



ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT **2011**

Romania-Bulgaria **Cross-Border Cooperation Operational Programme** **2007-2013**



Table of Contents

1 Identification	5
2 Overview of the implementation of the Operational Programme	6
2.1 <i>Achievement and analysis of the progress.....</i>	6
2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the Operational Programme:.....	9
2.1.2 Financial information	10
2.1.3 Information about the breakdown of use of the Funds	15
2.1.4 Assistance by target groups	21
2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used	22
2.1.6 Qualitative analysis	22
2.2 <i>Information about compliance with Community law</i>	26
2.3 <i>Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them.....</i>	28
2.3.1 Changes in national legislation affecting the Programme implementation ... Error! Bookmark not defined.	
2.3.2 Encountered problems	28
2.3.3 Measures taken to overcome the encountered problems:.....	30
2.4 <i>Changes in the context of the OP implementation (if relevant)</i>	33
2.5 <i>Substantial modification under Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (if relevant).....</i>	34
2.6 <i>Complementarity with other instruments.....</i>	34
2.7 <i>Monitoring and evaluation.....</i>	35
2.7.1 Monitoring	35
2.7.2 Evaluation	38
2.8 <i>National performance reserve</i>	41
3 Implementation by priority	41
3.1 <i>Priority Axis 1</i>	41
3.1.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress.....	41
3.1.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them	45
3.2 <i>Priority Axis 2</i>	45
3.2.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress.....	46
3.2.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them	50
3.3 <i>Priority Axis 3</i>	50
3.3.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress.....	51
3.3.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them	57
3.4 <i>Priority Axis 4</i>	57
3.4.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress.....	57
3.4.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them	58
4 ESF Programmes: coherence and concentration	59
5 ERDF/CF programmes: Major Projects	59
6 Technical Assistance	59
6.1 <i>Technical Assistance Annual Strategy for 2011 (TAAS).....</i>	59
6.1.1 Beneficiaries of the Technical Assistance priority axis	60
6.1.2 Technical assistance contracting and payments	60
6.1.3 Technical Assistance (Managing Authority).....	60
6.1.4 Technical Assistance (National Authority).....	61
6.1.5 Technical Assistance (Joint Technical Secretariat)	62
6.1.6 Other technical assistance available for the Programme	63
7 Information and Publicity	63
7.1 <i>Communication Events</i>	64
7.1.1 Events organized by the National Authority.....	64
7.1.2 Events for Programme implementation (Joint Technical Secretariat)	65
7.1.3 Information and Promotion events (Joint Technical Secretariat)	67
7.2 <i>Information and communication media and materials.....</i>	70
7.2.1 Electronic channels for information and communication	70
7.2.2 Promotion materials.....	70
7.2.3 Press-cutting services (JTS)	71

7.2.4	Electronic and phone communication	72
7.3	<i>Monitoring and evaluation of the Communication Plan (JTS and MA)</i>	72

Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Audit Authority
ACSI	Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments
AWG	Assessment Working Group
BG	Bulgaria
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CU	Control Unit within the Regional Office for Cross-Border Cooperation Calarași
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
FLC	First level control
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
KAI	Key Area of Intervention
LP	Lead Partner
MA	Managing Authority
MIS-ETC	Management Information System-European Territorial Cooperation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRDT	Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (Romania)
MRDPW	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (Bulgaria)
NA	National Authority
NAMRPP	National Authority for Monitoring and Regulating of Public Procurement (Romania)
OPTA	Operational Programme for Technical Assistance
Phare CBC Programme	Phare (Poland Hungary Aid for Reconstruction of the Economy) Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013
RO	Romania
ROC	CBC Regional Office Calarasi
TAAS	Technical Assistance Annual Strategy
UCVPP	Unit for Coordinating and Verifying Public Procurement (Romania)

1 IDENTIFICATION

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	Objective concerned: European Territorial Cooperation
	Eligible area concerned: Cross-Border Area between Romania and Bulgaria (see Annex 6 for list and map of eligible NUTS III regions)
	Programming period: 2007-2013
	Programme number (CCI No): 2007CB163PO021
	Programme title: ROMANIA - BULGARIACROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2007-2013
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	Reporting year: 2011
	Date of approval of the annual report by the Joint Monitoring Committee: 8th of June 2012

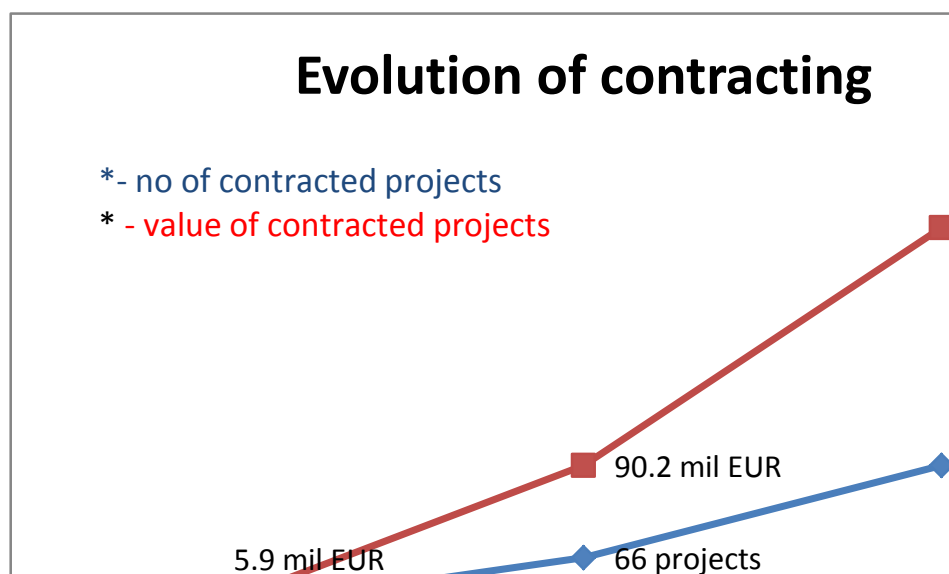
2 OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

2.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRESS

The Programme was approved by the European Commission under the Commission Decision no. 6331 / December 18, 2007.

The 2009 Annual Implementation Report was accepted by the European Commission on 14th of September 2010 and the 2010 Annual Implementation Report was accepted by the European Commission on 22nd of December 2011.

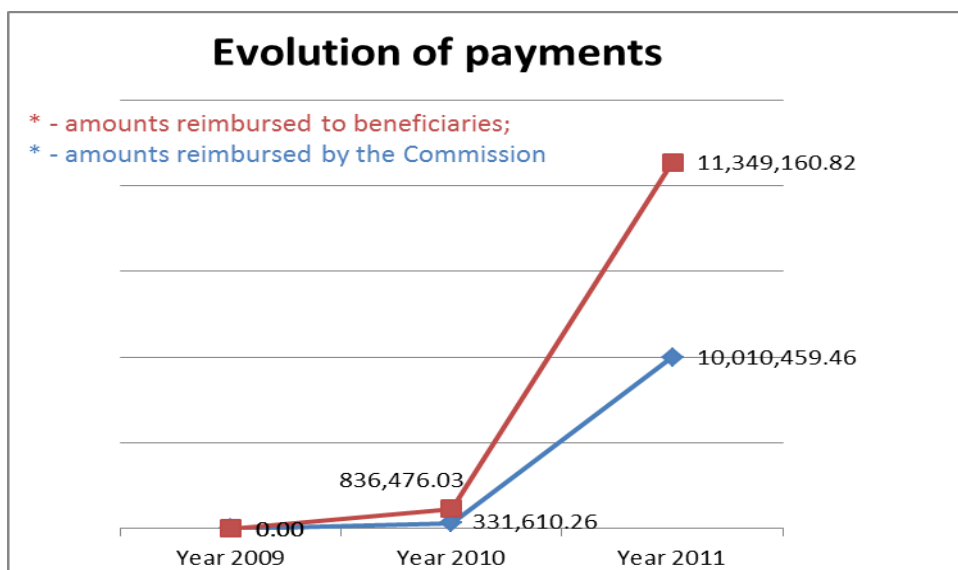
During 2011 the continuation of the progress made in 2010 regarding the increase of the number of contracted projects from 66 projects contracted at the end of 2010, of a total value of 89,839,085.18 Euro; to 110 contracted projects at the end of 2011, with a total value of **181,958,360.90 Euro**.



During the year 2011, the first 31 projects have finalized their implementation period with a total eligible budget of 11,798,594.12 EURO.

									MEUR	
Submitted projects			Selected projects			Contracted projects			Payments to beneficiaries	
No	Total value	Of which EU	No	Total value	Of which EU	No	Total value	Of which EU	No	Value
392	586,135,062.46	495,682,980.73	225	405,935,922.04	338,262,345.07	110	181,958,360.90	154,064,391.19	246	11,349,160.82

An important progress was made in 2011 regarding the expenditure paid by the body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries. Thus, if by the end of 2010, an amount of 836,476.03 Euro was paid to the beneficiaries, until 31st of December 2011 a cumulated amount of 11,349,160.82 EURO was paid to the beneficiaries; while a cumulated amount of 10,010,459.46 EURO was received by the end of 2011 from the European Commission, as compared with 331,610.26 EURO received by the end of 2010 from the EC.



During 2011 no new calls for proposals for *regular or strategic projects* were launched. Still, the process of evaluation continued in 2011 for the projects already under evaluation, namely the evaluation of the projects submitted under the second call for proposals, intermediary deadline October 2009 and evaluation of two out of four strategic projects submitted under the second call for strategic projects which were under the re-evaluation.

In 2011 a number of 4 projects in amount of 12,917,312.37 Euro were selected by the ceiling of the financial allocation of Priority Axis 2.

Due to the fact that following the July 2009 selection, the value of compliant projects for Priority Axes 1 and 3 exceeded the entire financial allocation of these axes, a reserve list mechanism was established in accordance with JMC decision no. 52/14.06.2011.

Also, following the selection of project submitted under the Second call for proposal, Intermediary deadline October 2009, the value of compliant projects for Priority Axis 2 also exceeded the entire financial allocation of this axis.

By the end of 2011, the reserve list included 87 projects of a total amount of 162,739,834.94.

The activities of the decision committees of the Programme:

During 2011 two Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) meetings were held:

- the first JMC meeting was held on 22nd of June, 2011, for the approval of the Annual Implementation Report for 2010 and of the Intermediary Evaluation Report for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013;
- the second JMC meeting was held on 29th of November, 2011, during which there were approved the 2012 Technical Assistance Annual Strategy of the Programme, the List of measures regarding the recommendations received following the Programme Intermediary Evaluation and the 2012 Annual Evaluation Plan of the RO-BG Programme.

Only one meeting of the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was held in 2011, on November 28th, where the following decisions have been taken: the list of changes necessary to be made during the pre-contracting phase of several approved projects, the list with the projects approved/rejected for financing the applications submitted within the second call for proposals of the October 2009 intermediary deadline.

Regarding the main task of the JSC - to select projects for funding - four written procedures were organized in order to approve:

1. the strategic project "Danube WATER integrated management (WATER)", submitted in the context of the second call for strategic projects for Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007 - 2013;
2. the list of approved projects, submitted under the second call for proposals, intermediary deadline July 2009 and proposed for re-evaluation;
3. the List of rejected projects submitted under the second call for proposals due to the fact that during the pre-contracting phase, the Programme's structures have encountered a number of difficulties/problems generated by external factors related to the beneficiaries from 4 projects, it became impossible to contract them. Therefore, the projects were proposed to be rejected. For 2 projects, the documents submitted by the beneficiaries within the pre-contracting phase were not in compliance with the Programme's rules, and for the other 2 projects, the beneficiaries failed to submit all requested documents during the pre-contracting phase within the set deadlines;
4. the strategic project "Common Strategy for Sustainable Territorial Development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria", submitted in the context of the second call for strategic projects for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.

In addition, considering the fact that according to the JSC Rules of Procedure, art. 2 (e), for the sound implementation of the Programme JSC shall decide if a project shall continue or not in case of a major change in the project (e.g. changes in the budget lines over 10%, changes of partners etc.), a large number of written procedures were organized, mainly to approve the changes during the pre-contracting/implementation phase for the concerned projects, the modifications of the partnership structures and the extension of the implementation period based on solid and justified arguments and requests received from beneficiaries (see Annex no.5).

2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the Operational Programme:

The indicators used to measure the progress of this priority are shown in the table below and refer to the contracted projects (as for the committed indicators within the Programme) and finalized projects (as for the clearly achieved indicators) until 31st of December 2011. The methodology for reporting on indicators was changed compared with the 2009 and 2010 AIRs, in order to observe the provisions of the *Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Reporting on Core Indicators for the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, Working Document No. 7*:

A. Contracted projects level

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the projects contracted until 31st of December 2011

Programme Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Number of cross-border community based partnerships and networks established for the joint development of the cooperation area, using its human, natural and environmental resources and advantages	Achievement	-	0	1	69	112					112
	Target 2015	386									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of cross-border community based permanent partnerships and networks active by end of the Programme	Achievement	-	0	1	69	112					112
	Target 2015	40									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Joint projects respecting two of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing (%)	Achievement	-	0	1	69	115					115
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Joint projects respecting three of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing (%)	Achievement	-	0	1	68	111					111
	Target 2015	20									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Joint projects respecting four of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing (%)	Achievement	-	0	1	53	91					91
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport, ICT networks and services	Achievement	-	0	0	11	27					27
	Target 2015	39									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Projects encouraging and improving the joint protection and management of the environment	Achievement	-	0	0	13	20					20
	Target 2015	150									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

B. Finalized projects level

Programme Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Number of cross-border community based partnerships and networks established for the joint development of the cooperation area, using its human, natural and environmental resources and advantages	Achievement	-	0	0	0	11					11
	Target 2015	386									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of cross-border community based permanent partnerships and networks active by end of the Programme	Achievement	-	0	0	0	11					11
	Target 2015	40									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Joint projects respecting two of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	11					11
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Joint projects respecting three of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	11					11
	Target 2015	20									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Joint projects respecting four of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	8					8
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport, ICT networks and services	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	39									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Projects encouraging and improving the joint protection and management of the environment	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	150									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the final progress reports submitted for the projects finalized until 31st of December 2011

2.1.2 Financial information

By the end of 2009, the European Commission has provided as **pre-financing** for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme the amount of 19,604,138.13 Euro from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The amount represents 9% of the total allocated contribution from the ERDF funds for the Programme, in line with the provisions of the revised art. 82 of EC Regulation 1083/2006.

For Priority Axes 1-3, until 31.12.2011 there were submitted by the Lead Partners (LP) to the Joint Technical Secretariat a number of 309 reimbursement claims with a total amount of 14,769,882.77 Euro (validated by the First Level Control) - out of which 12,515,398.14 Euro ERDF. A number of 286 reimbursement claims were checked and submitted by JTS to the Managing Authority with a total amount of 13,493,992.17 Euro (validated by FLC) - out of which 11,433,392.82 Euro ERDF. Until 31.12.2011 a number of **246 reimbursement claims** were authorised and paid by the MA to the beneficiaries, with a total ERDF amount of 11,349,160.82 Euro.

The Romanian First Level Control has received until 31.12.2011 from beneficiaries 420 requests for first level control, has effectuated 385 “on the spot” visits, with a total amount verified of 9,390.000 Euro, out of which it was validated an amount of 8,900,000 Euro.

The first level controllers from Bulgaria performed 352 on the spot visits and verification of expenditure of Bulgarian beneficiaries (360 requests for FLC, 5 of them cancelled due to lack of expenditure incurred in the reporting period and 3 due to errors in the reporting period). The beneficiaries reported for verification expenditure to the amount of 8,159,669.59 Euro. The first level controllers verified 8,016,187.89 Euro, and declared as non-eligible 98,561.12 Euro.

37 reimbursement claims were submitted under the Priority Axis 4 - Technical Assistance of the Programme by JTS, Managing Authority and National Authority during 2008-2011. The total value of the reimbursement claims was 2,521,239.14 Euro - out of which 34 were paid by the end of 2011, with an ERDF value of 1,567,577.24 Euro.

During 2011, a number of 22 reimbursement claims were submitted under the Priority Axis 4 - Technical Assistance of the Programme by JTS, Managing Authority and National Authority. The total value of the reimbursement claims was 1,436,705.52 Euro. Out of these reimbursement claims, 19 were paid by the end of 2011 with a total ERDF value of 870,474.21 Euro. The rest of 3 reimbursement claims are in processing and will be paid in the beginning of 2012.

Seven applications for payment were submitted to the European Commission during 2007-2011, with a total ERDF value of 10,010,459.46 Euro, out of which 4 applications were submitted in 2011 with a total ERDF value of 9,678,849.2 Euro.

Financial information by Priority axes:

(Figures expressed in cumulative terms in Euro)

	Total funding of the operational Programme (Union and national)	Basis for calculating Union contribution (Public or total costs)	Total amount of certified eligible expenditure paid by beneficiaries	Corresponding public contribution	Implementation rate In %
	a	b	c	d	e=c/a if T or e=d/a if P
Priority axis 1 Accessibility - Improved mobility and access to transport, information and communication infrastructure in the cross-border area	94,390,722	T	2,952,882.96	2,952,882.96	3.13%
of which ERDF type expenditure	80,238,315		2,493,916.80	2,493,916.80	3.11%
Priority axis 2 Environment - Sustainable use and protection of natural resources and environment and promotion of efficient risk management in the cross-border area	89,557,597	T	2,781,347.50	2,781,347.50	3.11%
of which ERDF type expenditure	76,238,315		2,359,098.37	2,359,098.37	3.10 %
Priority axis 3 Economic and Social Development - Economic development and social cohesion by joint identification and enhancement of the area's comparative advantages	56,293,347	T	5,750,113.19	5,750,113.19	10.21%
of which ERDF type expenditure	47,921,227		4,877,151.26	4,877,151.26	10.18%
Priority axis 4 Technical Assistance	20,193,543	T	2,501,507.21	2,501,507.21	12.39%
of which ERDF type expenditure	13,069,425		1,618,994.39	1,618,994.39	12.39%
Grand total	262,003,541	T	13,985,850.86	13,985,850.86	5.34%
			11,349,160.82	11,349,160.82	

N+3 Rule

In order to prevent the risk of decommitment and ensure smooth project implementation, the Programme bodies prepared procedures for evaluation and selection, contracting and project monitoring. Also, a Project Implementation Manual was prepared and published in order to help and support the beneficiaries during the preparation and implementation of their projects.

