

Interreg



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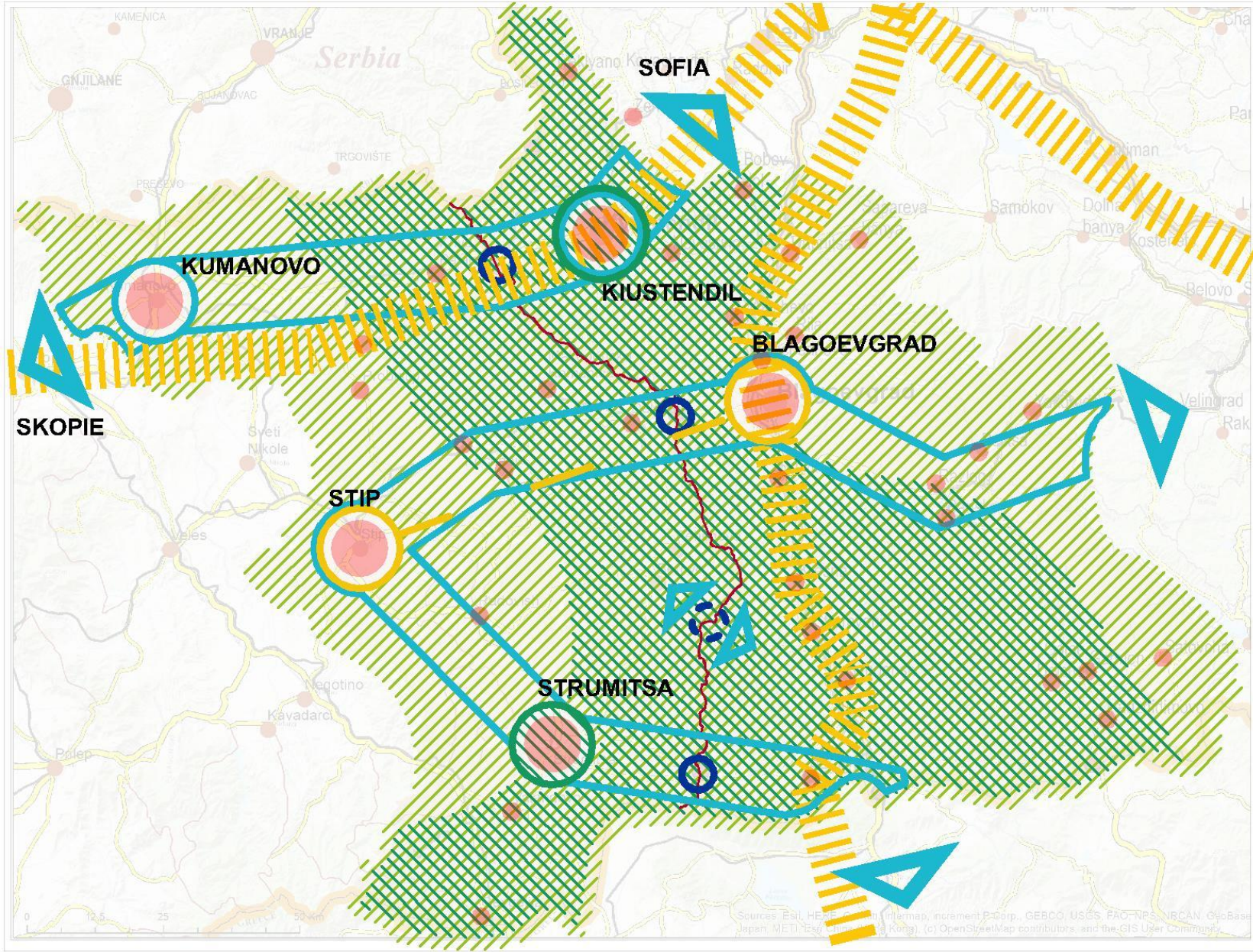
IPA Republic of Bulgaria -
Republic of North Macedonia

INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL STRATEGY

that aims to stimulate the development of the territory through a set of joint operations implemented on both sides of the border.



*One of the objectives set in the 2021-2027 EU Cohesion Policy.



Surveys

Lessons learned

Strategic context

Interreg IPA-CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia

Greener border region

More connected border region

Integrated development of the cross-border region



Territorial Analysis

Selective and focused on identification of the needs and potentials of the area suitable for support through cross-border investments

Geographical characteristics and environment

Demographic characteristics and labor market

Aspects of socio - economic development

Transport and engineering infrastructure

Cultural, historical and natural heritage

Tourism

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NEEDS AND POTENTIALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY

The analysis is selective and focuses on the needs and potentials of the territory that are suitable to be addressed through cross-border investments. The needs and potentials are divided conditionally into two sections:

Increasing the competitiveness of the local economy and improving the business environment:

- overcoming the differences between the settlements and managing depopulation;
- bringing out SMEs with focus on family business through support for improving the staff knowledge and skills;
- increasing the resource and energy efficiency of SMEs using the methods of circular economy;
- continuous renewal of SMEs by developing new knowledge and skills and implementing digital technologies;
- implementing measures to overcome shortage of qualified staff and to increase the executive and management staff qualification;
- improving the company culture of cooperation between SMEs;
- encouraging economically inactive people to look for work experience or education and supporting the business in opening new job positions;
- **relatively good educational infrastructure in terms of territorial coverage, universities within the territory;**
- **rich cultural-historical and natural heritage.**

Developing an attractive all-season tourist product through joint intelligent solutions:

