

Rules of procedure of the Task Force supporting the elaboration of the Territorial strategy for integrated measures under INTERREG-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia for the programming period 2021-2027

Approved by Task Force by Decision No1 on 11.03.2021

1. Tasks of the Task Force

Shall support the elaboration of the Territorial strategy for integrated measures under PO5 “Europe closer to citizens” under INTERREG-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2027

Shall have the overall responsibility for:

- Collaboration with the Consultant during the elaboration of the Territorial strategy for integrated measures under PO5 “Europe closer to citizens” under INTERREG-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2027
- Feed in results of dialogues with relevant stakeholders, databases, expert positions etc.

OBJECTIVE & EXPECTED RESULTS

The overall objective of the Task Force is as follows:

To participate with supporting functions in the elaboration of multiannual (covering the period 2021-2027) Strategy for Integrated Territorial Development, with the aim to meet the needs of the INTERREG - IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia 2021 - 2027 to contribute to a sustainable economic development of the region. The implementation of the measures of the Territorial Strategy shall be conducted under the scope of PO5 “Europe Closer to Citizens”.

Result to be achieved

- Consulted with the Task force group Final draft of the Territorial strategy for integrated measures, including identified functional area/s, strategy governance, indicators for implementation and potential list of operations to be financed under the

INTERREG - IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia 2021 -2027 in English;

SCOPE OF THE WORK

Description of the assignment

The Territorial strategy should be elaborated in line with the relevant EU regulations (art. 22 & 23 of the draft CPR and art. 20 of the draft INTERREG Regulation), as well as INTERACT Publication - Bringing territoriality into INTERREG - Policy Objective 5, 18 June 2021.

The Task force will consult the contractor during the execution of the tasks assigned described in non-exhaustive list below:

1. Identifying the geographical area to be covered by strategy. The areas should have a high degree of interactions and interdependencies, where simultaneous actions in different sectors are necessary for their future development (tourism, education, employment, transport, environment, business support etc.);
2. Preparing the analysis of the development needs and potentials of the territories covered by the strategy, based on which the key spheres of intervention that will be addressed in the strategy;
3. Preparing the description of an integrated approach to address the identified development needs, potential of each region.

3.1 Defining / establishing the strategic context and methodology.

This activity will include establishing the methodology for developing of the strategy, taking into consideration existing strategic documents at European, national, regional and local level. The methodology shall describe the process and appropriate tools for each stage / activity of the development of the respective strategy.

3.2 Development of the strategy, including vision and prioritization of interventions. Based on the results from the previous stages, this one will include establishing of the strategic and specific objectives, as well as prioritising measures and interventions (which shall be SMART - specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound).

¹ <http://www.interact-eu.net/library#2959-publication-bringing-territoriality-interreg-policy-objective-5>

4. Preparing a description of the involvement of partners/stakeholders in the preparation and in implementation of the strategy, including the roles and responsibilities of the various parties taking into consideration the multilevel governance principle.
5. Development of the methodology for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. The activity includes establishing future responsibilities for the strategy implementation, methodology for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation, defining output and result indicators for the implementation of the strategy.
6. Preparation of a methodology for and establishment of a potential long list of operations to be supported, based on mapping of possible interventions for integrated economic and social development, cultural and natural heritage preservation, sustainable tourism, environmental management etc., as well as identifying target groups and potential beneficiaries. The operations from the list should be grouped, prioritised and time-bound (based on a transparent and clear methodology and selection criteria).
7. Preparation of criteria for selection and establishing of a potential short list of operations to be supported under the INTERREG - IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2027 (with a total budget of approximately 50%).
8. Shaping the action plan of the respective 7-year strategy implementation, as well as of the shortlisted operations to be supported by the respective INTERREG - IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2027. During this stage, the timeframe for the implementation of the envisaged measures in order to accomplish the strategy objectives will be established.
9. Reflecting in the final draft of the Territorial strategy the comments and remarks received during the consultation and approval procedures, as well as taking into consideration the outcomes from the Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA).

2. Members of the Task Force

- a) Members of the Task Force are designated representatives of the cross-border region of the future programme, which covers Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil districts of Republic of Bulgaria and North-Eastern, Eastern, and South-Eastern

planning regions of Republic of North Macedonia, according to Annex 1 to the present document.

- b) The members have an exclusively consultative role in the elaboration of the Territorial strategy for integrated measures.
- c) If necessary, on a case-by-case basis any other relevant bodies could be also consulted upon joint agreement.
- d) The Joint Secretariat of the Interreg-IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as “JS”) together with the Managing Authority shall perform the tasks of a Task Force secretariat related to the organization of meetings, communication towards its members, submitting of agenda and other working documents, preparation of minutes, and any other relevant administrative tasks.
- e) If a member of the Task Force is not able to participate in the Task Force meeting, he/she informs the Secretariat at least 2 working days in advance of the meeting. The deputy or a substitute representing the member can attend the meeting instead, having the same rights and duties as the member him/herself.
- f) The members shall avoid any conflicts of interest and shall act in favour of the border region. The members shall not act with the purpose of obtaining financial advantages or other benefits for themselves or for others.

3. Meetings of the Task Force

- a) The Task Force shall be chaired by a co-chairs and a vice- co- chairs by the Managing Authority and the National Authority under CBC Programme. The role of the Chair and Vice-chair shall be ensured by the responsible institution for the cross-border cooperation in the respective partnering countries: the Director of “Territorial Cooperation Management” Directorate at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works in Republic of Bulgaria, and the Cross-border Cooperation Coordinator at the Ministry of Local Self-Government in Republic of North Macedonia, or a duly authorized official by the country. The Chair shall belong to the country hosting the meeting.
- b) In the absence of a Chair, its attributions will be exerted by its deputy, or a substitute person delegated by the Chair.

- c) The working language of all meetings/written procedures and documents is English. The discussion might be carried on also in the languages of the two countries where simultaneous translation for both languages is provided, as appropriate. The documents will be presented to the Task Force members in English.
- d) The Task Force' Secretariat, on behalf of the Chair, shall send the draft agenda and the relevant documents via email/fax at least 10 (ten) working days before a meeting or before the end of a written procedure. This period may be reduced to 5 (five) working days at the discretion of the Chair of the Task Force.
- e) The work of the Task Force should be arranged according to the principles of effectiveness and efficiency.
- f) Task Force members may be also consult on documents in online meetings and written procedures and according to the same efficiency principles applied to the meetings.
- g) Comments on proposed documents shall be done in writing via email in order to allow smooth communication process.
- h) The comments and suggestions of the members shall be incorporated in table, containing the answers, justifications and references to corrected parts of the respective document.

Attachments:

Annex I: List of Members of the Task Force for supporting the elaboration of the Territorial strategy for integrated measures under PO5 "Europe closer to citizens" under INTERREG-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia for the programming period 2021-2027.

Annex II: Indicative Time Shedule for development of Territorial strategy by the Consultant - National Centre for Regional Development and the Task Force of Interreg-IPA CBC Programme between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia (the start date is 11.01.2021 and the period of implementation of tasks is 12 months).

Annex III: Confidentiality and Impartiality Declaration for the members and guests of the Task Force meetings.