Below it is shown the accomplishment status of N+3 rule by 31st of December 2011:

Accomplishment status of n+3 rule AT 31st of December 2011

Romania-Bulgaria CBC Programme 2007-2013

Programme Payment targets*					EC advance payments 2007-2009	EC reimbursements 2007-2011**	Total advance + reimburse ments	Amounts to be included in application for payment in order to avoid N+3/N+2 Risk		
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012				2012	2013	2014
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
34.02	34.07	35.88	36.16	37.95	19.60	10.01	29.61	34.07	72.04	37.95

Million Euro

*According to EU Regulation 539/2010 and the annual programme allocations

** Cumulated amounts 2007-2011

9=2; 10=2+3; 11=5

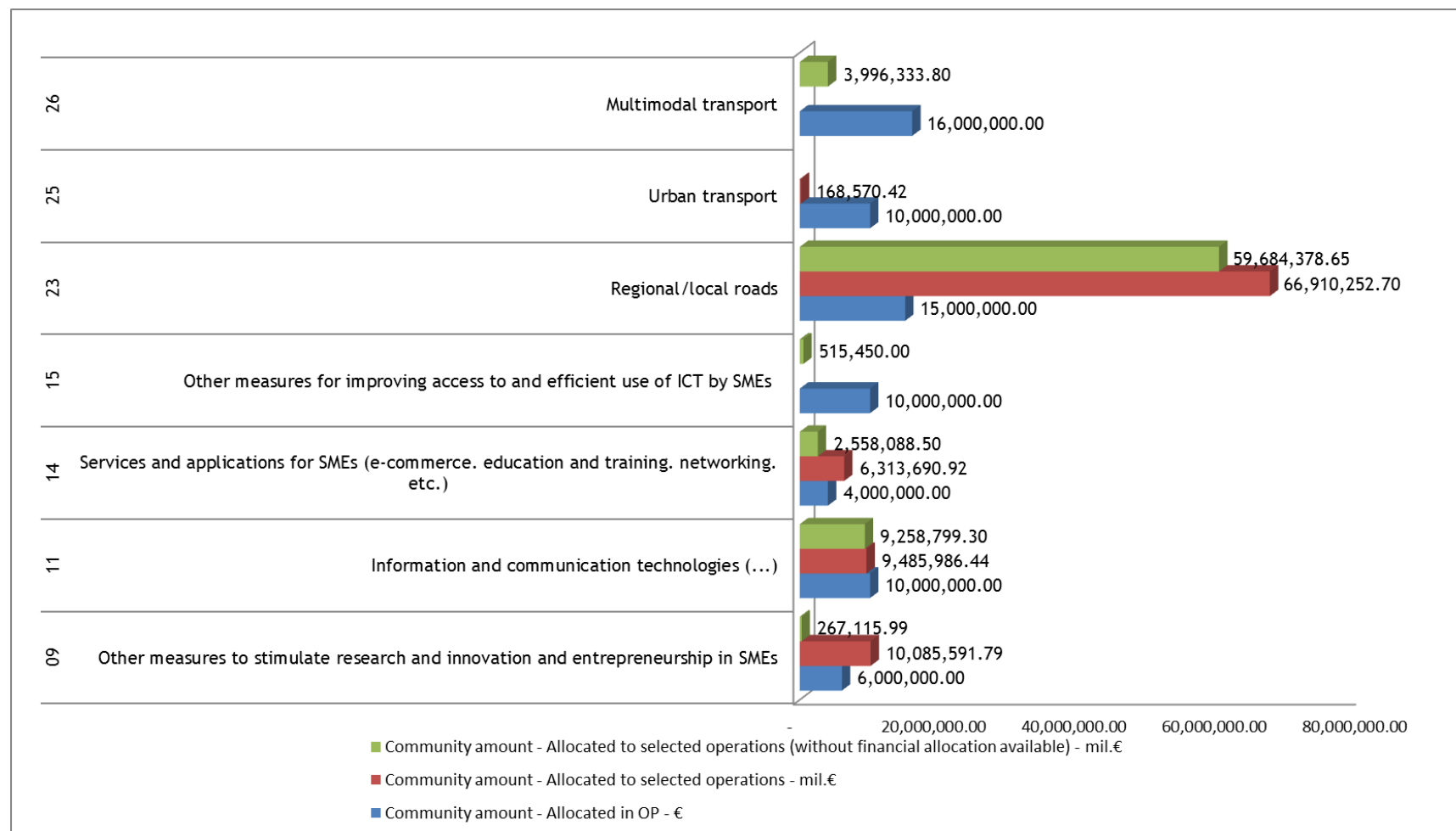
	(1) Calendar year	(2) EU funds available (N)	(3) Spending year (N+3/N+2)	(4) split of 2007 target (2007 amount /6)	(5) Insert advance payment to be deducted	(6) Add back advance payment	(7) Amounts that must be spent by 31 Dec	(8) Total amounts that must be spent by 31 Dec
N	2007	32,528,986.00						
N+1	2008	28,602,880.00						
N+2	2009	28,646,754.00						
N+3	2010	30,454,255.00	32,528,986.00					
	2011	30,740,998.00	28,602,880.00	5,421,497.67	-19,604,138.13		14,420,239.54	14,420,239.54*
	2012	32,528,091.00	28,646,754.00	5,421,497.67			34,068,251.67	48,488,491.20
	2013	34,321,793.00	61,195,253.00	10,842,995.33			72,038,248.33	120,526,739.54
	2014		32,528,091.00	5,421,497.67			37,949,588.67	158,476,328.20
	2015		34,321,793.00	5,421,497.67		19,604,138.13	59,347,428.80	217,823,757.00
	Total	217,823,757.00	185,294,771.00	32,528,986.00	-19,604,138.13	19,604,138.13	217,823,757.00	

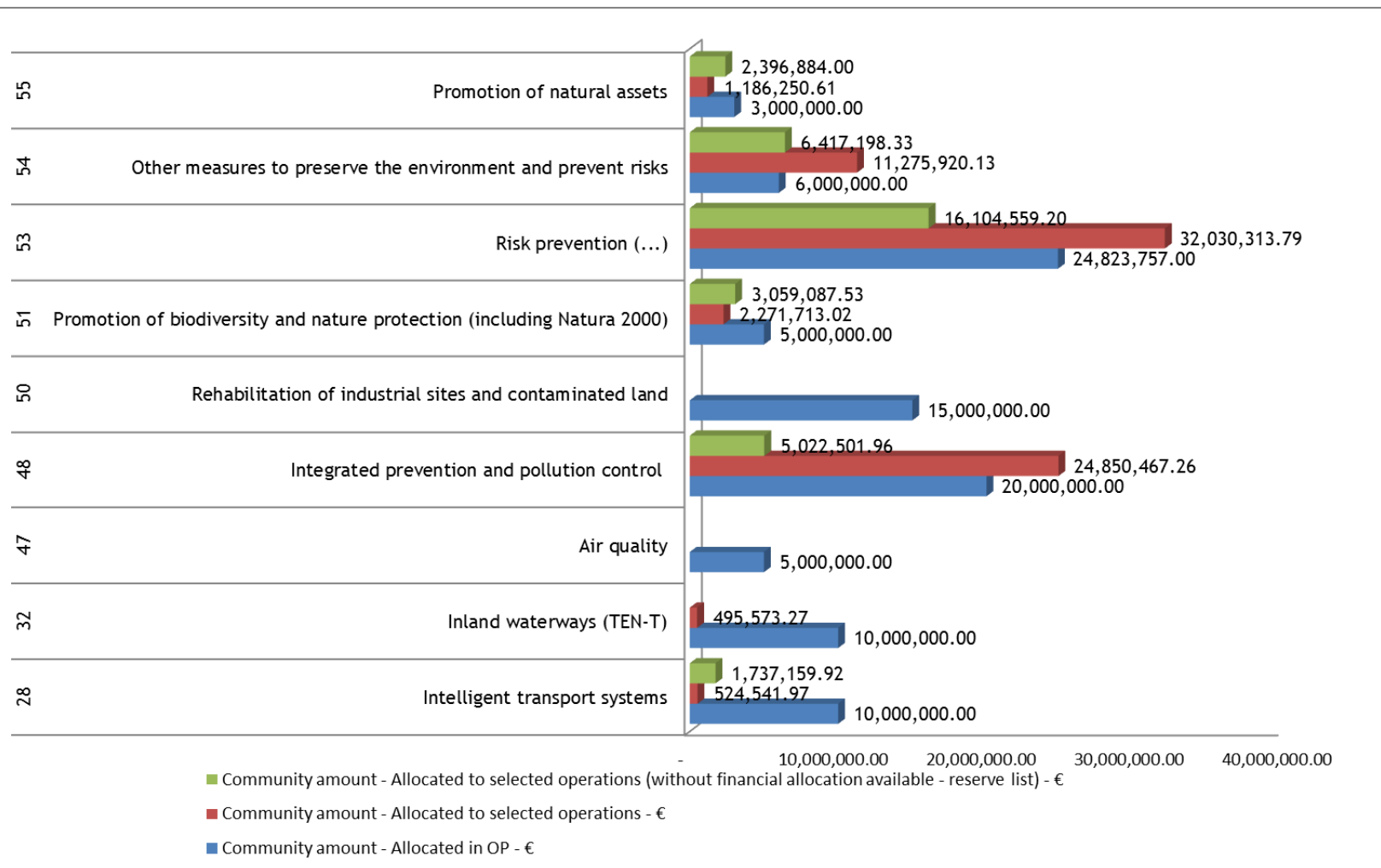
*14,420,239.54 Euro represented the amount to be spent at Programme level by the 31st December 2011 in order to avoid N+3/N+2 risk. As the ERDF amount of the applications for payment submitted to the EC during 2007-2011 was 10,010,459.46 Euro, the amount exposed to potential decommitment was 4,409,780.08 Euro.

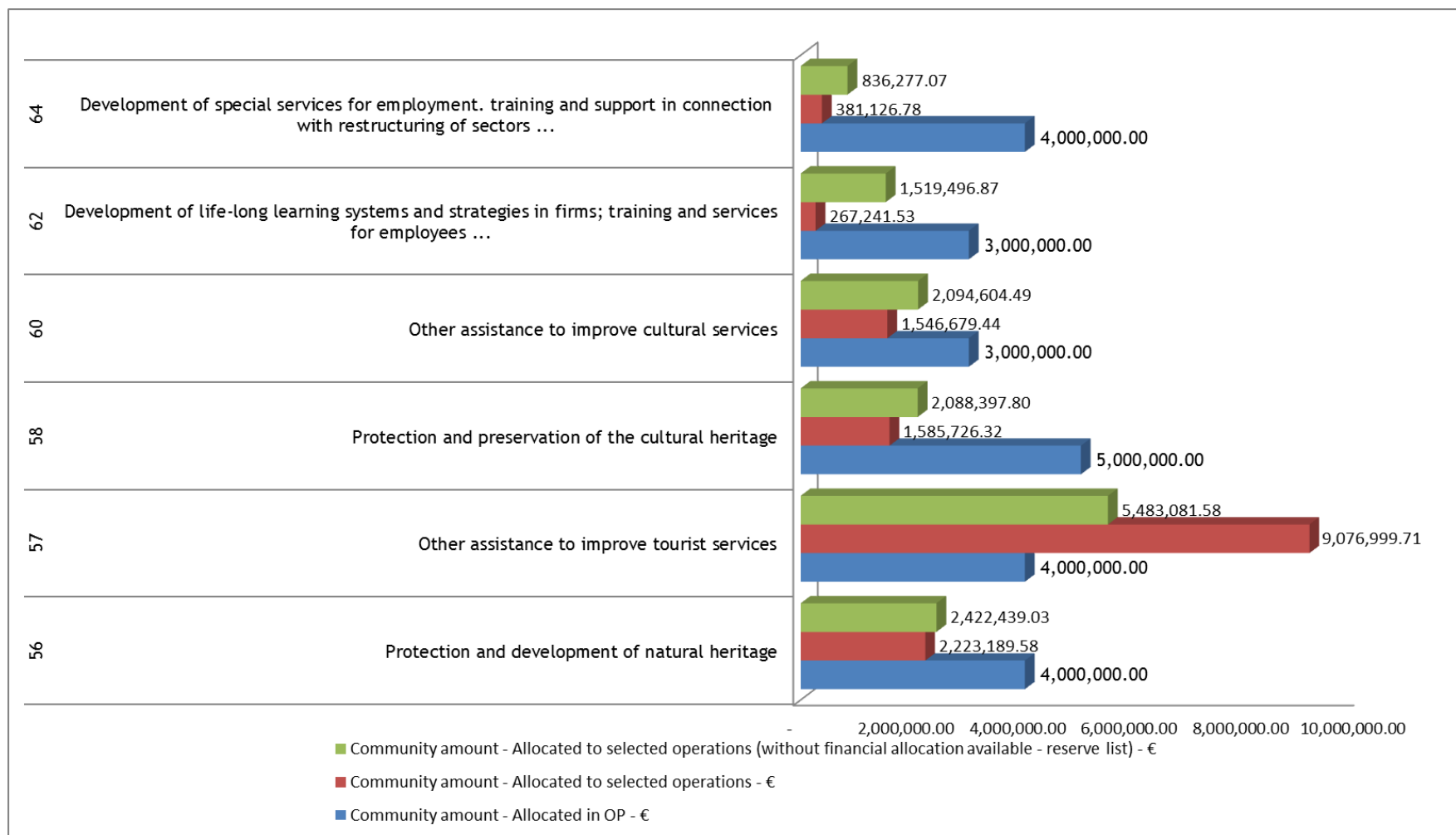
2.1.3 Information about the breakdown of use of the Funds

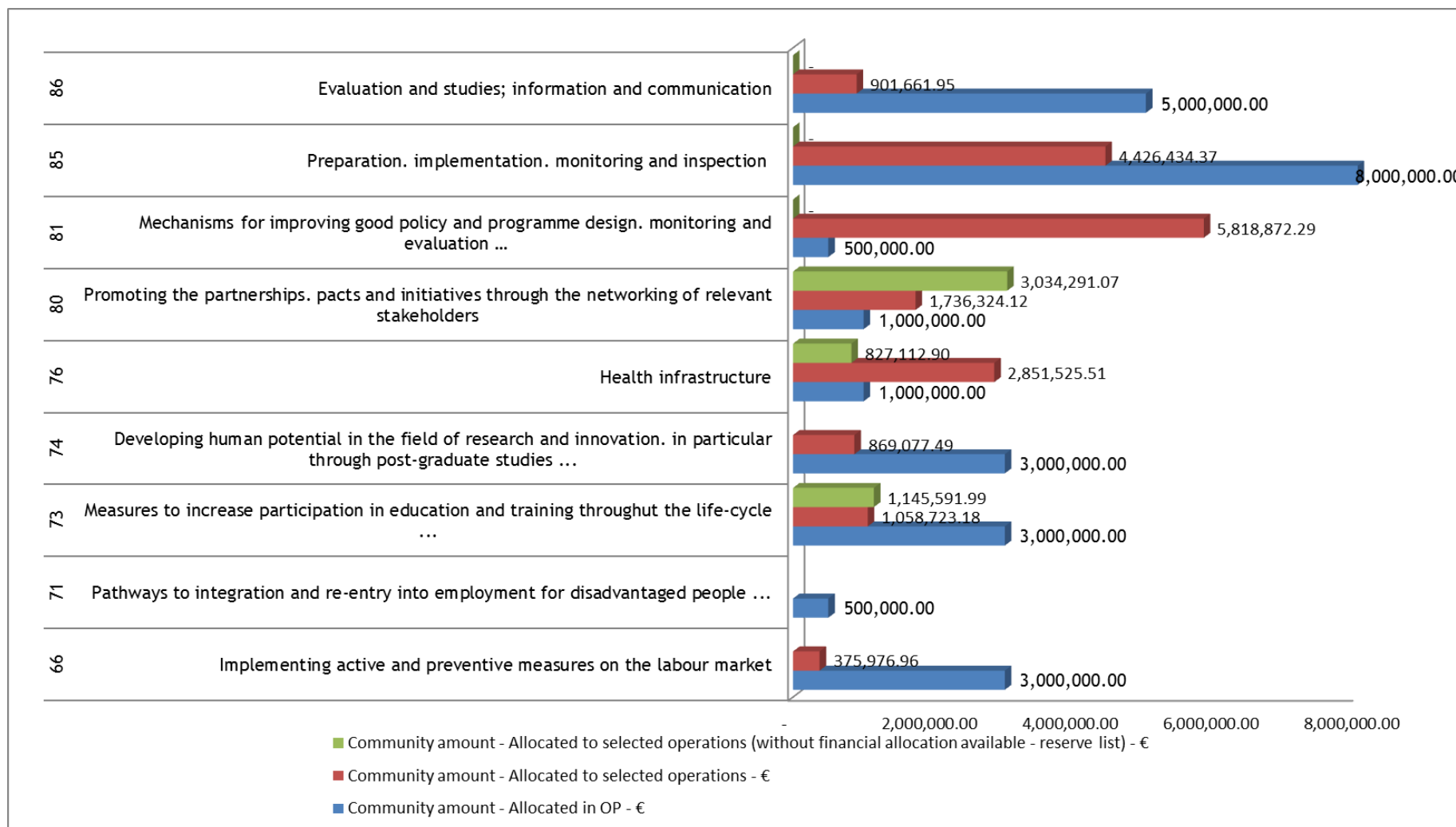
See attached Annex 2 - "IR_Categorisation_Romania-Bulgaria Programme-2011".

At the end of 2011, from the total ERDF allocation, 217,823,757.00 Euro, a total amount of 329,187,281.53 Euro was already allocated in selected operations (out of which 198,718,431.55 Euro are allocated in operations within financial allocation, and an amount of 130,468,849.98 Euro are over-selected operations, according with JMC Decision 52/14.06.2011). A graphic presentation of the selected operations ERDF amounts within the priority themes allocation defined in the Programme is presented below:







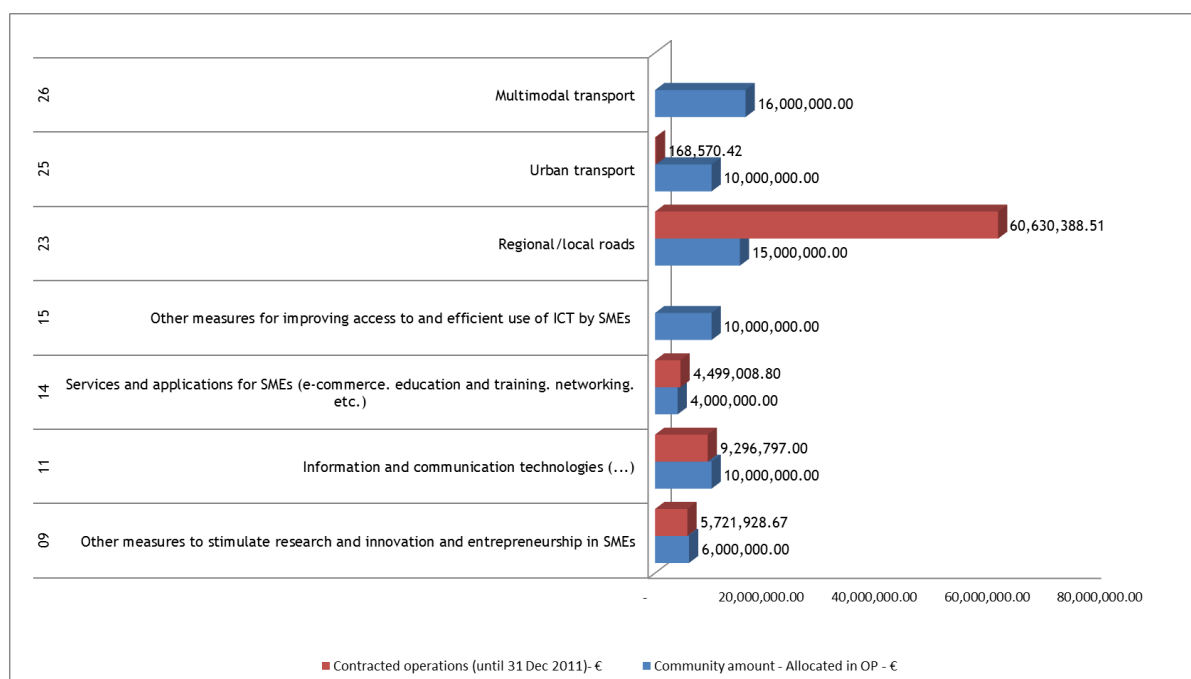


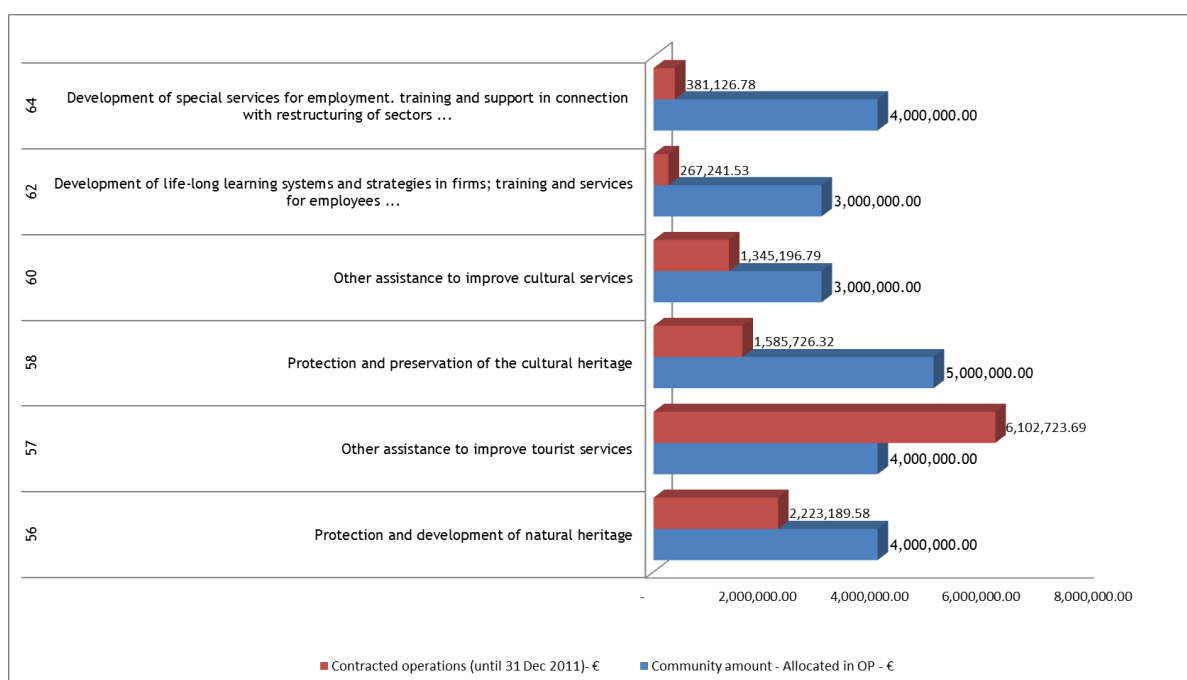
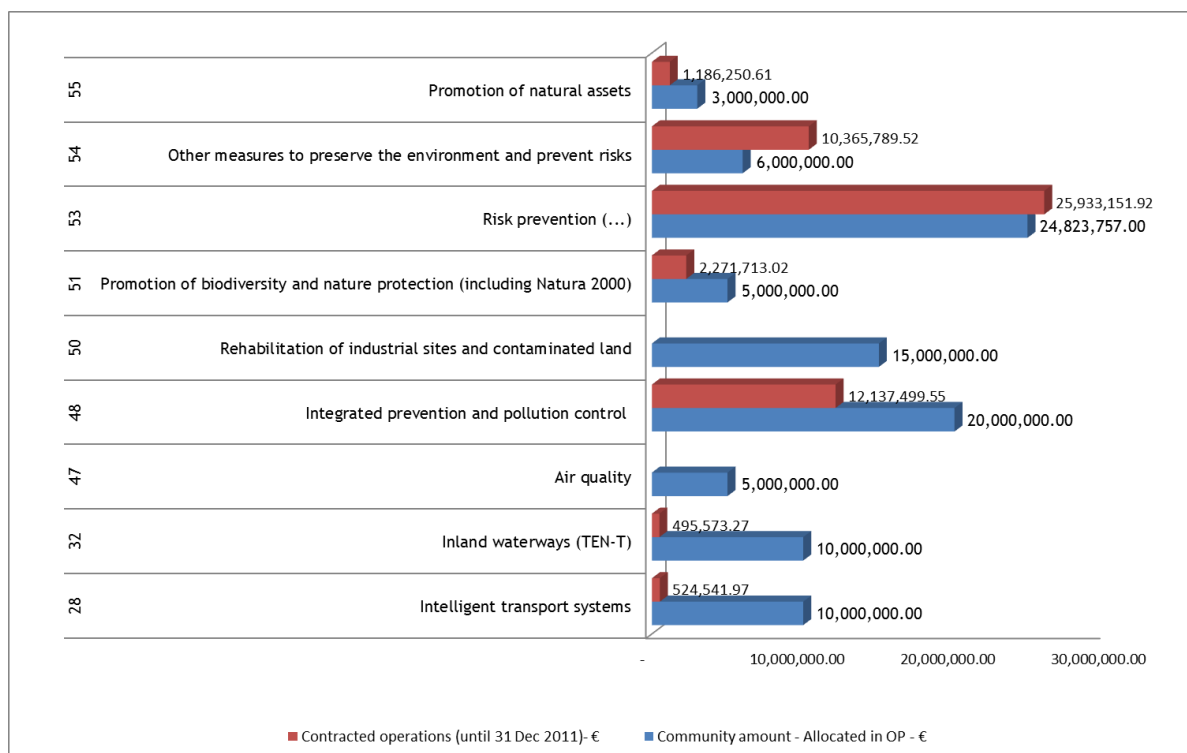
It can be noticed that there are some priority themes allocations that were fully covered by selected operations, such as:

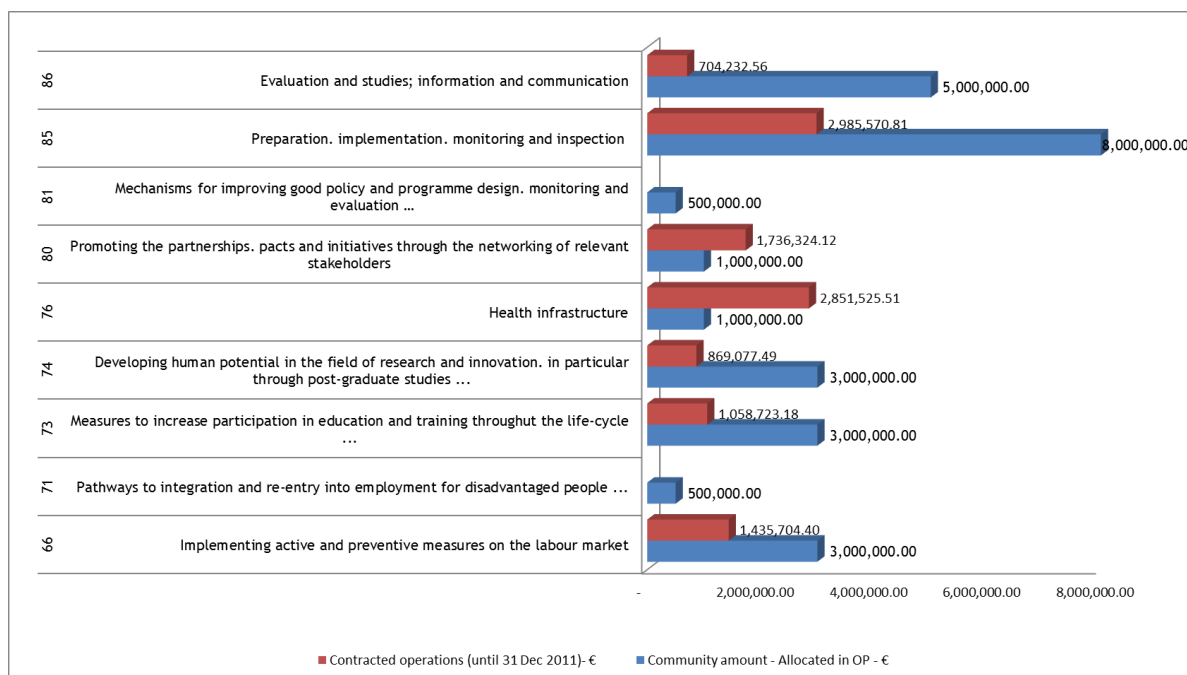
Priority Themes	Code
Other measures to stimulate research and innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs	09
Services and applications for SMEs (e-commerce, education and training, networking etc.)	14
Regional/local roads	23
Integrated prevention and pollution control	48
Risk prevention	53
Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks	54
Other assistance to improve tourist services	57
Health infrastructure	76
Promoting the partnerships, pacts and initiatives through the networking of relevant stakeholders	80
Mechanisms for improving good policy and Programme design, monitoring and evaluation	81

At the end of 2011, there were contracted 110 projects with a total ERDF allocation of 154,064,390.30 Euro (for 1 project, MIS Code 672, “Joint Efforts for a Clean and Open Future” with ERDF allocation of 976,617.65 Euro, the financing contract was terminated due to withdrawal of Romanian partner, because of incapacity to ensure the availability of funds until reimbursement is made from the Programme.

A graphic presentation of the contracted operations ERDF amounts within the priority themes allocation defined in the Programme is presented below:







2.1.4 Assistance by target groups

A series of events were organized by the Programme Management Structures during 2011, with the large participation of applicants, beneficiaries, stakeholders and general public - approx. 1510 participants, out of which a proportion of 43 % male and 57 % females, as follows:

Event	Number of Males	Number of Females
Joint Steering Committee meetings	25	19
Joint Monitoring Committee meetings	60	66
Training seminars for the Bulgarian first level controllers	19	21
Technical meetings with the lead partners/partners	153	225
Working meetings (round tables)	93	89
Workshops	50	105
Technical meetings with the Programme management bodies	21	23
Technical meetings on communication issues	25	37
Conference with European multipliers of information	36	31
Information session for equal opportunities	30	26
Open Day - Europe's Day - May 9 th	17	59
"On site visits"	46	57
Seminar with Romanian mass-media representatives	12	18
Annual conference	64	59

The detailed attendance to the events organised in 2011 in the context of the Programme is presented within **Annex 4**.

Also, during the monitoring process carried out by the JTS and MA for project implementation, the following aspects related to equal opportunities are monitored:

- Number of women/men that have access to ICT facilities (Information and Communication Technology);
- Number of women/men that use ICT facilities;
- Number of women/men that benefit of the awareness campaigns in the environmental field;
- Number of women/men informed on employment opportunities;
- Number of jobs that have been set up for women/ men;
- Number of women/men that graduated training / vocational skills courses;
- Number of women/men that attended to people-to-people actions;
- Number of actions accomplished for the disabled persons;
- Number of actions accomplished for the ethnic minorities;
- Number of actions accomplished for the persons over 65 years of age.

The beneficiaries are reporting on the abovementioned indicators for each project through the intermediary reports, every three months of implementation, and also through the final progress reports that must be submitted within five months after the project implementation finalization date.

2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used

Not applicable.

2.1.6 Qualitative analysis

1. Evaluation process of the applications submitted within the Calls for proposals:

During 2011, the evaluation process was finalized for all the applications submitted within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.

Starting with the selection of the July 2009 projects (JSC Decision no 16/07.12.2010), the financial allocation for Priority Axis 3 (PA 3) was exceeded. 2 projects from Priority Axis 1 (PA 1) (2(3i)-1.1-1 and 2(3i)-1.1-7) and 1 project from PA 3 (2(3i)-3.1-3), were proposed for re-evaluation. After JSC Decision no. 21/10.06.2011 for the selection of the 3 abovementioned projects, the financial allocation for PA 1 was also exceeded.

Through JMC Decision no. 52/ 14.06.2011, a reserve list mechanism was established, according to which the projects will be contracted for each priority axis, in the chronological order of the intermediary submission deadlines of the 2nd call for proposals, and in accordance with the scores obtained (first the reserve list for the respective priority axis for the July 2009 projects and then the reserve list for the October 2009 projects).

After the selection of October 2009 projects during the 28th of November JSC meeting, all the projects selected under PA 1 (19 projects, total eligible value of 88,968,669.45 Euro) and PA 3 (48 projects, total eligible value of 29,286,696.20 Euro) were placed on the reserve list. As regards PA 2, only 4 of the selected projects had financial allocation available, the other 18 projects selected being included on the reserve list (22 projects selected under PA 2 in total).

eligible value of 48,925,438.79 Euro, out of which 18 projects placed on the reserve list in total eligible value of 5,961,145.08 Euro).

By MA Instruction no. 43/02.12.2012, and in accordance with JSC Decision no. 52/14.06.2011, it was established the methodology for calculating the available financial allocations for contracting the projects placed on the reserve list.

Also, during 2011, the JSC selected for financing 2 strategic projects from the applications submitted under the second call for proposals for strategic projects:

- **SPATIAL** - Common Strategy for the Sustainable Territorial Development of the Cross Border Area Romania-Bulgaria;
- **WATER** - Danube Water Integrated Management.

SPATIAL - Common Strategy for the Sustainable Territorial Development of the Cross Border Area Romania-Bulgaria

Approved budget			
Project's aggregate value (euro)	Community Funding ERDF (euro)	National public funding (euro)	Own contribution (euro)
5,450,150.00	4,622,817.23	708,519.50	118,813.27

The project gives a common and integrated approach for the entire cross-border Programme area. It is defining and building the cooperation framework in order to use the territorial capital to facilitate the competitiveness and innovation for the entire program area and also, to protect and improve the environment.

Also, this strategy can be used as a more focused part of the EU Strategy for the Danube Macro-region. This project helps the next financing period (2014-2020) for the two countries by identifying and prioritizing the interventions with a big impact for the cross-border area in relation with the EU development context and priorities.

WATER - Danube Water Integrated Management

WATER - Danube Water Integrated Management Approved budget			
Project's aggregate value (euro)	Community Funding ERDF (euro)	National public funding (euro)	Own contribution (euro)
11,508,928.63	9,761,873.27	1,496,160.72	250,894.64

The project will create a common management and monitoring system for water quality in extreme environmental conditions (floods, droughts, accidental pollution by chemical and radioactive substances), including data and information dissemination mechanism for regional development of the border area. Also, the project will transfer know how for processing the wastewaters from the nuclear plants Cernavodă and Kozloduy.

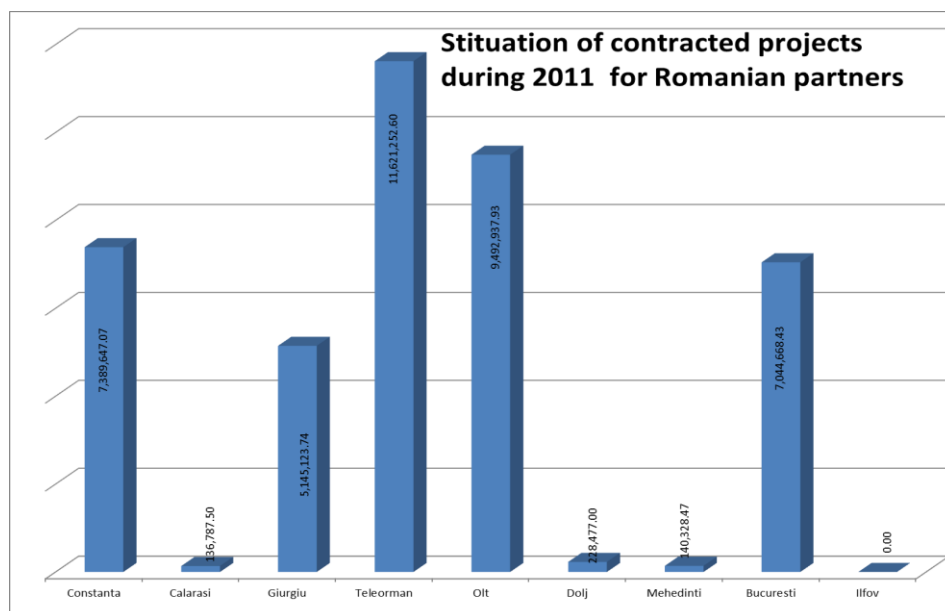
From an economic point of view, the project is extremely important as the local communities and policy makers will benefit from the reduced time needed to obtain the information and implicitly to take a decision. The application implemented by the project will support the efforts to modernize and to increase the life quality in targeted project areas by substantially reducing the costs and terms of know-how transfer.

2. Contracting of the applications selected for funding:

During 2011 the contracting process of the projects submitted under the first call for proposals and under the second call for proposals, intermediary deadlines January 2009, March 2009 and April 2009 was finalized.

Also, during 2011, the projects from the second call for proposals, intermediary deadline July 2009 were contracted and the process of contracting will continue in 2012 when also the projects selected from the intermediary deadline October 2009 will be contracted.

In total, during 2011 were contracted 43 projects with a total value of 91,669,939.74 Euro, out of which 77,612,272.53 Euro ERDF.



The Programme contribution to the Lisbon Strategy

The key objectives of the Programme are closely focused on delivering results and favourable outcomes that address the specific needs of the border region and are in line with the Lisbon Strategy. The proposed partnerships through the implemented projects aim for growth and jobs, which are in line with the Lisbon Strategy and sets out priorities that will help the European Union and the Member States drive up productivity and create more and better jobs.

Therefore through the implementation of its priority axes, Romania - Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme will contribute to the accomplishment of Lisbon Strategy objectives, by:

- making Romania - Bulgaria cross-border area a more attractive place to invest and work - through implementing the selected projects;
- the selected projects will have impact on the development of knowledge and innovation for growth in different areas such as: R&D, SMEs, ICT, etc.;
- creating more and better jobs at European level by attracting more people into employment and investing more in human capital through better education and skills.

The consideration of the Strategy “Europe 2020” by the national authorities of both EU Member States, Romania and Bulgaria, were assumed by the implementation bodies and its promotion have been subject of communication activities.

Horizontal Themes

The horizontal themes were taken into consideration through the standard format of the application form developed in the context of the Programme; as result, the beneficiaries were requested to justify how their projects observe the Programme provisions on horizontal themes.

The evaluation criteria, approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee, together with the application packs, make sure that the horizontal themes are respected. At the same time, the better a project was addressing these aspects the more extra points were received in the evaluation process. Also, during the entire lifetime of a project, these rules must be observed, since such a provision was inserted in the financing contract.

Equal opportunities

Based on the full respect for human dignity and equal opportunities, promoted in both countries, Romania and Bulgaria, as fundamental values fully enforced by the Law, measures were taken during the entire evaluation and selection processes in order to ensure the observance of the equal treatment principle concerning the selection of target groups, the definition of project management teams as well as the employment creation within the eligible areas.

The process of target group selection ensured full and open access without any discrimination for its members on basis of age, gender, ethnical origin or social category. Also, the recruitment of management teams or the selection of project experts, as well their remuneration, were based only on their input and professional capacity and experience.

The monitoring and verification activities have revealed any disrespect of contractual obligations concerning equal gender opportunities.

Sustainable development and climate change

The environmental issues were observed both within the evaluation process as follows:

- at the admissibility and eligibility step, the Environmental agreement was verified, respectively the favourable opinion from the specialized bodies in the field;
- at the technical and financial step, the applications were scored according to the requirements on environmental protection. For the Technical Project the provisions of the Feasibility Study regarding to environmental protection are verified that they are correctly taken over.

During the implementation phase, the principles of sustainable development and environment protection were guidelines for implementation in accordance with legal provisions in both countries legislation.

The monitoring method of the potential effects of the Programme on the environment was established by the Managing Authority during the Strategic Environmental Assessment. In this context, the monitoring of the effects on the environment must be performed by aggregating information from the project level. The monitoring process should be performed only for the projects that are subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure.

Therefore, every three months the beneficiaries are submitting progress reports which have a special chapter regarding the “Aspects related to environment (if the case)” and at the end of the project implementation; these reports allow Programme Implementation Structures (JTS and MA) to properly monitor the environmental issues.

At the end of project implementation, together with the final progress report, the beneficiaries have to submit a “Report on the project’s effects on the environment” related to the project impact on the environment, having as main chapters the following:

- 1 - Biodiversity;
- 2 - Air;
- 3 - Cultural heritage;
- 4 - Landscape;
- 5 - Energetic efficiency;
- 6 - Transport;
- 7 - Soil;
- 8 - Protection against floods;
- 9 - Other general and specific aspects.

The projects under implementation or finalized during 2011 reported that there were no cases of negative impact on the environment, while EIA did not apply.

2.2 INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY LAW

During 2011, within the framework of the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, small modifications were made in order to ensure the full compliance with the provisions of the Community law.