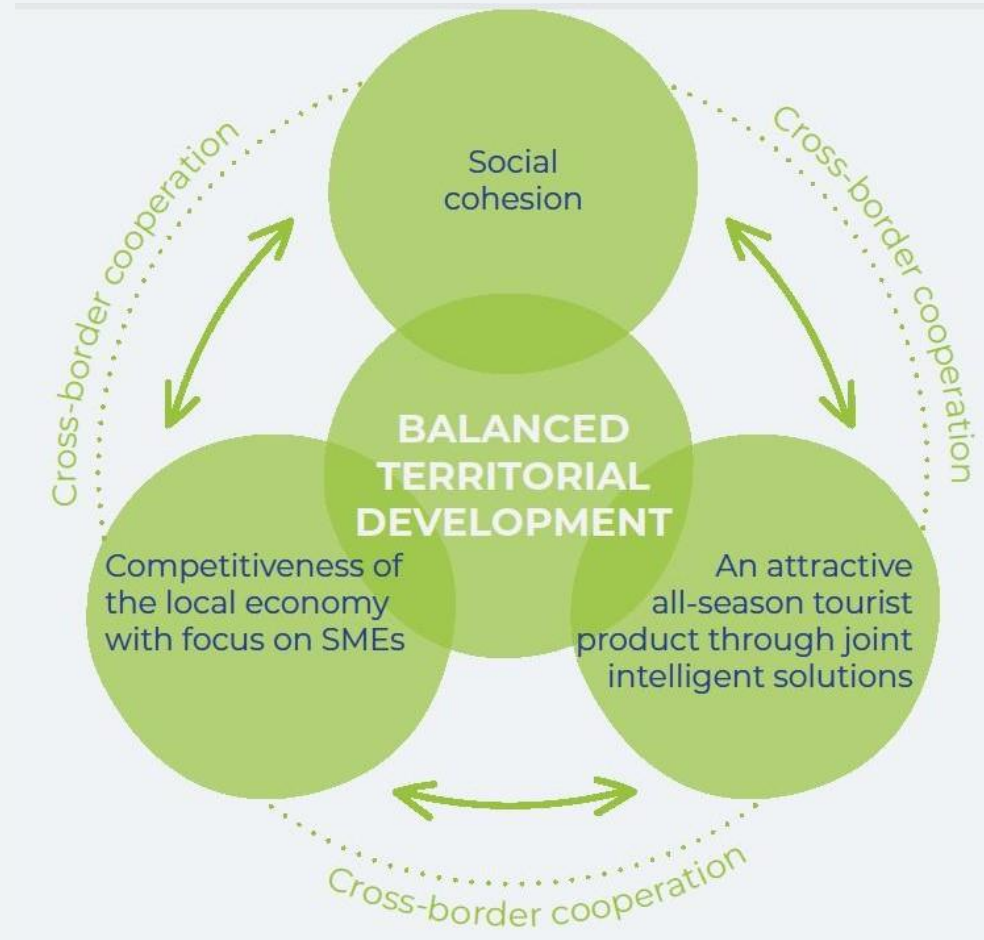
- developing a system for alternative modes of transport;
- implementing joint actions to reduce domestic and transboundary environmental pollution in order to adapt to climate change;
- organising coordinated joint actions in cases of natural disasters and accidents;
- improving the awareness of the local inhabitants about the impact of human activity on the environment and stimulating the motivation to preserve the cultural-historical and natural heritage;
- developing and maintaining the infrastructure of the cultural-historical sites and the natural landmarks;
- adapting the strong seasonal nature of the tourist services within the territory to an all-season tourist product that is available during the whole year;
- implementing target measures for development of ecological tourism;
- providing financial support for cultural activities and exchanges;
- **opportunity to increase competitiveness by encouraging the development of sustainable four-season tourism within the territory.**

SpO

Social development and cohesion through sustainable economic growth based on a 'knowledge economy' and aimed at ironing out the significant differences between population centres at different hierarchical levels in the CBC region

SpO 1.1.

Increasing the competitiveness of the local economy and improving the business environment.



SpO 1.2.

The cultural and historical heritage of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia: a prerequisite for the development of an attractive, all-season tourism product by means of smart solutions that ensure universal access and participation.

PO5
Europe
closer to
citizens

SpO 2

SpO 1

M1 Actions aimed at increasing the productive capacity of the SMEs to become greener, more digital and more competitive (technological modernization);

M2 Actions aimed at improving the knowledge capacity of the SMEs to operate in a greener, more digital and more competitive environment (acquiring new knowledge and skills, incl. access to external finances);

M3 Actions aimed at building effective product development process (it encompasses all steps needed to take a product from concept to market availability) and reaching new markets (marketing, entrepreneurship, internationalization);

M1 Improving the mobility and connectivity of the transport and engineering infrastructure by a system of alternative mobility, including a grid of bicycle lanes, 'dirt' forest and country roads, helipads, etc.;

M2 Development and marketing of integrated regional tourism products suitable for various activities through the inclusion of the cultural and historical heritage and natural assets; joint efforts for diversification of the forms of tourism services and the realisation of all-season tourism in the CBC region;

M3 Development of integrated targeted financial packages for supporting business activity and the creation of new SMEs in tourism with a focus on family businesses and the offering of local tourism products: wine and gourmet tourism, rural eco-tourism, cycling tourism, hunting and fishing, off-road tourism, etc.;

M4 Creating a joint network of locations for the realization of concepts like 'green school', 'in the country', 'visiting with...', 'made by...', etc.;

M5 Elaborating and applying joint measures for reducing the vulnerability of services in the tourism sector to the effects of pandemic and epidemic situations; promoting the development of health and recreational tourism: products and services related to physical exercise, outdoor sports, strengthening the immune system and improving the health status through spa procedures, climate therapy, mud therapy; combining short breaks of different kinds with individual travel;

