

# **IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020**

## **Programme summary – programme starting points and objectives**

**August 2014**

The IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia- Serbia will support cross-border cooperation between the participating countries in the upcoming programming period 2014-2020. The programme is currently in the preparation phase, during which key variables of the programme are being agreed between the participating countries in line with the programming process consisting of Task Force meetings and workshops and thorough consultations with the relevant stakeholders and partners where the programme area shared challenges were identified as well as measures to address them. This paper summarises the current version of the IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia- Serbia 2014-2020 in order to provide a brief overview on the strategic orientation of the programme.

### **1. Background information about the Programme**

In total, the programme area covers 9 NUTS III regions in the cross border territory between Croatia and Serbia. On the Croatian side, the programme area includes 4 counties on the north-east of Croatia: Osječko-baranjska, Vukovarsko-srijemska, Brodsko-posavska and Požeško-slavonska county, whereas on the Serbian side, the programme area covers 5 districts on north-west of Serbia: North Bačka, West Bačka, South Bačka, Srem and Mačva district. Covering an area of over 18 000 square km the IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia is home to about 2.3 million people.

The programme area has a large number of assets but also faces numerous challenges in various fields affecting regional development, which have all been thoroughly analysed before concentrating the programme on four thematic priorities. Results expected from the programme will directly contribute to reaching goals of Europe 2020 Strategy as well as South East Europe 2020 Strategy.

### **2. Programme objectives, priorities and areas of intervention**

The overall objective of the IPA Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020 is to strengthen the social, economic and territorial development of the cross-border programme area through the implementation of joint projects and activities to be supported within four thematic priorities:

1. Employment, social inclusion, health and social services
2. Environment, risk prevention and energy production
3. Tourism and cultural and natural heritage
4. Competitiveness and SME development

The selected thematic priorities have been translated into four priority axes which will enable the programme to become the tool for implementing smart solutions that answer to the programme area needs and challenges.

Within four priority axes, five specific objectives indicate specific changes that the IPA CBC Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020 anticipates to achieve through implementation of specific actions and realization of related outputs.

## **Priority Axis 1 – “Promoting employment and improving social inclusion and social and health services”**

Under this priority, the programme aims to improve facilities, services and employment throughout the programme area by enhancing labour skills and employability as well as by improving social inclusion and services in the area of public health and social welfare.

The financial allocation to this priority amounts to 15% of total programme EU funding (about 4,5 million EUR). Projects to be funded under this priority will have to tackle the following specific objective (SO):

### **SO 1.1. - To improve facilities, services and employment throughout the programme area.**

This specific objective will be achieved through cross-border cooperation implementing the following indicative list of actions:

- Developing and implementing lifelong learning programmes and encouraging education for the development of entrepreneurship and self-employment as well as networking of institutions in order to improve social entrepreneurship
- Supporting education related actions aiming at increase of skills of vulnerable groups
- Strengthening of health care for vulnerable groups and implementation of ICT solutions aiming at improvement of health care and social care services

## **Priority Axis 2 – “Protecting the environment, improving risk prevention and sustainable energy production”**

Under this priority, the programme directly responds to the environment protection challenges, risk prevention improvement needs and aims at strengthening the usage of renewable resources thus improving energy efficiency.

The financial allocation to this priority amounts to 28% of total programme EU funding (about 8,4 million EUR). Projects to be funded under this priority will have to tackle one of the two specific objectives (SO):

### **SO 2.1. - To improve management systems for risk prevention (water, soil, air, environmental and biodiversity (including ecosystems and NATURA 2000) protection.**

This specific objective will be achieved through cross-border cooperation implementing the following indicative list of actions:

- Implementing joint actions in the area of water management, soil and air quality and waste management
- Implementing pilot and demonstration projects on innovative technologies to enforce management systems for risk prevention.
- Developing and implementing joint plans for protection of endangered species and protection and revitalisation of habitats and nature, environment and/or biodiversity protection

### **SO 2.2. - To promote innovative technologies for sustainable energy production and energy efficiency.**

This specific objective will be achieved through cross-border cooperation implementing the following indicative list of actions:

- Investing in joint infrastructure and strengthening capacity building on sustainable energy production and energy efficiency

- Developing and implementing pilot and demonstration projects on innovative technologies in the field of sustainable energy production and energy efficiency.
- Implementing joint incentives in order to improve legal framework in the area of renewable energy resources and energy efficiency (e.g. analyses, comparisons, recommendation, local/regional action plans, etc).

### **Priority Axis 3 – “Encouraging tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage”**

Under this priority, the programme aims at further strengthening, diversification and integration of tourism potential in the programme area as well as preservation and better management of cultural and natural heritage assets.

The financial allocation to this priority amounts to 25% of total programme EU funding (about 7.5 million EUR). Projects to be funded under this priority will have to tackle the following specific objective (SO):

#### **SO 3.1. - To strengthen, diversify, integrate the cross-border tourism offer and better manage cultural and natural heritage assets**

This specific objective will be achieved through cross-border cooperation implementing the following indicative list of actions:

- Joint development and promotion of all tourism niches and joint development and diversification of the tourism offer and capacity as well as development, branding, protection and promotion of new tourism products
- Preparing and developing joint tourism strategies and action plans.
- Capacity building and development of human resources in the areas of tourism and protection of cultural and natural heritage
- Developing and implementing joint initiatives on valuation, preservation, restoration and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage sites
- Implementation of training programs in the field of quality assurance and standardization of cultural and natural heritage.

### **Priority Axis 4 – “Enhancing competitiveness and developing business environment and investment in the programme area”**

Under this priority, the programme addresses the main challenges and needs related to the enhancing competitiveness and development of business environment and investment in the programme area through improving competitiveness, enhancing research, development, innovation and business support actions

The financial allocation to this priority amounts to 22% of total programme EU funding (about 6.6 million EUR). Projects to be funded under this priority will have to tackle the following specific objective (SO):

#### **SO 4.1 - To improve competitiveness of the programme area through enhancing research, development, innovation and business support actions**

This specific objective will be achieved through cross-border cooperation implementing the following indicative list of actions:

- Establishment of and support to existing and new business related sectorial networks and organisations in standardisation, product protection, marketing and development of cross-border markets.
- Development of cooperation between SMEs, public sector, education, research & development organisations to improve business innovativeness and technology based on smart specialization approach.

- Improving knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship, innovation and new technologies and development of training programmes on applying innovation and R&D in their industry
- Establishing laboratories, innovation, technological and competence centres, spin offs and ICT infrastructure for common use of the enterprises in the border region in order to upgrade the existing and develop new products, services, processes or prototypes.

IPA Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020 is financed from European Fund for Regional Development as regards to Croatian part of Programme allocation and from Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Fund as regards to Serbian part of programme allocation. The total programme budget is about 30 million EUR.

Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds is in charge for coordinating the programming process being conducted in cooperation between programme participating countries.

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