Changes in national legislation affecting the Programme implementation

Changes in the Romanian legislation during 2011 - Changes in the public procurement legislation

During 2011, the National Authority for Monitoring and Regulating of Public Procurement (NAMRPP) issued the Order no. 301/01.06.2011 (published in the Official Journal no. 416/14.06.2011) for approval of the Methodology for analysis of public procurement procedures, concession contracts for public works and services contracts financed from structural funds, stating 2 important issues which affected also the beneficiaries of Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013:

1. the provisions of the public procurement law (OUG no. 34/2006) are not applicable to legal entities which do not have the quality of contracting authority;

2. any document issued by Management Authorities imposing the obligation for the beneficiaries to observe the public procurement is not applicable.

The Order no. 301/01.06.2011 was repealed by Order no. 313/2011 which kept the same provisions as those mentioned above; this situation created the impossibility for a series of beneficiaries (NGO's) to unfold public procurement procedures because the National Authority for Monitoring and Regulating of Public Procurement did not approve the requests of the beneficiaries for developing the procurement procedures

Changes in Bulgarian legislation in 2011 affecting the Programme - Changes in Public procurement act

In November 2011 the Bulgarian Parliament adopted changes in public procurement act, which affect every public contracting authority after entering into force. The document will enter into force in 2012.

The changes are addressed mainly on limiting applicable rules for public procurement regardless of the threshold of procurement to be done, strengthening and spreading ex-ante control from responsible authority (public procurement agency) on public procurement procedures fully or partially funded by resources of European Union funds, as follows:

- for works of a value equal to or greater than BGN 2,400,000 (1,227,119 Euro),
- for supplies of a value equal to or greater than BGN 244,475 (114,774 Euro),
- for services of a value equal to or greater than BGN 377,479 (193,005 Euro), simplifying and formalizing existing public procurement procedures and last but not least changes in the appeal procedure.

No other significant changes in procurement acts relevant to procurement from non-public authority had been done in 2011.

Changes in rules regarding eligibility of the expenditures

With Council of Ministers' Decree no. 330 of 5th of December, 2011 (Published in State Gazette no. 98 of 13th of December, 2011) amending Council of Ministers' Decree no. 62 of 2007 regarding the adoption of National rules on eligibility of expenditure under the operational programmes co-financed by the Structural and Cohesion funds of the European Union, in relation to the 2007-2013 financial framework (Published in State Gazette, no. 27 of 2007) a "Methodology for the determination, payment and reimbursement of expenditure for the remuneration of employees in the administration of central and territorial authorities of the executive power, the administration of local self-government authorities and the administration of the judiciary for the management and implementation of projects and participation in the evaluation of project proposals under operational programmes co-financed from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund of the European Union" was adopted. The Council of Ministers' Decree no. 330 entered into force on the day of its promulgation in the State Gazette - 13th of December, 2011.

The subject matter of the approved methodology is the remuneration, which could be paid to the employees of State administration (central and local) and the administrations of municipalities in relation with the performance of activities for managing or implementing projects under operational programmes financed by the Structural and Cohesion Funds of EU and will be applied for all Bulgarian partners in projects for which subsidy contracts are signed after its entering into force.

2.3 SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND MEASURES TAKEN TO OVERCOME THEM

2.3.1 Encountered problems

During 2011 a series of problems regarding the Programme implementation were encountered, as follows:

1) Difficulties in performing the public procurement procedures for Romanian beneficiaries

The Romanian beneficiaries encountered problems during the performance of the public procurement procedures due to several modifications of the public procurement legislation in Romania.

First, the National Authority for Monitoring and Regulating of Public Procurement (NAMRPP) issued the Order no. 301/01.06.2011 (published in the Official Journal no. 416/14.06.2011) for approval of the Methodology for analysis of public procurement procedures, concession contracts for public works and services contracts financed from structural funds.

The abovementioned Order had foreseen 2 specific provisions which created problems for the implementation of the projects:

a) the provisions of the public procurement law (OUG no. 34/2006) are not applicable to legal entities which do not have the quality of contracting authority;

b) any document issued by Management Authorities imposing the obligation for the beneficiaries to observe the public procurement is not applicable.

The Order no. 301/01.06.2011 was repealed by Order no. 313/2011 which kept the same provisions as those mentioned above; this situation created the impossibility for a series of beneficiaries (NGO's) to unfold public procurement procedures because the National Authority for Monitoring and Regulating of Public Procurement did not approve the requests of the beneficiaries for developing the procurement procedures.

2) The provisions of the legislation regarding the eligibility of expenditures for the Romanian partners regarding the expenditures made outside the implementation period of the projects

Through the MRDT/MPF Orders regarding the eligibility of expenditures for the first call for proposals (no. 32/137/2009) and the second call for proposals (no. 32/137/2009; 916/3364/2009; 917/3362/2009; 918/3366/2009; 919/3367/2009; 920/3368/2009; 921/3365/2009; 922/3363/2009) it was foreseen that, in order to be eligible, the expenditures must be made during the implementation period of the project.

This provision came into contradiction with the real situation of the project implementation and the way the activities are unfolded and the payments are made. This is the case of several type of expenditures which can be made only outside the implementation period of the project, such as payments related to the independent audit of the project, expenditures related to the final reimbursement claim, bank charges for international transactions.

3) The impossibility of some beneficiaries to execute their own budgets due to judicial matters

This issue was specific for the partners located in Teleorman County in Romania and was caused by the fact that the representative of the Romanian Government in Teleorman County - the Prefect - contested the decision of the local authorities regarding the approval of the budget. Having in mind the provisions of the Romanian Constitution, the execution of any decision that is contested by the Prefect is suspended until the court takes a final decision. Because of this situation, the beneficiaries were unable to make payments even if the activities were performed and the contracts within the projects were signed and executed.

The beneficiaries sued the Institution of the Prefect and, at the end of 2011, the issue was still pending in court with no final decision adopted.

4) Insufficient level of knowledge of private beneficiaries of the public procurement law

The insufficient level of knowledge of private beneficiaries of the public procurement legislation, both in Romania and in Bulgaria was reflected in the financial corrections applied by the First Level Controllers during 2011. Actually, more than 55% of the financial corrections applied by the First Level Controllers were related to mistakes made within the public procurement procedures unfolded by the beneficiaries.

5) Delays in observing the schedules of reimbursement claims for individual projects due to insufficient level of knowledge of Programme specificities during the planning and implementing phases of the projects

Due to the fact that some beneficiaries didn't take into consideration the specificities of the cross border Programme, the plans of activities within the projects were not realistic and couldn't be implemented within the foreseen initial schedule. Because of this, numerous modifications of the contracts were needed which created a big number of addenda/notifications.

The necessity for modifications of the contract generated blockages at individual project level, but also at the level of the Programme structures where the cumulated number of processed documents generated a longer period for processing. At Programme level, in 2011 there were 140 addenda and 228 notifications processed for the total number of 100 projects contracted until the end of 2011.

The blockages caused by the necessity of amendment of the contracts produced delays in project implementation, which further created delays in the calendar of the foreseen reimbursements; this situation finally contributed to the decommitment of funds for the Programme due to non-accomplishing the payments target for 2011.

6) Difficulties in ensuring the co-financing of the projects or the necessary cash flow by the beneficiaries

Due to the economic difficulties, some beneficiaries were not able to ensure the co-financing of the projects or the necessary cash flow. Out of the beneficiaries experiencing difficulties in ensuring the co-financing, 5 beneficiaries requested to withdraw from the project implementation during 2011. In this regard, the following situations were encountered:

- for one project the activities of the partner experiencing co-financing problems were transferred to the LP, together with the related budget and obligation for co-financing;
- for one project the partner experiencing co-financing problems withdrew from the project implementation and all its activities and budget were transferred to the other partners;
- one project was cancelled in 2011 due to the fact that the renouncement of the partner conducted to losing the cross border character of the project since there were only two project partners involved;
- for two projects the procedures for cancellation of the contracts were started in 2011, due to the fact that the renouncement of the partner conducted to losing the cross border character of the project since there were only two project partners.

2.3.2 Measures taken to overcome the encountered problems:

1. In order to allow the beneficiaries to conduct public procurement procedures, the MA drafted a special procedure regarding the assignment of works, supplies and services contracts for Romanian beneficiaries that do not fall under art. 9, letter c) and c1) under the provisions of GEO 34/2006, as amended and supplemented. At the end of year 2011 the procedure was in the consultation phase and it will be approved in the beginning of 2012. The procedure will be applicable after the approval of the MA and after the amendment of the subsidy contracts for the inclusion of the procedure as special provision of the contracts.
2. In order to ensure the reimbursement of all expenditures related to project implementation, the MA engaged in a procedure of amendment of the orders regarding the eligibility of expenditures. The procedure also implies the agreement of the Romanian Ministry for Public Finances and the Ministry of European Affairs. At the end of year 2011, the procedure was in full process and the estimated time for the revision of the orders for eligible expenditures is January 2012.
3. In order to limit the effects that caused the blocking of project implementation, the Managing Authorities agreed with the proposals of the beneficiaries to reschedule the activities and also took into consideration the possibility of suspension of project implementation if the situation will not be solved in the beginning of 2012.
4. The JTS provided technical assistance to beneficiaries regarding the contracting plan and public procurement procedures. Also, a list of most frequent mistakes was prepared to be published on the Programme website as bad practices in order to improve the beneficiaries' capacity to conduct public procurement procedures.
5. During 2011, JTS organized more technical meetings with the beneficiaries and provided individual technical assistance regarding the proposals for modifications of the contracts submitted during project implementation period.

The MA issued the Instruction no. 41/20.09.2011 clarifying some aspects related to the expenditures for which beneficiaries had requested modification of the contract provisions through an addendum or notification. The Instruction 41 created the possibility for the beneficiaries to make expenditures prior to the approval of the request for addendum, at their own risk, if the MA would reject the request.

Regarding the schedule of reimbursement claims, the Instruction no. 41 established clear deadlines and provisions regarding the submission of the reimbursement claims.

6. In order to help the beneficiaries ensuring the cash flow at project level, the MA and JTS took specific measures for shortening the period of time needed for verification of the submitted reimbursement claims, therefore ensuring a faster reimbursement of the expenditures made by the beneficiaries.

Summary of problems identified under the procedure in Article 6291)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006, as well as any measures taken by the Managing Authority of the Monitoring Committee to solve the problems:

No serious problems were identified during the audit missions performed by the Audit Authority of the Programme in 2011.

Still, some deficiencies identified in the functioning of the management and control system required corrective measures, to ensure a smooth implementation of the operational Programme.

1. **Finding:** Selection and contracting of two similar projects (projects № 1-3.3-1 and № 2-3.3-7) with the same beneficiaries, objective, results and activities due to lack of proper controls to ensure identification of potential overlapping of grant application forms.

Recommendations:

1. Creating a check at the level of Managing Authority (or delegated to Joint Technical Secretariat), within the pre-contracting stage, to ensure identification of potential overlaps, at the level of the same beneficiary, between the application assessed and another implemented or under implementation project, previously financed from the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013;
2. Modification of the Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat contracting procedure, so that the beneficiary must issue a declaration, during pre-contracting, stating that he has not previously received any other financing, from any other non-refundable financing source, for a project with the same objective, results and activities;
3. Cancellation of the subsidy contract no. 45377/22.07.2010 between the Managing Authority and the Association Regional Partnership for Sustainable Development Vidin and of the co-financing contract no. 45372/09.07.2010 between the Managing Authority and the Local Employer Association of Small and Medium Enterprises Calafat, for project code MIS-ETC 632 and the recovery of 4,145.86 euro, as unduly advance paid amount.

Measures taken by the MA: The MA started the procedures for cancellation of the subsidy contract no. 45377/22.07.2010 between the Managing Authority and the Association Regional Partnership for Sustainable Development Vidin and of the co-financing contract no. 45372/09.07.2010 between the Managing Authority and the Local Employer Association of Small and Medium Enterprises Calafat, for project code MIS-ETC 632 and the recovery of 4,145.86 euro, as unduly advance paid amount which will be finalized in 2012

2. **Finding:** Lack of proper functioning of controls in the authorization phase of the expenditure declared by beneficiaries, on how they comply with procurement laws.

Checks performed in the Managing Authority, within the authorization phase of the expenditures declared by beneficiaries on compliance with public procurement rules, did not work properly for projects MIS-ETC code no. 36 - second reimbursement claim, MIS-ETC code no. 588 - first reimbursement claim and MIS-ETC code no. 673 - second reimbursement claim. The violation of the law has been discovered by the Certifying Authority in case of projects MIS-ETC code no. 36 - second reimbursement claim and MIS-ETC code no. 588 - first reimbursement claim.

For project MIS-ETC code no. 673, the Romanian Audit Authority found that expenditures were authorized although the beneficiary made an artificial division of a supply contract with estimated value of over 15,000 excluding VAT, into 2 direct procurement contracts. Although CPV codes used are different, the nature and destination of products purchased by the two contracts are identical. Products are necessary for carrying out the same activities in the project and are delivered by the same contractor. Rules on disclosure, transparency and equal treatment have been violated.

Recommendations:

1. Appropriate screening by the Managing Authority in respect with the public procurement legislation, in particular to identify: (1) where experience of experts is used as an awarding criterion; (2) where a restrictive qualification criterion is used in a procurement procedure; (3) artificially divided service or purchase of goods contracts in order to avoid the proper use of procurement procedures.

2. Initiation of administrative or judicial procedures for investigation of the suspicion of irregularity and, if case, recovery of the unduly paid amounts, for project MIS-ETC code no. 673 - second reimbursement claim in accordance with the national legislation.

Measures taken by the MA: The procedures for the investigation of the suspicion of irregularity were developed at the level of the MA and following these procedures a financial correction of 25% was applied at the level of the amounts affected by the irregularity. Following the authorization of the final reimbursement claim, the MA recovered the unduly paid amounts.

3. Finding: The MIS-ETC system has no data recorded regarding the contracting and the technical and financial implementation status of the projects.

Although until December 2010 reimbursement claims have been submitted for 22 projects related to the 1, 2 and 3 priority axis, the financial reports generated by the MIS-ETC do not present the projects' current status, this being determined by the lack of existence of financial data in the system at the project's level.

Recommendation: The JTS and MA management shall undertake measures in order to update the technical and financial data in the MIS-ETC, related to the projects implementation. The JTS personnel shall be given the necessary technical assistance through the MA's follow-up on the data updates in the MIS-ETC system.

Measures taken by the JTS/MA: JTS took administrative measures and at the end of 2011 the information is being updated in the MIS ETC system as described within section 2.7.1 - Monitoring, of the present AIR.

4. Finding: The MIS-ETC system does not allow accurate generation of monthly declarations of expenditures by the Managing Authority and the statement of expenditure by Certifying Authority, because of the financial gaps between actual financial data related to the projects and the financial data from the MIS-ETC system.

The gap is caused by the failure of the system to reflect the costs in euro at the certification rate established by the Certifying Authority.

Recommendation: Continuation of the actions started by the Managing Authority, and the Certifying Authority in order to implement actions that will allow the reconciliation of amounts in MIS- ETC system with those mentioned in the declarations of expenditures submitted by the Managing Authority, respectively the Certifying Authority.

Measures taken by the JTS/MA: The recommendation is implemented - the system is able to generate the MA declarations of expenditure as well as the Certifying Authority applications of payment; the reconciliation of the amounts in MIS-ETC system with those mentioned in the declarations of expenditures submitted by the Managing Authority, respectively the Certifying Authority will be done in the next period of time.

5. Finding: The personnel recruiting process at the ROC CBC Calarasi (ROC) level is suspended by Calarasi Civil Court Decision no 111/25.10.2010, appealed before the Bucharest Court of Appeal, the first appearance in Court being due on the 29.04.2011. Thus, the JTS necessary personnel cannot be ensured based on contest recruiting until the litigation is settled.

Recommendation: Considering the ROC personnel experience in the implementation of programmes financed by EU financial aid (CBC PHARE Programmes), the personnel of the ROC PHARE department should be transferred to JTS for a determined or an undetermined period of time, depending on the availability of personnel as to avoid affecting the monitoring activity for PHARE programmes.

Measures taken by the ROC: the Regional Office in Calarasi ensured representation in court through the legal assistance contract signed within the technical assistance contract for Romania Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013. The legal issue was decided in favour of the JTS and the recruiting process was reopened. .

6. Finding: When re-performing first level controls for projects implemented by the Bulgarian beneficiaries, MIS ETC codes no.19, 59, 629 and 642, it was found that the checklists of the controllers for first level of control are too general and do not describe in details the checks which should be performed during the verifications.

Recommendation: Update and approval by the Managing Authority and National Authority of the common guidelines for first level control by completing the questions in the checklist used by the first level controllers.

Measures taken by the MA and NA: The MA and NA adopted a common check list for the verification of the documents attached to the request for performing the first level control of the projects' partners. The amendment of the Project Implementation Manual is pending and will also include this modification.

2.4 CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OP IMPLEMENTATION (IF RELEVANT)

The effects of the economic crisis were reflected at Programme level through the difficulties encountered in project implementation for all type of beneficiaries. Some beneficiaries were affected by the austerity measures taken by the Romanian government and encountered problems in ensuring the financing of the projects.

One project was terminated in 2011 due to the withdrawal of the Romanian partner, caused by its incapacity to ensure the availability of funds until the reimbursement is made from the Programme (project MIS Code 672, "*Joint Efforts for a Clean and Open Future*" with ERDF allocation of 976,617.65 Euro). Also, the incapacity of the beneficiaries to ensure the project financing was directly reflected in the low amount of expenditures made during project implementation. All these aspects represented direct causes for the potential Programme decommitment of funds in 2011.

One of the austerity measures taken by the Romanian government was to limit the employment of new staff within the public authorities. This decision affected the Programme beneficiaries - local public authorities which could not hire new staff for project implementation, although the amounts were foreseen as eligible within the project budgets.

After the moment of approval by the European Commission of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) - December 8th 2010 - and its endorsement by the European Council in 2011, the EUSDR Communication and Action Plan defined the principles, operational objectives and concrete projects of the regional co-operation along the Danube, with complex implications for the implementation of Romania-Bulgaria CBC projects. The EUSDR does not establish new EU legislation or new EU structures; instead it establishes a focus on closer synergies between authorities at all levels to maximise the impact of actions and existing funding.

Even if selected before the approval of the EUSDR by the EC, the projects financed through Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 contribute to the achievement of the operation objective since there are projects under implementation complying with EUSDR priorities such as tourism, environment and environmental risks, emergency situations.

The four main Pillars of the EUSDR

EUSDR PILLARS	EUSDR PRIORITY AREAS
1. Connecting the Region	PA 1A Mobility - Waterways (coordinated by Austria and <u>Romania</u>)
	PA 1B Mobility - Rail/Road/Air
	PA 02 Sustainable energy
	PA 03 Culture & Tourism (coordinated by <u>Bulgaria</u> and <u>Romania</u>)
2. Protecting the environment	PA 04 Water quality
	PA 05 Environmental risks (coordinated by Hungary and <u>Romania</u>)
	PA 06 Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils
3. Building prosperity	PA 07 Knowledge Society
	PA 08 Competitiveness
	PA 09 People & Skills
4. Strengthening the Region	PA 10 Institutional capacity and co-operation
	PA 11 Security (coordinated by Germany and <u>Bulgaria</u>)

2.5 SUBSTANTIAL MODIFICATION UNDER ARTICLE 57 OF REGULATION (EC) No 1083/2006 (IF RELEVANT)

Not applicable.

2.6 COMPLEMENTARITY WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS

The complementarity with other financial instruments is ensured through mechanisms foreseen in the programming document. The Managing Authority, the National Authority and the joint bodies (Joint Technical Secretariat, Joint Monitoring and Steering Committees) are responsible with implementing these arrangements during the Programme implementation phase.

Mechanisms for the coordination and coherence of the Programme with the Cohesion Policy Programmes operated in the area

The Programme's authorities consider that consistency and coordination between the major programmes co-funded by EU is essential to ensure that all objectives are met with no duplication of efforts and actions and also to maximize funding opportunities available for the Programme area under the different Community Programmes.

