



**Second Meeting of the Joint Working Group
for Strategic Planning and Programming
for INTERREG-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme
between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia 2021-2027**

Date: December, 18th, 2020

Place: video conferencing through Webex platform

Chair: Denitsa Nikolova - Deputy-minister, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Republic of Bulgaria

Co-chair: - Mihajilo Dašić, Assistant minister, Ministry of European Integration, Head of NA

Organizers:

Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works - MRDPW – Desislava Georgieva, Stanka Dimitrova, Desislava Tencheva, Trayana Yordanova;

Ministry of European Integration, Government of the Republic of Serbia – Sanda Šimić – Stambolić, Valentina Vidović, Kristina Askovic.

Joint Secretariat – Stoyan Kanatov, Aneliya Aleksandrova

| <i>AGENDA</i> | |
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| 10:00 – 10:15 | Registration of participants |
| 10:15 - 10:30 | Opening of the meeting |
| | Speeches of the representatives on the perspectives for INTERREG-IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia in 2021-2027: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria• Ministry of European Integration, Republic of Serbia |
| 10:30 – 10:35 | Approval of the agenda |
| 10:35 – 11:15 | Proposal for Intervention logic for INTERREG-IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia in 2021-2027 – presentation, comments and approval |
| 11:15– 11:30 | AOB; end of meeting. |

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| Subject: | Opening of the meeting |
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Mrs. Denitsa NIKOLOVA opened officially the second meeting of the Joint Working Group for elaboration of the Interreg IPA-Bulgaria - Serbia Programme 2021-2027. First she expressed her gratitude to the colleagues from Serbia for the fruitful cooperation and dialogue over the years, ~~which has become the good basis for the forthcoming important steps and decisions needed for~~ development and approval of the new programme for the period 2021-2027. She pointed out that at present the countries are at a crucial stage of programme elaboration – decisions have to be taken to target most efficiently programme funds in order to achieve added value and a more tangible effect on the economic development of the common cross-border region. Mrs. Nikolova explained that by joint efforts of the Managing Authority and National Authority intervention logic have been prepared, identifying the needs and potential of the area. The latter show that both countries share many common challenges and resources in the cross-border area and demonstrate close performance in key economic indicators.

Mr. Mihajilo DAŠIĆ thanked Ms. Nikolova for the good collaboration and greeted the participants in the meeting. He pointed out the importance of the CBC Programmes between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia and stressed out that the both Authority made important steps for the new CBC Programme as tailored to the needs of the region.

Mrs. NIKOLOVA announced that at the present meeting there is a guest from the side of the European Commission – **Mrs. Magali LENOEL**, who is the responsible desk officer of the programme for the current programming period.

Afterwards, **Mrs. Stanka DIMITROVA**, after checking the number of participants, confirmed that the quorum was met since 9 out of 15 members are present from Bulgarian part of the voting members of the JWG and 7 out of 12 are present from the Serbian part of the voting members.

Mrs. NIKOLOVA explained some technical details for voting and taking the floor by the JWG members through the video conferencing software and put to vote and approval the agenda of the meeting. The agenda was adopted unanimously. After that, the floor was given to Mrs. Desislava Tencheva, chief expert in the Managing Authority to present the Intervention logic (IL) of the new CBC programme.

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| Subject: | Proposal for Intervention logic for INTERREG-IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia in 2021-2027 |
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Mrs. Desislava TENCHEVA, chief expert in Territorial Cooperation Management Directorate, MRDPW made a presentation on the Intervention logic for the Interreg IPA-CBC Programme Republic of Bulgaria - Republic of Serbia 2021-2027. She presented the strategic outlook of the Intervention logic, consisting of three policy objectives and 4 priorities: Priority 1 “Competitive border region”, corresponding to Policy objective 1 “A smarter Europe”, Priority 2 “Integrated development of border region”, corresponding to Policy objective 5 “A Europe closer to citizens”, Priority 3 “A more resilient border region”, corresponding to PO 2 “A greener, low-carbon Europe”,

and Priority “Technical assistance”. Mrs. Tencheva outlined the indicative distribution of the programme funds, as follows: 15% for Priority 1; 55% for Priority 2; 20% to Priority 3; and 10 % to Priority “Technical Assistance”. Further on Mrs. Tencheva gave insight of the rationale behind selection of each policy area, as well as the upcoming steps in programming - tendering and preparation of the Territorial Strategy under PO5, Environmental assessment of the programme and the Territorial Strategy and preparation of the first draft of the programme after adoption of the 2021-2027 regulatory framework.

