission | 18.02.2008 -.-.2009 01.07.2009 |

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| | | Stabilisation and Association Agreement | European Community | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009 | European Commission | 06.11.2007 05.11.2008 14.10.2009 |
| 12. | **Croatia** | Accession Partnership (EC/119/2008) | European Commission | 12.02.2008 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007-2009) (2008–2010) (2009–2011) | European Commission | 20.06.2007 -.-.2008 -.-.2009 |
| | | Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009 | European Commission | 06.11.2007 05.11.2008 14.10.2009 |
| 13. | **MK** | Accession Partnership (EC/212/2008) | European Commission | 18.02.2008 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007-2009) (2008–2010) (2009–2011) | European Commission | 30.04.2007 -.-.2008 -.-.2009 |
| | | Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009 | European Commission | 06.11.2007 05.11.2008 14.10.2009 |
| 14. | **Montenegro** | European Partnership (EC/210/2008) | European Commission | 22.01.2007 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007-2009) (2008–2010) (2009–2011) | European Commission | 01.06.2007 -.-.2008 -.-.2009 |
| | | Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009 | European Commission | 06.11.2007 05.11.2008 14.10.2009 |
| 15. | **Serbia** | Operational Manual for IPA Programming | Ministry of Finance, RS | -.-.- |
| | | European Partnership (EC/213/2008) | European Commission | 18.02.2008 |
| | | Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007–2009) (2008-2010) (2009–2011) | European Commission | 18.06.2007 -.-.2008 -.-.2009 |
| | | Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009 | European Commission | 06.11.2007 05.11.2008 14.10.2009 |
| **Evaluations** | | | | |
| 16. | **EU evaluations and monitoring** | Evaluations 2001-2008 by sectors | European Agency for Reconstruction | 10.2008 |
| | | Evaluation of the assistance to the Balkan Countries under CARDS regulation 2666/2000 (Vol. I-III) | Development Researcher's Network Con- | 06.2004 |

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Interim Evaluation of Cross-Border Programmes between Candidate/Potential Candidate Country (Intra-Western Balkan Borders) under the Cross-Border Cooperation Component of IPA

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| | | Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) for the CARDS/Western Balkan countries. Annual Report 2006 | INTEGRATION International Management Consultants (commissioned by the European Commission) | n/a |
| | | Court of Auditors Special Report No 5/2007 on the Commission's management of the CARDS programme with Commissions replies | European Court of Auditors | 27.11.2007 |
| | | Lessons learned to lessons applied 2000-2008 | European Agency for Reconstruction | 2008 |
| | | DG ELARG Evaluation Guide | European Commission | 03.2008 |
| | | Assessment of the first call for proposal IPA-IPA Countries | CBIB Phase II | Not dated |
| **TA Reports** | | | | |
| 17. | **TA Reports** | CBIB (Phase II) 2nd Interim Report | CBIB | 30.11.2009 |
| | | CBIB (Phase I) Final Report | CBIB | 22.10.2008 |
| | | EU CORIN Draft Final Report | EU CORIN | 20.03.2009 |
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