The presence of the Managing Authorities of the National Operational Programmes and Rural Development Programmes, in both countries as members/observers in the Joint Monitoring Committee and Joint Steering Committee of the Romania-Bulgaria Programme has been foreseen in order to avoid overlapping and ensure coherence and complementarities of the interventions under these Programmes.

Electronic information exchange

Information is exchanged with the other bodies that are implementing Operational Programmes co-financed by structural funds whenever necessary, in order to clarify issues or avoid confusions.

In 2011 the discussions were continued as regards the reporting and the electronic information exchange as a mean of avoiding double financing; thus, in 2012 a new tool for dynamic reporting integrated in MIS ETC is envisaged to be developed. This new instrument will represent a tool that will improve the MA's monitoring process in order to avoid the double financing at Programme level and to ensure crosschecking between EU financed Programmes.

During the year 2011, MIS-ETC was updated with new functions that ensure automatically generation of the monthly declarations of expenditures to the CA and payment applications to the EC. Also, the MIS-ETC system was updated with new fields and reports according to the AA recommendations and users' requirements. At the same time, technical support for solving the system errors and flaws was ensured during 2011.

2.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

2.7.1 Monitoring

Programme level

The monitoring at the Programme's level is ensured by the Joint Monitoring Committee and the Managing Authority together with the National Authority. In order to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the Programme implementation, the monitoring at the Programme level is performed using the Management Information System for European Territorial Cooperation (MIS-ETC), which allows the monitoring and reporting the implementation status of the Programme.

During 2011, the decisions approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee were also related to approving the list of measures regarding the recommendations received following the Intermediary Evaluation and the 2012 Annual Evaluation Plan of the RO-BG Programme

Joint Monitoring Committee activity

During 2011 two JMC meetings were held, the first one on 22nd of June, for the approval of Annual Implementation Report for 2010 and the Intermediary Evaluation Report for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013. The second JMC meeting was held on 29th of November, 2011, and there were approved the 2012 Technical Assistance Annual Strategy of the Programme, the List of measures regarding the recommendations received following the Intermediary Evaluation and the 2012 Annual Evaluation Plan of the RO-BG Programme. Also, according to the Rules of Procedures, the members of the Joint Monitoring Committee were consulted through written procedures on various implementation issues. Thus, during 2011 the JMC members had adopted 13 decisions, ensuring the quality of implementation of the Programme in different aspects, as follows:

- 2011 Technical Assistance Annual Strategy of the Programme;
- the Visual Identity Manual;
- the method for using the reserve lists in the context of the second call for regular projects;
- Annual Implementation Report for 2010;
- Intermediary Evaluation Report of the Programme;
- 2011 Technical Assistance Annual Strategy;

- the eligibility rules for some categories of expenditure incurred after the implementation period of the operation;
- 2012 Technical Assistance Annual Strategy;
- the measures regarding the recommendations received following the Intermediary Evaluation of the Programme;
- 2012 Annual Evaluation Plan of the Programme.

The full list of Joint Monitoring Committee decisions is foreseen within Annex 1 - Decisions of Joint Monitoring Committee for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.

Project level

The project monitoring activity was ensured by the Joint Technical Secretariat in accordance with an internal monitoring procedure. The main purpose of this process is to monitor if the public financing is used according with the financing rules of the Programme included in the subsidy and co-financing contracts.

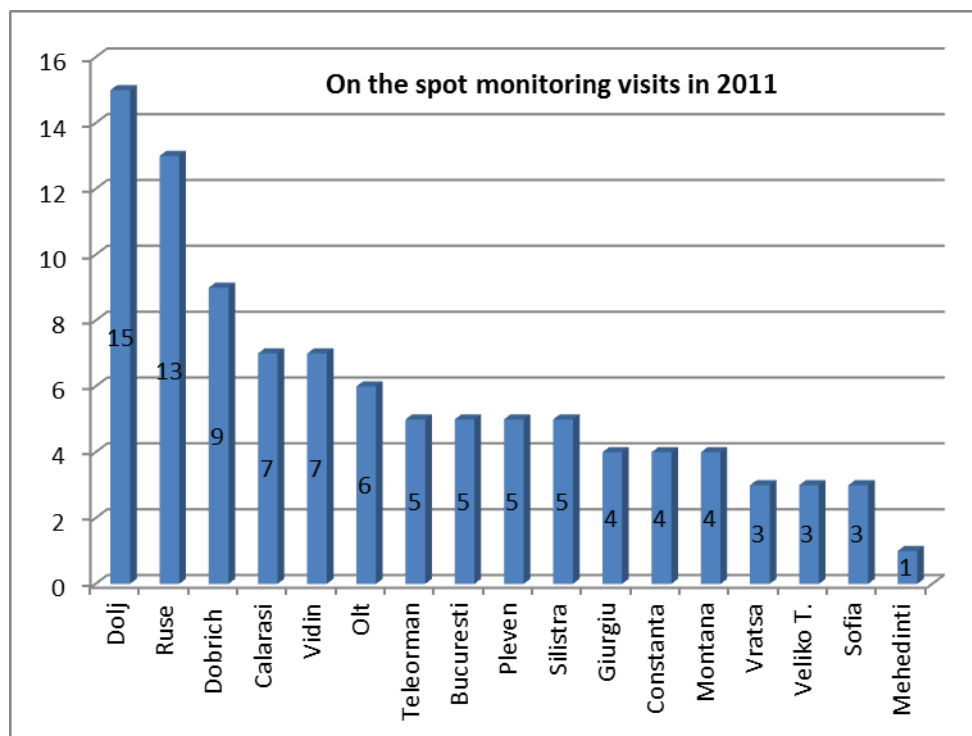
This close monitoring process created the opportunities to early identify the problematic issues at project level and, if necessary, to take the needed preventive or corrective measures.

Also, the close monitoring created the possibilities to identify good or bad practices within the projects under implementation and properly inform all beneficiaries within the seminars or technical meetings about them.

The technical and financial monitoring activity is carried out using instruments such as progress reports and monitoring visits.

On desk monitoring was realised during 2011 through progress reports that are submitted by the beneficiaries in accordance with each individual project's schedule of reimbursement claims.

The information provided was also verified within 99 on-the-spot monitoring visits that were organised in order to verify that the information provided within the progress reports are real.



Out of these 99 on-the-spot monitoring visits, 21 were final monitoring visits realised after the finalisation of the project implementation period, but before the deadline (5 months after the finalisation of project implementation) foreseen by the subsidy contract for the submission of the final progress report and reimbursement claim.

Also, for a better monitoring of the project implementation, the Managing Authority issued Instruction no. 36 introducing specific monitoring instruments at project level and also at Programme level for all projects. The instruments are:

- project fiche that is constantly updated and foresees an image of the project implementation whenever information is available (when receiving progress reports/reimbursement claims; when receiving requests for addenda or notifications etc.)
- centralized situation summarizing the following information for each project: modifications of the contract (addenda and notifications); payments realised within the contract; performed site visits etc.

As concerns the monitoring of project indicators, objectives and results for the finalized projects, beside the intermediary verification realised through intermediary progress reports, a special attention is also given to the final monitoring visit in order to establish the degree of accomplishing the project implementation. In this regard, the Managing Authority is preparing a procedure for establishing the application of financial corrections for not achieving, fully or partially, the indicators specified within the financing contracts.

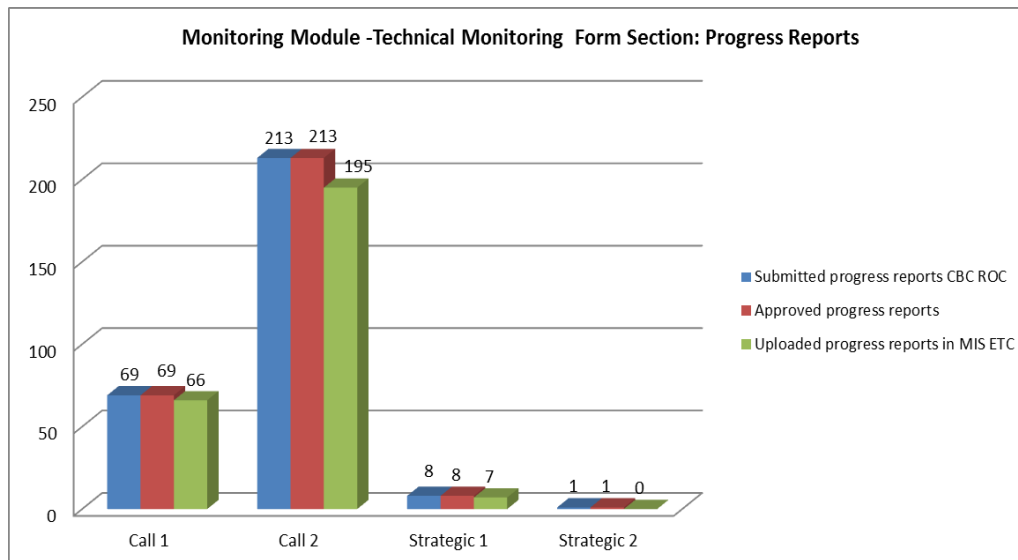
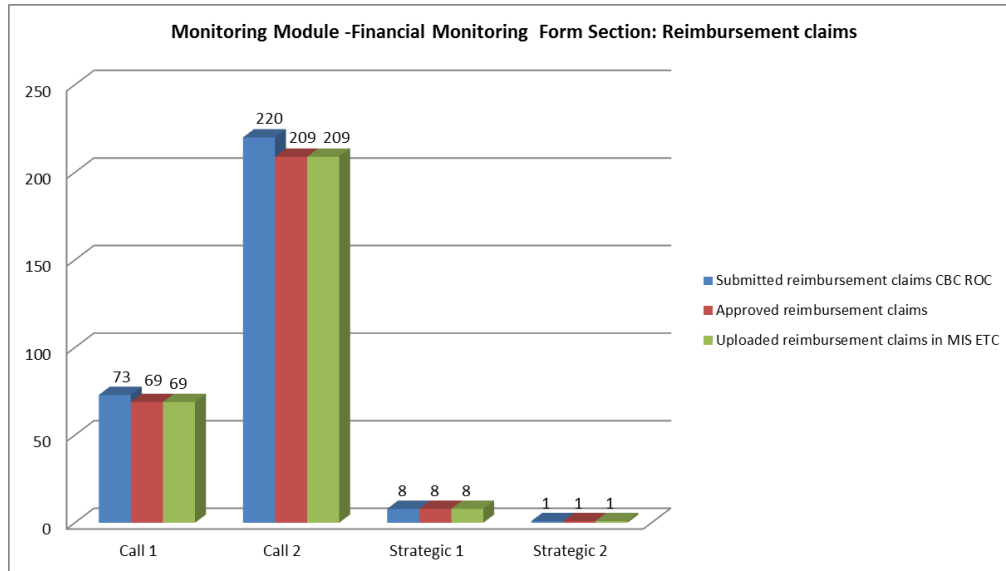
At the same time, another important tool for ensuring the Programme monitoring is the Management Information System of the Programme (MIS-ETC).

MIS-ETC

A very important progress was made during 2011 regarding the process of inputting data in the MIS-ETC system.

Compared with the end of 2010, when data was uploaded only in Project Management Module-section Proposed Projects- for 392 projects, during 2011 more data has been uploaded in the Project Management Module: 280 projects in Project Registration Form and Project Appraisal sections and 277 projects in Project Decisions Management section.

As regards the data uploaded in the Monitoring Module, Financial Monitoring Form and Technical Monitoring Form sections of the MIS-ETC, the status at 31st December 2011 was the following:



2.7.2 Evaluation

On 28 July 2010 the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism launched the procurement for the “Interim Evaluation of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013”. Following the evaluation process, the contract was awarded on 15 September 2010 to the Consortium Ernst&Young SRL - GEA Strategy & Consulting SA. The execution period was of seven months starting from 17 November 2010 with contract activities ending on 30 June 2011.

The evaluation exercise focuses on four broad evaluation issues:

- Effectiveness of the Programme (financial and physical progress),
- Efficiency of the Programme (implementation system),
- Effectiveness in reaching Horizontal objectives,
- Effectiveness of the Programme Communication Plan.

The scope of the evaluation covered:

- the 4 Priority Axes of the Programme,
- the evolution of the Programme from 1 January 2007 to 1 June 2010,
- the Programme implementation system in terms of planning and launching the call for proposals; quality of the application forms; timeliness and effectiveness of the selection procedures; timeliness and effectiveness of the contracting procedures; effectiveness of the monitoring procedures.

The Inception Report was submitted on 8 December 2010 and approved on 10 February 2011, following the resubmission of an amended version based on the comments of the Managing Authority, thus determining the official start of the Field Phase.

Field activities were carried out in accordance with the agreed methodology in the period between February and April 2011 and a debrief meeting presenting the preliminary findings of the evaluation was held in Bucharest on 8 April 2011.

A first draft of the Evaluation Report has been submitted for stakeholder review on 2 May 2011. The comments have been discussed during a workshop held at the premises of the Managing Authority on 25 May 2011. The revised evaluation report was submitted on 2 June 2011 and approved on 3 June 2011.

The results of the evaluation have been communicated during the Joint Monitoring Committee meeting held in Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria) on 22nd June 2011.

The main conclusions derived from the evaluation report are further on outlined:

Effectiveness of the Programme

- The Programme strategy is still consistent with the socio-economic environment: needs of the area and intervention logic remain valid. The Programme identifies clearly the connection between socio-economic analysis, objectives and indicators.
- The distribution of selected projects is, with few exceptions, balanced in geographical terms, both at national and regional level. NGOs and Public Administrations have shown the strongest interest.
- 98% of the selected projects go beyond the minimum requirements regarding cooperation and 75% are respecting all the four criteria of joint development, implementation, staffing and financing. However there is a need to further clarify the cooperation requirement.

Efficiency of the Programme

- The quality of the application package is satisfactory and enables the preparation of good applications. Guidelines have improved progressively and the managing structures have taken a participatory, transparent approach by requesting and integrating feedback from beneficiaries. Specific improvements can be adopted in order to reduce errors in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of projects as well as strengthening the cross-border character of cooperation.

Horizontal issues

- The horizontal issues of equal opportunities, sustainable development and climate change are taken into consideration, from programming documents to selection criteria.

- In terms of the general perception of beneficiaries, all survey respondents agreed that they have adequately considered horizontal issues, and have built the project activities so as to respect the norms and principles of sustainable development, gender equality, climate change. There was consensus among respondents that the targets set at project level referring to horizontal will be fully met.
- According to the survey results, 50% of the respondents included horizontal issues in the project promotion materials (web-site, leaflet, database, brochures, demonstrative exercises, the PR materials, best practices and case studies etc.). Therefore, beneficiaries also plan to comply with horizontal principles through awareness raising exercises.

Communication activities

- The Communication Plan is clearly structured and coherent to the set objectives. Planned measures are coherent with the objectives and address the target groups identified (potential beneficiaries, applicants, general public, stakeholders).
- Communication activities carried out to date by the Programme authorities have positively contributed to ensuring a high level of commitment of financial resources and a good level of awareness and knowledge regarding the Program among both general public and target audience in Romania and Bulgaria.

In addition to these main conclusions, the evaluation report includes specific conclusions on project assessment and monitoring as well as recommendations for improving implementation. These recommendations are analysed by MA and a set of measures to adopt or reject them is presented within JMC meetings.

Other Programme evaluation activities undertaken in 2011

In compliance with the Multi-Annual Evaluation Plan adopted by JMC in 2009, a second evaluation foreseen for the end of 2012 was approved within the JMC meeting from 29 November 2011. The terms of reference for the second interim evaluation were drawn up and presented within the above mentioned meeting.

This evaluation will build on the outcomes of the first one developed between November 2010 and June 2011. The specific objectives of this evaluation are:

- To provide an analysis (evaluation) of the policy quantified impact, by using counterfactual methodology, where appropriate.
- To provide an in-depth project implementation analysis (evaluation), in order to highlight the:
 - a) efficiency and effectiveness in relation to the overall implementation of the projects financed under this Programme, having in mind the cut-off date;
 - b) functionality and sustainability of project partnerships;
 - c) success models in project implementation (including a description) and weak points, along with an overview on possible breaches during implementation (including causes);
 - d) the observance of equal opportunities and environment, namely the contribution of projects funded.

The evaluation has a total duration of 6 months and it is scheduled to start in June 2012.

2.8 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE RESERVE

Not applicable.

3 IMPLEMENTATION BY PRIORITY

3.1 PRIORITY AXIS 1

Priority axis 1: Accessibility - Improved mobility and access to transport, information and communication infrastructure in the cross-border area.

The focus of the priority axis is to promote and implement joint cross-border solutions in the field of road and river transport and ICT, which will lead to overcome the impact of geographical and functional barriers both to traffic flows and communication in the Programme area. These are pre-conditions to the mobility of goods and people and to the economic and social common undertakings within the Programme area and thereby this priority axis will contribute to improving the attractiveness of the cross-border area and strengthening the area sustainable economic growth and territorial cohesion.

Around 80.59 million Euro ERDF grant is available for this priority axis, matched by 13.79 million Euro national contributions.

3.1.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

A. Information on the physical progress of the priority

The indicators used to measure the progress of this priority are shown in the table below and refer to the contracted projects (as for the committed indicators within the Programme) and finalized projects (as for the clearly achieved indicators) until 31st of December 2011. The methodology for reporting on indicators was changed compared with the 2009 and 2010 AIRs, in order to observe the provisions of the Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Reporting on Core Indicators for the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, Working Document no. 7:

1. Contracted projects

Priority Axis 1 Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Priority Axis Objective 1. To improve cross-border mobility through improving existing conditions and developing new facilities for transport in the eligible area.											
Number of projects improving transport accessibility in the programme area	Achievement	-	0	0	6	15					15
	Target 2015	9									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Reduction of travel time between settlements located on either side of the border (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	19	45					45
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	100	0	0	0	0	0				0
Priority Axis Objective 2. To enable efficient regular exchange of information and data of cross-border relevance											
Number of projects improving ICT accessibility in the programme area	Achievement	-	0	0	2	7					7
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people having access to ICT facilities	Achievement	0	0	0	233,060	437790					437,790

Number of people using ICT facilities	Target 2015	3.2 M									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
	Achievement	0	0	0	100,420	104,840					104,806
	Target 2015	1.75 M									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the projects contracted until 31st of December 2011

2. Finalized projects

Priority Axis 1 Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Priority Axis Objective 1. To improve cross-border mobility through improving existing conditions and developing new facilities for transport in the eligible area.											
Number of projects improving transport accessibility in the programme area	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	9									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Reduction of travel time between settlements located on either side of the border (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	100	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 2. To enable efficient regular exchange of information and data of cross-border relevance											
Number of projects improving ICT accessibility in the programme area	Achievement	-	0	0	0	10					10
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people having access to ICT facilities	Achievement	0	0	0	0	32					32
	Target 2015	3.2 M									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people using ICT facilities	Achievement	0	0	0	0	62					62
	Target 2015	1.75 M									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the final progress reports submitted for the projects finalized until 31st of December 2011

B. Qualitative analysis

During 2011 the evaluation and selection processes of the projects submitted was continued for the closed calls for proposals and no new calls for proposals for ordinary projects were launched.

1) Second call for proposals - intermediary deadline 30th of October 2009

Out of the 32 application forms that were submitted under Priority Axis 1 (24 projects on KAI 1 - Improvements to land and river cross-border transport facilities and 8 projects on KAI 2 - Development of information and communications networks and services within the cross-border area) a number of 23 projects were selected for technical and financial evaluation, with a total value of 96,742,662.38 Euro, as follows:

Lead partners selected for technical and financial evaluation	RO		BG	
	No of projects	Total Eligible Value	No of projects	Total Eligible Value
KAI 1.1	14	69,999,827.40	2	13,679,859.19
KAI 1.2	4	10,694,274.42	3	2,368,701.37

The technical and financial evaluation had also been carried out during 2011, starting with 4th February, 2011. The report for technical and financial evaluation of the applications submitted under the Second call for proposals, intermediary deadline October 2009 was approved by the MA on 8th November, 2011, and the applications were selected/rejected from financing by JSC on 28th November, 2011.