After that, Mrs. Tencheva present all received comments together with the opinion of the MA and pointed out that they are presented in detail in the “TABLE WITH COMMENTS, received by JWG members/observers on the Intervention Logic of the new INTERREG IPA III programme in the framework of programming Republic of Bulgaria- Republic of Serbia 2021-2027”.

Mrs. Slavica KUKOLJ, representative of Ministry of Trade, Tourism, and Telecommunications proposed to put “minimum” before the 40% for the tourism as this sector is strongly affected by the COVID pandemic.

Mrs. LENOEL, representative of DG REGIO, European Commission, asked MA about timeframe of the activities for the future contract for elaboration of the Territorial strategy.

Mrs. NIKOLOVA answered the question of Mrs. Kukolj as highlighted that there will be a special analysis of the needs within the preparation of the strategy and the sectors of tourism and culture will be taken into consideration. She added that for the moment at least 40% will be dedicated in this direction and this will be reflected by the respective indicator. Based on the strategy there will be a final proportion of the investments.

Mrs. GEORGIEVA answered to the question of the Mrs. Lenoel, she pointed out that in case of favourable decision of the meeting the MA have ready to launch procurement for territorial strategy and envisaged the period of work to be around three months and half, for the most important part which will reflect in the Programme and will be submitted for consideration for European Commission.

Mrs. Iliana PHILIPOVA, representative of the Nationally representative employers' organizations, which are approved by the Council of Ministers in accordance of Labour core proposed PO2 not to be limited only to the Ministry of Interior as a beneficiary.

Mrs. Desislava Georgieva answered that the strategic project will involve not only the responsible institutions, but also wide range of partners – volunteers' organizations, business, professionals and schools. She added that in terms of PO5 the “bottom-up” approach will bring together also NGOs, clusters, etc. in the integrated projects, which is one of the lessons learnt from the previous programming periods.

Since there were no more comments and remarks on the Intervention Logic, the discussion on the topic was closed and **Mrs. Nikolova** invited the members of the JWG to vote and adopt a decision for approval of the **Intervention logic for the Interreg IPA-CBC Programme Republic of Bulgaria - Republic of Serbia 2021-2027** with respect of the comments received by the members

and the remarks from MA that reflect the comments in the process of discussion. No objections and restraints were expressed. The decision was adopted unanimously.

DECISION No 3 of December 18th, 2020:

The Joint Working Group for Strategic Planning and Programming for INTERREG-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia 2021-2027 approves the Intervention logic for the Interreg IPA-CBC Programme Republic of Bulgaria - Republic of Serbia 2021-2027.

Mrs. NIKOLOVA thanked JWG members for the support and stated that the decision taken gives the MA and NA a green light for preparation of the specific territorial strategy that covers the implementation phase of Thematic objective 5 and to draft the future programme in the needed content. She pointed out that this is also a possibility to continue the efforts of the managing authorities and the members of the JWG and to finalize the draft of the programme in a very timely manner.

Mr. DAŠIĆ also thanked the JWG and emphasized that the agreement on the IL will make an important step ahead towards the new CBC Programme to be tailored to the needs of the region.

Mrs. NIKOLOVA closed the meeting with the final words that all sides have to continue their efforts to move faster in the programming process, including at the EU level. She pointed out that the decisions taken at the meeting were of big importance and she was pleased that they received the support of the JWG. She extended her regards to all members of the JWG for their active participation and contribution, and ensured them that the work on programming will continue intensively.

Attachments:

1. List of participants at the Second Meeting of JWG held on-line on December 18-th, 2020;
2. Table with comments, received by JWG members/observers on the Intervention Logic of the new Interreg IPA III programme in the framework of programming Republic of Bulgaria- Republic of Serbia 2021-2027.

Chair

Denitsa NIKOLOVA

Deputy Minister

Ministry of Regional Development and
Public Works
Republic of Bulgaria

Co-chair

Mihajilo DAŠIĆ

Assistant minister

Ministry of European Integration
Republic of Serbia