Out of the 23 application forms that passed the admissibility and eligibility evaluation phases, 19 were further approved after the technical and financial evaluation and accordingly selected by the JSC:

Lead partners selected for financing by the JSC	RO		BG	
	No of projects	Total Eligible Value	No of projects	Total Eligible Value
KAI 1.1	12	62,798,074.20	2	11,236,985.50
KAI 1.2	4	10,686,074.42	1	818,772.40

All the selected applications entered the reserve list, due to lack of financial allocation available.

Also, during 2011, 2 projects submitted under the second call for proposal, July Intermediary deadline 2009 were re-evaluated, according to the JSC Decision no. 16/07.12.2011.

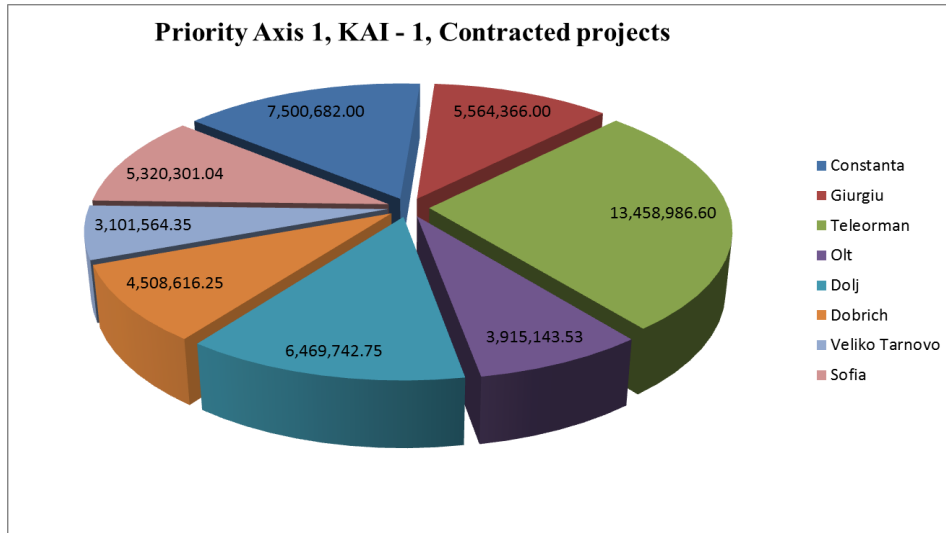
The technical and financial evaluation of the application forms suspended for the re-evaluation was carried out between 28.02.2011-06.04.2011 and it was finalized with the recommendation for funding acceptance of the two projects for Priority Axis 1, KAI 1:

- 2(3i)-1.1-1 - *“Road to the Danube - Road infrastructure development in the cross-border area Bechet - Oryahovo, premise for a higher level of mobility between Romania and Bulgaria”* with Lead Partner - Bechet Local Council,
- 2(3i)-1.1-7 - *“Clean Access in Calarasi-Silistra cross-border area”*, Lead Partner: National Research Institute for Electrical Engineering - Advanced Research ICPE-CA.

Following the proposal of the Assessment Working Group, the two projects were selected for funding by the Joint Steering Committee with a total value of 8,523,324.21 Euro and included on in the reserve list as no financial allocation was available for contracting.

Contracted projects for Priority Axis 1

For **Priority Axis 1, KAI 1**, for the entire period 2007-2011 a total number of 15 projects were contracted (12 with Romanian Lead Partner and 3 with Bulgarian Lead Partner), with a total value of 49,839,402.52 Euro.

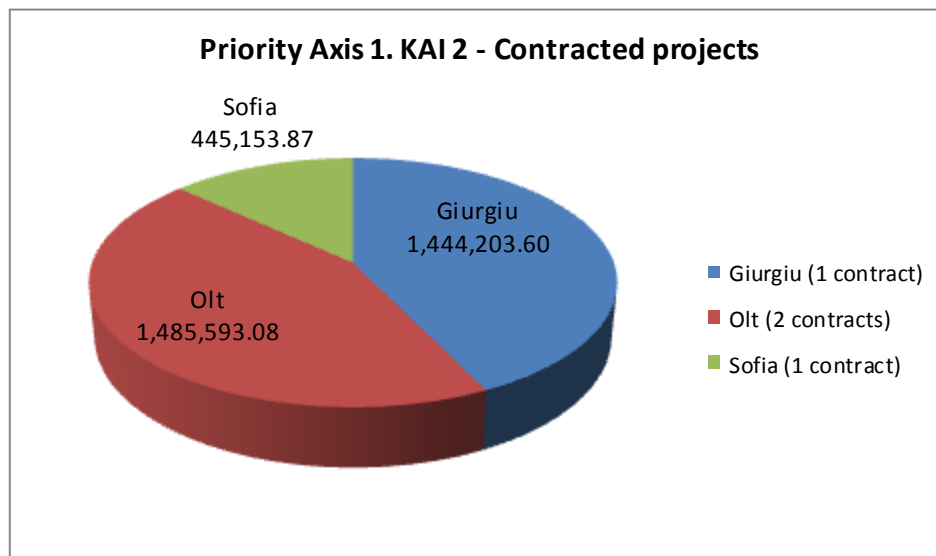


Out of these, 8 projects were contracted during 2011, with a total eligible value of 25,240,167.42 Euro.

Advance payments and reimbursement claims on PA 1 / KAI 1 during 2007-2011:

- 14 advance payment requests from national state budget contribution for Romanian Partners were paid amounting 4,401,906.97 Euro. Out of these, 9 advance payment requests were paid in 2011, with a value of 2,545,850.04.
- 25 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid, with a total of 1,935,103.79 Euro - out of which ERDF 1,634,388.68 Euro. All these reimbursement claims were authorized and paid in 2011.

For **Priority Axis 1, KAI 2**, there were no contracts signed during 2011 and the situation is the same as describe in 2010 AIR: 4 projects (3 with Romanian Lead Partner and 1 with Bulgarian Lead Partner) with a total value of 3,374,950.55 Euro were contracted.



Advance payments and reimbursement claims on PA 1 / KAI 2 during 2007-2011:

- 5 advance payment requests from national state budget contribution for Romanian Partners were paid amounting 310,242.95 Euro. Out of these, 1 advance payment request was paid in 2011, amounting 54,839.53 Euro.
- 19 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid, with a total value of 1,048,820.28 Euro - out of which ERDF 885,833.60 Euro. Out of these 18 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid in 2011, amounting 1,035,921.05 Euro, out of which ERDF 874,938.91 Euro.

3.1.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No specific problems for this Priority Axis have been encountered during 2011.

Still, a single case requested a deep analysis and decisions of the JSC (for project 2(3i)-1.1-4) following the recommendation of the evaluators regarding the eligibility of the additional works to the main rehabilitation of the Tutrakan Boulevard in Ruse, as part of the project 2(3i)-1.1-4.

Following the JSC Decision no. 16/07.12.2010, the application has been selected for funding acceptance under the conditions of clarifying, during the pre-contracting stage, the eligibility of the planned expenditures for the rehabilitation of the heating, electrical, water and gas networks.

On 16th of September 2011, in Ruse, the representatives of Managing Authority, National Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat/CBC ROC and Municipality of Ruse participated to a meeting in order to clarify the eligibility of the above mentioned expenditures, according to the Applicant's Guide and Programme's provisions regarding eligibility. Moreover, the EC was consulted in this respect and the Programme's structures were advised to follow the exact provisions of the Applicant's Guide.

As a result, during the JSC meeting held in November 2011, in Pleven, MA presented its position regarding the non-eligibility of all expenditures for the rehabilitation of the heating, electrical, water and gas networks and through JSC Decision no. 33/28.11.2011 the revised documents within submitted application form and the revised budget were approved.

The revised form of the budget approved:

- to consider the expenditures for the gas and heating network **as non-eligible**;
- considering the fact that the over-bridge collector is already under construction, the amount established for this objective will no longer be eligible. So the Municipality will **remove** from the budget this expenditure, equal with 914,000 BGN/ 467,276.82 Euro;
- to move the amount for salaries from budgetary line *Staff* and to transfer them to budgetary line *Consultancy*.

3.2 PRIORITY AXIS 2

Priority axis 2: Environment - Sustainable use and protection of natural resources and environment and promotion of efficient risk management in the cross-border area

The focus of this priority axis will be on the prudent exploitation and protection of the intrinsic quality and value of the area's outstanding natural resources by joint initiatives, including prevention of natural and technological risks and the fast reaction to emergency situations, as the elemental conditions to increase the quality of life and attractiveness of the Programme area and to achieve a sustainable socio-economic development.

Around 76.2 million Euro ERDF grant is available for this priority axis, matched by 13.7 million Euro national contributions.

3.2.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

A. Information on the physical progress of the priority

The indicators used to measure the progress of this priority are shown in the table below and refer to the contracted projects (as for the committed indicators within the Programme) and finalized projects (as for the clearly achieved indicators) until 31st of December 2011. The methodology for reporting on indicators was changed compared with the 2009 and 2010 AIRs, in order to observe the provisions of the Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Reporting on Core Indicators for the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, Working Document no. 7:

1. Contracted projects

Priority Axis 2 Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Priority Axis Objective 1. To ensure effective protection and use of the area's natural assets by coordinated joint management systems.											
Number of projects developing joint management systems for environmental protection	Achievement	-	0	0	4	10					10
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of joint management systems implemented	Achievement	-	0	0	4	8					8
	Target 2015	20									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 2. To increase the awareness on the environmental protection and management in the cross-border area											
Number of projects raising awareness on environmental protection and management	Achievement	-	0	0	10	21					21
	Target 2015	100									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
The extent to which the eligible area is covered by awareness raising campaigns (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	100 **	100 **					100
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people benefiting from awareness raising activities on environmental protection	Achievement	-	0	0	1.6 M	9.7 M					9.7 M
	Target 2015	2.5 M									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0					
Priority Axis Objective 3. To protect local population, businesses, environment and infrastructure from the potentially disastrous consequences of natural and man-made crises, by joint preventative actions and emergency response services throughout the border area.											
Number of projects contributing to risk prevention in the cross-border area	Achievement	-	0	0	6	12					12
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of projects contributing to joint early warning and emergency response to risk	Achievement	-	0	0	6	12					12
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
The extent to which the Danube is covered by joint flood prevention systems in the cross-border area (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	100 **					100 **
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

The extent to which the eligible area is covered by joint risk prevention systems (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	67.5	100 **					100 **
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
The extent to which Danube is covered by joint early warning emergency activities against flooding (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	26.0 4	100 **					100 **
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of partnerships created for early warning and emergency response activities	Achievement	-	0	0	15	25					25
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

* Where M = million

** The entire area is covered by awareness raising campaigns (100%) and additional 10% of the eligible area is covered by more than one awareness raising campaign.

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the projects contracted until 31st of December 2011

2. Finalized projects

Priority Axis 2 Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Priority Axis Objective 1. To ensure effective protection and use of the area's natural assets by coordinated joint management systems.											
Number of projects developing joint management systems for environmental protection	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of joint management systems implemented	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	20									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 2. To increase the awareness on the environmental protection and management in the cross-border area											
Number of projects raising awareness on environmental protection and management	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	100									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
The extent to which the eligible area is covered by awareness raising campaigns (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	12.5					12.5
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people benefiting from awareness raising activities on environmental protection	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	2.5 M									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0					
Priority Axis Objective 3. To protect local population, businesses, environment and infrastructure from the potentially disastrous consequences of natural and man-made crises, by joint preventative actions and emergency response services throughout the border area.											
Number of projects contributing to risk prevention in the cross-border area	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of projects contributing to joint early	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	10									

warning and emergency response to risk	Baseline	0	0	0	3	0	0				
The extent to which the Danube is covered by joint flood prevention systems in the cross-border area (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
The extent to which the eligible area is covered by joint risk prevention systems (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
The extent to which Danube is covered by joint early warning emergency activities against flooding (%)	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	70									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of partnerships created for early warning and emergency response activities	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

* Where M = million

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the final progress reports submitted for the projects finalized until 31st of December 2011

B. Qualitative analysis

Second call for proposals - intermediary deadline 30th of October, 2009

40 application forms were submitted for the Priority axis 2, as follows: 23 within KAI 1 - Development of joint management systems for environmental protection and 17 within KAI 2 - Development of joint infrastructure and services to prevent natural and man-made crises, including joint emergency response services.

The technical and financial evaluation had been carried out during 2011, starting with 4th of February, 2011. The report for technical and financial evaluation of the applications submitted under the Second call for proposals, intermediary deadline October 2009, was approved by the MA on 17th of August, 2011, and the applications were selected/rejected from financing by JSC on 28th of November, 2011 (32 application forms were selected).

Lead partners selected for technical and financial evaluation	RO		BG	
	No of projects	Total Eligible Value		No of projects
KAI 2.1	9	10,693,002.96	7	7,545,641.94
KAI 2.2	15	44,200,454.21	1	4,918,671.90

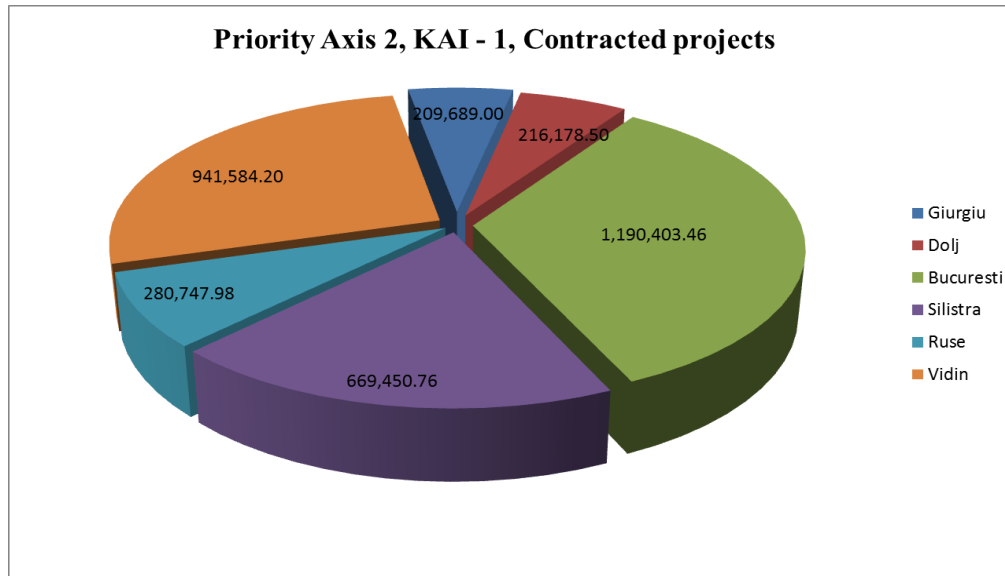
Out of the 32 application forms that passed the admissibility and eligibility evaluation phase, 22 were further approved after the technical and financial evaluation and accordingly selected by the JSC:

Lead partners selected for financing by the JSC	RO		BG	
	No of projects	Total Eligible Value	No of projects	Total Eligible Value
KAI 2.1	4	3,187,429.88	6	2,909,991.90
KAI 2.2	11	37,909,345.11	1	4,918,671.90

Four selected applications from October intermediary deadline received financial allocation, the rest being included on the reserve list, due to lack of financial allocation available.

Contracted projects for Priority Axis 2

For **Priority Axis 2, KAI 1**, during 2007-2011, 9 projects were contracted (5 with Romanian Lead Partner and 4 with Bulgarian Lead Partners) with a total value of 3,508,053.90 Euro.

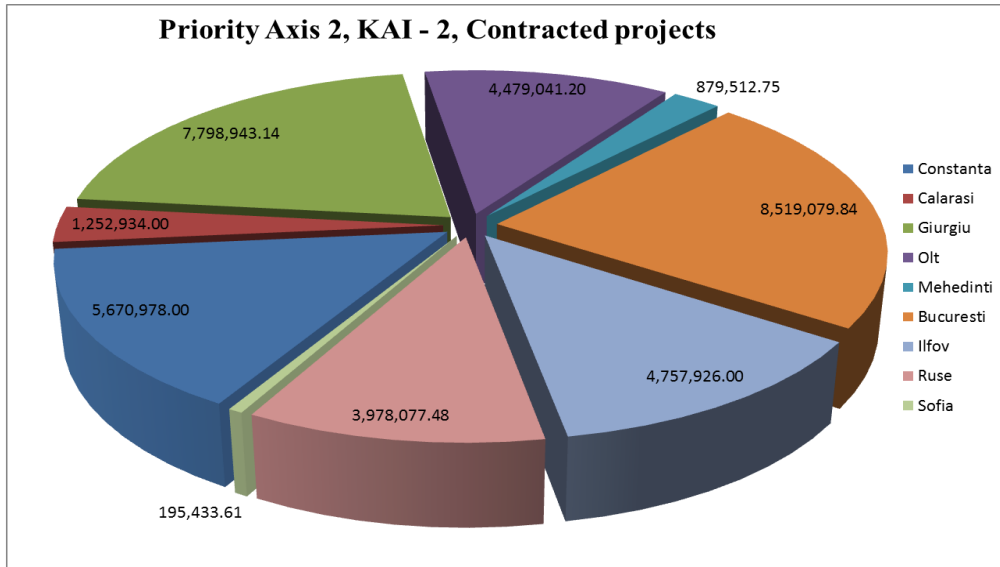


Out of these, 6 projects were contracted during 2011, with a total eligible value of 2,069,543.22 Euro. Also, in 2011 one project contracted in 2010 (with a total value of 1,151,400.20 Euro) was cancelled at the beneficiary's request, due to the lack of financial resources needed for the project implementation.

During 2011 the following advance payments and reimbursement claims were paid within the projects implemented under PA 2 / KAI 1:

- 11 advance payment requests from national state budget contribution for Romanian Partners were paid amounting 159,200.26 Euro. Out of these, 4 advance payment requests were paid in 2011, with a total amount of 104,290.11 Euro.
- 17 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid, with a total amount of 405,965.61 Euro - out of which ERDF 344,340.04 Euro. Out of these, 16 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid in 2011, with a total value of 404,746.55 Euro, out of which ERDF 343,306.04 Euro.

For **Priority Axis 2, KAI 2**, during 2007-2011, 14 projects were contracted (11 with Romanian Lead Partner and 3 with Bulgarian Lead Partner) with a total value of 37,531,926.02 Euro.



Out of these, 4 projects were contracted during 2011, with a total eligible value of 17,592,016.81 Euro.

During 2007-2011 the following advance payments and reimbursement claims were paid within the projects implemented under PA 2 / KAI 2:

- 21 advance payment requests from national state budget contribution for Romanian Partners were paid amounting 3,683,951.30 Euro. Out of these, 10 advance payment requests were received and paid in 2011, with a total amount of 1,705,651.01 Euro.
- 23 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid, with a total amount of 2,562,557.49 Euro - out of which ERDF 2,173,561.25 Euro. All these reimbursement claims were received and paid in 2011.

3.2.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No specific problems for this priority axis have been encountered during 2011. The general problems and measures taken to overcome them, described within Section 2.3., are also encountered within this PA.

3.3 PRIORITY AXIS 3

Priority axis 3: Economic and Social Development - Economic development and social cohesion by joint identification and enhancement of the area's comparative advantages

The focus of this priority axis is on reinforcing the economic and social connections in the border area in order to take advantage of its opportunities and strengths and to boost an economically competitive cross-border area, as a whole. It will encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and the growth of the knowledge economy in the Programme area; contribute to increasing the quality and level of services and attracting more people into employment. Also, by strengthening the social and cultural coherence among people and communities, this priority axis will contribute to the development of the cooperative area and to the creation of a

favourable image and regional identity, able to enhance the sustainable economic growth of the cross-border area.

Around ERDF 47.9 million Euro are available for this Priority Axis, matched by 8.6 million Euro national contributions.

3.3.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

A. Information on the physical progress of the priority

The indicators used to measure the progress of this priority are shown in the table below and refer to the contracted projects (as for the committed indicators within the Programme) and finalized projects (as for the clearly achieved indicators) until 31st of December 2011. The methodology for reporting on indicators was changed compared with the 2009 and 2010 AIRs, in order to observe the provisions of the Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Reporting on Core Indicators for the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, Working Document no. 7:

1. Contracted projects:

Priority Axis 3 Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Priority Axis Objective 1. To develop cross-border business infrastructure and services											
Number of projects developing cross-border business infrastructure and services	Achievement	-	0	1	15	27					27
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of SMEs benefiting from business facilities	Achievement	-	0	500	4,056	5,578					5,578
	Target 2015	500									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 2. To promote the image of the cross-border area inside and outside its boundaries											
Number of projects promoting the image of the cross-border area inside and outside its boundaries	Achievement	-	0	1	19	37					37
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of promotion materials/ events developed	Achievement	-	0	1	98	235					235
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0					
Priority Axis Objective 3. To support development of joint integrated tourism products based on the comparative advantages of the cross-border area											
Number of projects supporting the development of integrated tourism products based on the comparative advantages of the cross-border area	Achievement	-	0	0	13	21					21
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of joint integrated tourism products created	Achievement	-	0	0	20	48					48
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

Priority Axis Objective 4. To stimulate cross-border cooperation between universities, research institutes and businesses											
Number of projects stimulating cross-border cooperation between universities, research institutes and businesses	Achievement	-	0	0	12	28					28
	Target 2015	15									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of partnerships between universities, research institutes and businesses	Achievement	-	0	0	9	33					33
	Target 2015	15									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 5. To support the cross-border sharing of information on employment opportunities											
Number of projects supporting cross-border sharing of information on employment opportunities	Achievement	-	0	0	0	6					6
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people informed on employment opportunities	Achievement	-	0	0	193,500	240,200					240,200
	Target 2015	360,000									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 6. To develop cross-border training services for employment, in connection with the integrated market needs											
Number of projects developing cross-border training services for employment in connection with the integrated market needs	Achievement	-	0	0	2	10					10
	Target 2015	17									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people graduating cross-border training courses	Achievement	-	0	0	380	891					0
	Target 2015	3,500									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 7. To develop cross-border linkages and exchanges between education/training centres											
Number of projects developing cross-border linkages and exchanges between education/training centres	Achievement	-	0	0	5	15					15
	Target 2015	15									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of partnerships created between education/ training centres	Achievement	-	0	0	7	127					127
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 8. To strengthen social and cultural coherence and co-operation among local people and communities in the programme area											
Number of projects strengthening cultural coherence and cooperation among local people and communities in the local area	Achievement	-	0	0	18	31					31
	Target 2015	90									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people participating in people to people actions	Achievement	-	0		8,490	16,050					16,050
	Target 2015	4,500									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the projects contracted until 31st of December 2011

2. Finalized projects:

Priority Axis 3 Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Priority Axis Objective 1. To develop cross-border business infrastructure and services											
Number of projects developing cross-border business infrastructure and services	Achievement	-	0	0	0	1					1
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of SMEs benefiting from business facilities	Achievement	-	0	0	0	70					70
	Target 2015	500									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 2. To promote the image of the cross-border area inside and outside its boundaries											
Number of projects promoting the image of the cross-border area inside and outside its boundaries	Achievement	-	0	0	0	1					1
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of promotion materials/ events developed	Achievement	-	0	0	0	25					25
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 3. To support development of joint integrated tourism products based on the comparative advantages of the cross-border area											
Number of projects supporting the development of integrated tourism products based on the comparative advantages of the cross-border area	Achievement	-	0	0	0	1					1
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of joint integrated tourism products created	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	10									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 4. To stimulate cross-border cooperation between universities, research institutes and businesses											
Number of projects stimulating cross-border cooperation between universities, research institutes and businesses	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	15									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of partnerships between universities, research institutes and businesses	Achievement	-	0	0	0	10					10
	Target 2015	15									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 5. To support the cross-border sharing of information on employment opportunities											
Number of projects supporting cross-border sharing of information on employment opportunities	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people informed on employment opportunities	Achievement	-	0	0	0	300					300
	Target 2015	360.000									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 6. To develop cross-border training services for employment, in connection with the integrated market needs											

Number of projects developing cross-border training services for employment in connection with the integrated market needs	Achievement	-	0	0	0	1					1
	Target 2015	17									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people graduating cross-border training courses	Achievement	-	0	0	0	0					0
	Target 2015	3.500									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 7. To develop cross-border linkages and exchanges between education/training centres											
Number of projects developing cross-border linkages and exchanges between education/training centres	Achievement	-	0	0	0	11					11
	Target 2015	15									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of partnerships created between education/ training centres	Achievement	-	0	0	0	10					10
	Target 2015	30									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Priority Axis Objective 8. To strengthen social and cultural coherence and co-operation among local people and communities in the programme area											
Number of projects strengthening cultural coherence and cooperation among local people and communities in the local area	Achievement	-	0	0	0	9					9
	Target 2015	90									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of people participating in people to people actions	Achievement	-	0	0	0	7,406					7,406
	Target 2015	4.500									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				

The indicators within the above table are cumulated at the Programme level, using information from the final progress reports submitted for the projects finalized until 31st of December 2011

B. Qualitative analysis

1) Second call for proposals - intermediary deadline 30th of October 2009

The technical and financial evaluation had been carried out during 2011, starting with 4th February, 2011. The report for technical and financial evaluation of the applications submitted under the Second call for proposals, intermediary deadline October 2009 was approved by the MA on 8th of November, 2011, and the applications were selected by JSC on 28th of November, 2011.

Out of the 62 application forms that passed the admissibility and eligibility evaluation phase, 48 were further approved after the technical and financial evaluation and accordingly selected by the JSC:

Lead partners selected for financing by the JSC	RO		BG	
	No of projects	Total Eligible Value	No of projects	Total Eligible Value
KAI 3.1	15	14,403,333.40	7	4,788,713.21
KAI 3.2	6	5,576,241.13	2	884,980.40
KAI 3.3	7	1,326,217.90	11	2,051,895.36

During 2011, one project submitted for Priority Axis 3, under the second call for proposal, Intermediary deadline July 2009 was submitted for re-evaluation, following JSC Decision no. 16/07.12.2010.

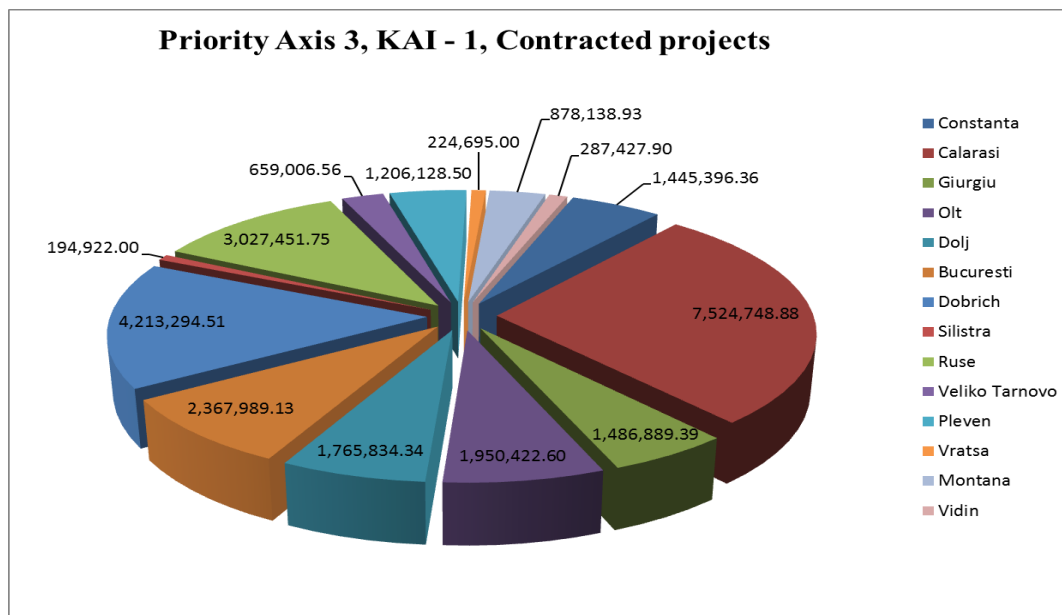
The technical and financial evaluation of the application forms suspended for the re-evaluation was unfolded between 28.02.2011-06.04.2011 and finalized with the recommendation for funding acceptance of the project 2(3i)-3.1-3 - *“Regional Center of Danubian Business - Gura Vaih, Mehedinti County”*, Lead Partner: Mehedinti County Council.

Following the proposal of the Assessment Working Group, the project was selected for funding by the Joint Steering Committee with a total value of 1,525,478.66 Euro and it was included on the reserve list because there was no financial allocation available for contracting.

Also, one project, submitted for PA 3, Intermediary deadline October 2009, 2(4i)-3.3-1 - *“First Steps towards Improvement of Social Services in the Cross-border Areas”*, was approved by the JSC through Decision no. 35/28.11.2011 with the condition that the JTS will further analyse the difference between the scores awarded by the two assessors that evaluated the application for 1 evaluation criterion (more than 10 points difference), as this represented an inconsistency with the provisions of the Assessors Guide. The JTS started the verification which will be finalized in 2012. A final decision will be taken after the agreement of MA and NA.

Contracted projects for Priority Axis 3

For **Priority Axis 3 - KAI 1**, during 2007-2011, 42 projects were contracted (20 with Romanian Lead Partners and 22 with Bulgarian Lead Partners), with a total eligible value of 27,232,345.85 Euro.



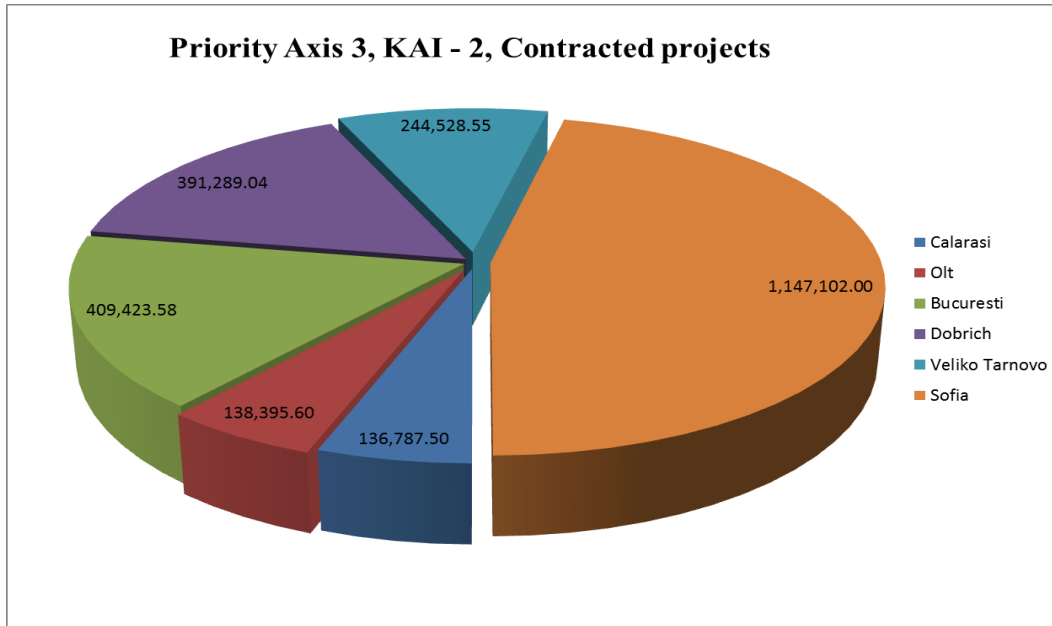
Out of these, 15 projects were contracted during 2011, with a total eligible value of 10,356,340.62 Euro.

During 2011 the following advance payments and reimbursement claims were paid within the projects implemented under PA 3 / KAI 1:

- 62 advance payment requests from national state budget contribution for Romanian Partners were paid amounting 2,275,779.87 Euro. Out of these, 23 advance payment requests were paid in 2011, with a total value of 956,950.44 Euro.
- 112 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid, with a total amount of 4,675,333.78 Euro - out of which ERDF 3,965,618.11 Euro. Out of these 108

reimbursement claims were authorized and paid in 2011, with a total value of 4,516,015.85 Euro, out of which ERDF 3,830,484.64 Euro.

For **Priority Axis 3, KAI 2**, during 2007-2011, 6 projects were contracted (3 with Romanian Lead Partners and 3 with Bulgarian Lead Partners), with a total value of 2,467,526.27 Euro.

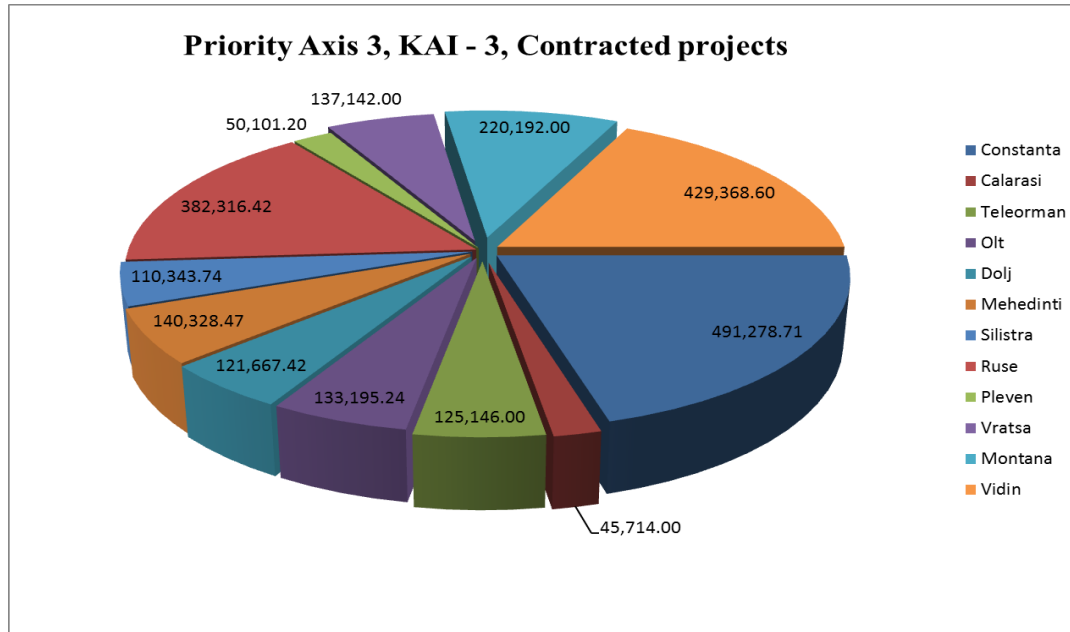


Out of these, 5 projects were contracted during 2011, with a total eligible value of 2,076,237.23 Euro.

During 2007-2011 the following advance payments and reimbursement claims were paid within the projects implemented under PA3/KAI 2:

- 8 advance payment requests from national state budget contribution for Romanian Partners were paid amounting 148,578.12 Euro. All these advance payment requests were received and paid during 2011.
- 3 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid, with a total amount of 75,029.46 Euro - out of which ERDF 63,639.99 Euro. All these reimbursement claims were authorized and paid during 2011.

For **Priority Axis 3 - KAI 3**, during 2007-2011, 20 projects were contracted (9 with Romanian Lead Partners and 11 with Bulgarian Lead Partners) with a total value of 2,386,793.803 Euro.



Also, in 2011 for one of the projects contracted in 2010 from Priority Axis 3, KAI 3, with a total value of 155,642.00 Euro, it was started the procedure for termination of the contract due to lack of financial resources needed for the project implementation of Partner 2 and the impossibility of the Lead Partner to find another suitable partner for the cross border partnership.

During 2007-2011 the following advance payments and reimbursement claims were paid within the projects implemented under PA3/KAI 3:

- 26 advance payment requests from national state budget contribution for Romanian Partners were paid amounting 161,855.21 Euro Out of these, 9 advance payment requests were received and paid in 2011, with a total amount of 74,638.35 Euro.
- 47 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid, with a total amount of 1,040,712.62 Euro - out of which ERDF 882,732.44 Euro. Out of these, 46 reimbursement claims were authorized and paid in 2011, with a total value of 1,034,852.20 Euro, out of which ERDF 877,761.63 Euro.

3.3.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No specific problems for this priority axis have been encountered during 2011. The general problems and measures taken to overcome them, described within Section 2.3., are also encountered within this PA.

3.4 PRIORITY AXIS 4

3.4.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

A. Information on the physical progress of the priority

The indicators used to measure the progress of this priority during 2011, together with the progress achieved up to date, are shown in the table below:

Priority Indicators	Axis		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Functional	Joint	Achievement	-	1	1	1	1					1

Technical Secretariat	Target 2015	1									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Web page of the Programme	Achievement	-	1	1	1	1					1
	Target 2015	1									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
	Achievement	-	8	19	32	41					41
Number of officers acquiring competencies in programme management and successfully performing their duties in JTS and other Programme bodies	Target 2015	18									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of planned programme evaluations	Achievement	0	0	0	0	1					1
	Target 2015	2									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
	Achievement	0	2	3	5	8					8
Number of Joint Monitoring Committee meetings held	Target 2015	14									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of calls for projects finalized	Achievement	0	0	2	2	4					4
	Target 2015	12									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
	Achievement	0	12	102	124	133					133
Number of information and promotion events	Target 2015	110									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of printed publications (types)	Achievement	0	3	9	17	18					17
	Target 2015	40									
	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0					

Qualitative analysis

37 reimbursement claims were submitted under the Priority Axis 4 - Technical Assistance of the Programme by JTS, Managing Authority and National Authority during 2007-2011. The total value of the reimbursement claims was 2,521,239.14 Euro - out of which 34 were paid by the end of 2011, with an ERDF value of 1,567,577.24 Euro.

During 2011, a number of 22 reimbursement claims was submitted under the Priority Axis 4 - Technical Assistance of the Programme by JTS, Managing Authority and National Authority. The total value of the reimbursement claims was 1,436,705.52 Euro. Out of these reimbursement claims, 19 were paid by the end of 2011 with a total ERDF value of 870,474.21 Euro. The rest of 3 reimbursement claims are in processing and will be paid in the beginning of 2012.

Detailed information regarding the implementation of this Priority Axis is presented in Chapter 6 - Technical Assistance and Chapter 7 - Information and Publicity.

3.4.2 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No specific problems for this priority axis have been encountered during 2010. The general problems and measures taken to overcome them, described within Section 2.3., are also encountered within this PA.

4 ESF PROGRAMMES: COHERENCE AND CONCENTRATION

Not applicable.

5 ERDF/CF PROGRAMMES: MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable - no major projects will be financed under this Programme.

6 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Technical Assistance (TA) under this Programme finances activities directly related to the Programme management. Technical assistance is invested in the overall management and promotion of the Programme, rising awareness, pro-active project generation and interactive development, according to the two key areas of intervention established within Romania-Bulgaria CBC Programme, namely:

KAI 4.1 - Support for the implementation and overall management of the Programme,

KAI 4.2 - Support for the communication and information of the Programme.

Detailed information about the activities that can be financed from the Technical Assistance, as well as estimations of annual allocations of funds are included in the consolidated Multiannual Technical Assistance Strategy (TAS), drafted by the MA and approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee in 2008 (revised in 2010).

As a general remark, the technical assistance financial support was used for implementing measures needed for mitigating the effects of the problems identified at beneficiary/Programme management structures. During 2011, in the documents submitted by the beneficiaries of the Programme to the JTS headquarters, was remarked that not all of them were drafted properly (e.g. reimbursement claims, progress reports, promotional materials, addenda, etc.) and this issue may affect the activities performance and achievements of the set results. In this regard, the events organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat in 2011 were focused not only on specific issues (progress reports, reimbursement claims, etc.), but also in disseminating good practices identified at different beneficiaries level. Lists of most common mistakes regarding the project implementation and reporting were drafted and presented to the beneficiaries and uploaded on the Programme's website. Case studies were also discussed with the beneficiaries within the technical meetings and workshops organized during 2011, in order to identify good practices.

6.1 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ANNUAL STRATEGY FOR 2011 (TAAS)

According to the Programme internal procedures, each year MA details the information included into the Multiannual Strategy in an Annual Technical Assistance Strategy, using the contributions from all the TA beneficiaries.

Thus, for 2011, the Technical Assistance Annual Strategy (TAAS) was approved by the JMC through Decision no. 49/14.02.2011 and amended through JMC Decision no. 57/17.08.2011, with a total budget of 3,663,832 EURO. The two related global financing decisions for the Managing Authority's activities financed from the Programme 2011 TA budget were approved on 22nd of March and amended on 1st of September 2011. The two financing contracts for JTS and First Level Control Unit for Romanian partners' related activities were approved on 5th of May 2011.

Also, MA drafted the 2012 TAAS, approved through JMC Decision no. 59/29.11.2011, with a total budget of 3,802,933 EURO. Following that, the two global financing decisions for 2012 for the

MA activities were drafted and pending approval. At the same time, the application forms for financing related to the 2012 TA budget were submitted by the JTS and approved by MA in December 2011; the corresponding financing contracts for JTS and First Level Control Unit for Romanian partners' related activities were drafted by the MA and pending approval at the end of 2011.

6.1.1 Beneficiaries of the Technical Assistance priority axis

- Joint Technical Secretariat
- Audit Authority
- National Authority
- Info Point
- Managing Authority
- Romanian First Level Controllers

6.1.2 Technical assistance contracting and payments

Total budget allocated for TA Priority Axis 2007-2013	2007-2011 total budget approved by JMC	Total payments made in 2007-2011 TA total budget (ERDF + national contribution)	% from the total allocated 2007-2011, by JMC, paid in 2011(ERDF + national contribution)
20,193,543.59	9,048,440.50	2,422,091.00	26.77

The total budget allocated for the Priority Axis 4 - Technical Assistance was 20,193,543.59 Euro. During 2011, the total payments made by the Programme structures, as TA beneficiaries, from the budget allocated was 2,422,091 Euro, this amount representing 26.77% from the total budget allocated for the period 2007-2011.

6.1.3 Technical Assistance (Managing Authority)

Payments incurred for the implementation of the Technical Assistance by MA, as TA beneficiary, during 2011

The funds allocated for the TA activities were used by the MA for the following activities:

- Technical support for MA administrative capacity: within this type of actions the MA carried out activities regarding the purchase of equipment and stationeries needed for the smooth performing of the daily activities for the Programme's management.
- Contracting external assessors for the evaluation process: external assessors were contracted by the MA in order to improve the assessment process of the applications submitted under the calls for proposals launched within the Programme. Their task was to perform the evaluation activities (admissibility and eligibility, and technical and financial evaluation) within the Assessment Working Groups established at JTS level. This was a measure intended to reduce delays in the evaluation process, as mentioned in the 2010 AIR as well as to reduce the workload of the JTS staff, which instead could better focus on the other tasks regarding Programme/projects implementation.
- On-going evaluation of the Programme (detailed information regarding this issue is included in Section Monitoring and Evaluation). The results of this evaluation will be

used by relevant bodies involved in the Programme management in order to take the proper measures for increasing the quality of the Programme's implementation and/or adjust the Programme to the new context and findings, if necessary. The contract was finalized in 2011.

- Contracting services for ensuring the MIS-ETC maintenance - this contract supported MA in its process of refining the MIS-ETC system and eliminating those errors that were identified in the early stages of uploading data process. The effects of this measure are foreseen to have a positive impact during 2012, as the contract is implemented.
- Contracting services for the evaluation of 2010 Annual Communication Plan and 2007-2013 Multiannual Communication Plan (implementation period evaluated 2007-mid 2011) - detailed information is included in Section Information and Publicity section 7.1 Information and Promotion events (Managing Authority). The contract was finalized in 2011.

The amounts allocated through the 2011 TAAS for the MA, together with the payments made during 2011 by the MA (as TA beneficiary) for the implementation of the Technical Assistance priority axis are presented in the table below:

2010 Budget approved through TAAS by JMC (ERDF 64.72% + National co-financing 35.28%) (Euro) for MA	2011 Budget approved through TAAS by JMC (ERDF 64.72% + National co-financing 35.28%) (Euro) for MA	Payments made in 2011 by MA for TA (Euro) from 2010-2011 budget	Percentage usage of the funds allocated for 2010-2011 (MA) during 2011
391,028	642,468	150,268.06	14.54

The usage of funds allocated for 2011 is mainly justified by difficulties encountered by the Programme during 2011, especially activities postponed due to the Romanian legal framework for public procurement.

Thus, the Romanian legal framework for public procurement (GO no 34/2006) stipulating long implementation periods for some of the public procurement procedures and not being very detailed regarding some other special types of procurements, made the procurement process longer and more difficult. This was reflected for example in the delays encountered within the procurement/contracting process for information and communication activities and some equipment. Thus, the payments concerning these contracts, although being part of 2011 approved TA budget, are foreseen to be made in 2012.

6.1.4 Technical Assistance (National Authority & Info Point)

Payments incurred for the implementation of the Technical Assistance by NA during 2011

The funds available for the implementation of the Technical Assistance priority axis were used in activities organized under the Key Area 4.1 - Support for the implementation and overall management of the Programme.

The amounts allocated through the TAAS 2011 for the NA and IP, together with the payments made during 2011 by the NA (as TA beneficiary) for the implementation of the Technical Assistance priority axis are presented in the table below:

Key Area of Intervention (Including reserve)	2011 Budget approved through TAAS by JMC (ERDF 64.72% + National co-financing 35.28%) (Euro)			Payments made in 2011 by the National Authority for TA (Euro)			Percentage usage of the funds allocated for 2011
	NA	IP	TOTAL	Payments made in 2011 by the National Authority for IP	Payments made in 2011 by the National Authority	TOTAL Payments made in 2011 by the National Authority for TA	
KAI 4.1 - Support for the implementation and overall management of the Programme	597,234	112,004	709,238	212,148.47	22,573	234,721.47	33.05%
KAI 4.2 - Support for the communication and information of the Programme	0	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0 %
Total	597,234	113,004	710,238	212,148.47	22,573	234,721.47	

6.1.5 Technical Assistance (Joint Technical Secretariat & Romanian First Level Controllers, constituted within the CBC Regional Office Calarasi)

Payments incurred for the implementation of the Technical Assistance by JTS during 2011: The amounts allocated through the 2010 TAAS and 2011 TAAS for the JTS, together with the payments made during 2011 by the JTS (as TA beneficiary) for the implementation of the Technical Assistance priority axis are presented in the table below:

2010 Budget approved through TAAS by JMC (ERDF 64.72% + National co-financing 35.28%) (Euro) for JTS	2011 Budget approved through TAAS by JMC (ERDF 64.72% + National co-financing 35.28%) (Euro) for JTS	Payments made in 2011 by JTS for TA (Euro) from 2010-2011 budget	Percentage usage of the funds allocated for 2010- 2011 (JTS)
1,920,606.00	2,187,937	2,279,742.53	42.17

The funds available for the implementation of the Technical Assistance priority axis were used by the Joint Technical Secretariat and the Romanian First Level Controllers in activities organized under the two Key Areas of Intervention for the management and promotion of the Programme:

- activities to ensure the functioning of the Programme (salaries and travelling costs for the staff implementing the Programme, procurement of works, goods and services),
- organizing trainings for JTS and FLC members,
- providing secretariat services for joint management structures of the Programme (JMC and JSC),

- activities in connection with the selection, evaluation and support of projects (workshops with lead partners/partners, technical meetings),
- support for the information and publicity activities of the Programme (promotional materials, Annual Conference, Conference with European information multipliers, information session for minorities, Project Café meetings, Formal and informal meetings with the decision factors, Open Day - 9 of May, monitoring of the Programme's presence in mass-media, maintenance and promotion of a Programme's website, services for the implementation of the interactive cross-border region map on the Programme's website).

6.1.6 Technical Assistance (Audit Authority)

The Audit Authority has submitted no application for 2011 TA budget.

6.1.7 Other technical assistance available for the Programme

During 2011, the Programme also benefited of support from projects financed from other financial sources than the technical assistance of the Programme, or the MRDT own budget, namely:

INTERACT Programme

The INTERACT Programme promotes and supports good governance of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. The Programme targets the institutions and bodies responsible for the management and delivery of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. Therefore the Programme organized during 2011 trainings and provided practical support to the Managing Authority, National Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat and beneficiaries, when it was necessary.

7 INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

In compliance with the provisions in force, the Managing Authority and National Authority had drafted the Multiannual Communication Plan for the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee Decision no. 2/15.04.2008. The plan is channelled on two main inter-related directions: awareness-raising and absorption capacity. Therefore, the purpose of the Communication Plan can be defined as follows:

- To highlight the role of the Community and to ensure that assistance from the Funds is transparent by proactively disseminating information and providing platforms that stimulate exchanges of experience in order to raise the awareness with the general public;
- To create the premises for a high absorption capacity in Romania and Bulgaria of the Structural Funds available through European Regional Development Fund.

In order to achieve its purpose, the Multiannual Plan sets out the following general objectives:

- To support the successful implementation of the Programme by ensuring effective communication system (measures, channels, targeted messages to all identified targets);
- To increase public awareness of the RO-BG Programme's existence, aims, priorities, financial support provided, estimated economic and social impact;

- To increase the knowledge of the potential beneficiaries of the RO-BG Programme implementation framework/arrangements, eligibility criteria and selection mechanism for applications submitted for financing;
- To ensure transparency for the target groups of the Programme, in order to raise the level of interest in Funds for a better absorption in the eligible areas;
- To increase the level of trust of the general public in the institutions managing the RO-BG Programme;
- To increase the visibility of the RO-BG Programme and of the Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat, at national and regional level, with the implementation of the Programme;
- To promote the social and economic impact of this assistance to the general public.

In order to achieve the established objectives and to reach the indicators target values, the Programme's management structures develop each year an Annual Communication Plan, which details the information and publicity activities that are going to be carried out during the year in question. The Annual Communication Plan of the Programme is part of the Technical Assistance Annual Strategy.

Until 31st of December 2011, the Multiannual Communication Plan for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 remained unchanged.

On 14th of February, the 2011 Annual Communication Plan, annex to the 2011 Technical Assistance Annual Strategy was approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee of the Programme; the total budget for information and communication activities, for all the Programme's management structures, was 610,800 EUR.

In 2011, the Programme was promoted on a large scale for the wide public in the eligible area in order to present results, projects and make it more visible. At the same time, the meetings and other forms of direct communication with beneficiaries had continued.

The information and publicity activities were directed to beneficiaries of the Ro-Bg Programme, in order to ensure proper and updated information about the implementation mechanism of the projects selected by the Joint Steering Committee of the Programme. The secondary target group was the general public as indirect beneficiary who was informed about the Programme, its goals and results. Information about the Programme and the projects' results was also provided to institutions involved in policy-making in fields related to priorities of the programme, stakeholders etc.

7.1 COMMUNICATION EVENTS

7.1.1 Events organized by the National Authority

1. Two training seminars for the Bulgarian first level controllers in the framework of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: 06/04/2011, Sofia, Bulgaria.
- Target groups: First Level Controllers under the Programme.
- Financing source: 50% of the costs for the event were financed through the Technical assistance of CBC RO-BG.
- Short description: Training seminar for First Level Controllers for CBC Programmes RO-BG and GR-BG. The seminar was organized in several modules: instructions regarding FLC procedures and control questions in the template reports, verification

of public procurement, eligibility of expenditure and financial issues. Representatives of the JTSs under the Programme took part in the discussions as well.

- 40 participants attended the training seminars, out of which 19 males and 21 females.

2. The sixth meeting of the Joint Steering Committee for the Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 (organized by JTS and hosted by NA)

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: First target group of the Ro-Bg Programme
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)
- Short description: During the meeting, it was presented the general context of the evaluation of projects submitted within the second call for proposals, intermediary deadline October 2009 (Priority Axes 1,2 and 3), namely: general presentation of the proposals evaluation; status of the Programme indicators evolution and coverage at project selected level, including projects submitted at the intermediary deadline October 2009 and proposed for financing by the Assessment Working Group; situation regarding the framing of budgets of projects proposed for financing within the Programme allocation; status of Programme indicative breakdown by category of funds coverage at project selected level, including projects submitted at the intermediary deadline October 2009 and proposed for financing by the AWG. The JSC Decisions are related to the projects approved for financing/rejected.
- 44 participants attended the meeting.

3. The seventh meeting of the Joint Monitoring Committee for the Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: First target group of the Ro-Bg Programme
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)
- Short description: During the meeting, it were presented the Programme implementation status, 2012 Technical Assistance Annual Strategy, The Programme's Action Plan regarding the Conclusions and the Recommendations included within the Report on the findings of the Programme Interim Evaluation and the 2012 Annual Evaluation Plan for the Programme (AEP) and Presentation of ToRs for the 2nd Programme Interim Evaluation 2012. The JMC decisions are related to the 2012 TAAS, the Programme's Action Plan and the 2012 Annual Evaluation Plan for the Programme.
- 65 participants attended the meeting.

7.1.2 Events for Programme implementation (Joint Technical Secretariat)

1. The sixth meeting of the Joint Monitoring Committee for the Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: First target group of the Ro-Bg Programme
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)

- Short description: During the meeting, the following decisions were approved: Decision no. 54 of June 22nd, approving the Annual Implementation Report for 2010 of Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007 - 2013 and Decision no. 55 of June 22nd, approving the Intermediary Evaluation Report for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.
- 67 participants attended the meeting.

2. Ten technical meetings with the lead partners/partners were organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat in the framework of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: towns from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: The lead partners/partners whose projects were approved for funding in the framework of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The technical meetings were addressed to the lead partners/partners whose projects were approved for funding from the first and second call for proposals/strategic projects. The aim of these meetings was to present detailed topics for the project implementation, namely public procurement, eligible expenditures, information and promotion measures, reporting etc.
- 287 participants attended the technical meetings.

3. Twelve working meetings (round tables) organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat for the beneficiaries of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: towns from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: The lead partners/partners from the projects under implementation in the framework of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The aim of these meetings was to analyses with the representatives of partners involved in the on-going projects different encountered situations - technical or financial issues - in order to ensure the project implementation according to the framework of the Ro-Bg Programme.
- 182 participants attended the working meetings.

4. Four workshops organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat for the lead partners/partners whose project were approved for funding in the framework of Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: towns from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: The lead partners/partners whose projects were approved for funding in the framework of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).

- Short description: The aim of these workshops was to present to the lead partners/partners the main topics from the Project Implementation Manual, namely First Level Control, Technical Management of the Programme/project, Financial Management of the Programme/project and Information and Publicity Measures for the Programme/project visibility.
- 155 participants attended all workshops.

5. Two technical meetings with the Programme management bodies

- Date & Location: towns from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: Management bodies of the Programme, namely Managing Authority, National Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat, First Level Control and Certifying Authority
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The aim of these meetings was to analyse the Programme status and different topics at projects' level, in order to ensure the sound implementation of the Programme.
- 44 participants attended the technical meetings.

7.1.3 Information and Promotion events (Joint Technical Secretariat)

Two technical meetings on communication issues organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat

- Date & Location: towns from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: Management bodies of the Programme, namely Managing Authority, National Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat and First Level Control
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The aim of these meetings was to debate on the communication and publicity issues, to analyse the problems appeared at beneficiary level during project implementation and to identify solutions.
- 63 participants attended these technical meetings.

One conference with European multipliers of information organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: organizations in the public sector (acting locally in the border region) and local NGOs
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The aim of the event was to develop the partnerships network for the communication activities of the Programme with organizations in the public sector (acting locally in the border region) and local NGOs. This network was built locally/regionally and operates as a group of information multipliers for all activities of the Programme.
- 67 participants attended the conference.

One information session for equal opportunities organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: representatives of organizations and associations of the minorities in the eligible area of the Programme (Roma people, women, disabled people and other categories of minorities).
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The information session was organised in order to promote the Programme and to present the results achieved on this area with the representatives of organizations and associations of the minorities in the eligible area of the Programme (Roma people, women, disabled people and other categories of minorities).
- 56 participants attended the information session.

Open Day - May 9th organized by the Joint Technical Secretariat

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: Representatives of the second target group of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: Celebrating Europe Day, Joint Technical Secretariat organized on 9th of May, 2011, an Open Day event for promoting the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 in the context of the European Union, in order to improve the popular perception of the European Union and to raise awareness on European dimension. The information provided was focused on the idea of accessibility and transparency in using the EU funds, on useful information regarding the different decision making bodies from regional, national and European level, the roles of the managing structures of the Programme and of the European Commission. At the event had been disseminated information through promotion materials regarding the Ro-Bg Programme and answers were provided at guests' requests.
- 76 participants attended the event.

Two "On site visits"

- Date & Location: towns from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: Mass media, decision-makers, civil society, and academic society (according to the type of project)
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)
- Short description: At these meetings was presented the implementation status of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 and the results achieved so far. For the transparency regarding the use of public funds, but also to see on the spot the evolution and the quality of the developed activities, the guests had the opportunity to visit projects' implementation locations and to find out more details about the operations. Therefore, the local and regional communities could learn more information about the Programme and its support in the cross-border area. One event was organized in each member state of the Programme.

- 103 participants attended the visits.

Seminar with Romanian mass-media representatives regarding Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: Local media representatives from the Romanian eligible area of the Programme.
- Financing source: Programme Technical Assistance (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The seminar had an interactive character, presenting the progress of the Programme and giving the participants the opportunity to address questions. The following topics were addressed: the Programme impact in the cross-border region; the successful results of the call for proposals through the applicants; the contracting status of the Programme; the physical and financial progress of the Programme. The conclusions of the seminars showed that the media representatives that were present at the event are interested in the Programme and are aware of their role in promoting financing opportunities.
- 30 participants attended the seminar.

Annual conference for Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013

- Date & Location: town from the eligible area of the Programme (See Annex 4)
- Target groups: Mass-media representatives, stakeholders, representatives of the local/regional/national administration, NGOs and beneficiaries from the entire eligible area of the Programme.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of Ro-Bg Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)
- Short description: The conference aimed to inform the beneficiaries, officials at national, regional and local level from Romania and Bulgaria about the progress of the RO-BG Programme achieved at the end of the year 2011. The management bodies of the Programme presented the main achievements with emphasis on financial and physical information.
- 123 participants attended the conference.

The geographical distribution at the level of county/district of the events (number and number of participants) organized by JTS in the eligible area of the Programme is detailed below:

County	Constanta	Calarasi	Giurgiu	Olt	Teleorman	Dolj	Mehedinti	Bucuresti
Number of events	3	13	1	2	1	1	1	3
Number of participants	129	273	39	67	30	42	46	129

District	Dobrich	Silistra	Razgrad	Ruse	Veliko Tarnovo	Pleven	Vratsa	Montana	Vidin
Number of	2	2	1	4	2	4	1	1	1

events									
Number of participants	72	80	56	149	102	278	31	20	54

7.2 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND MATERIALS

7.2.1 Electronic channels for information and communication

Programme website: www.cbcrromaniabulgaria.eu

- Target groups: potential beneficiaries/applicants/beneficiaries of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, mass-media, bodies involved in the management and implementation of the Programme, stakeholders and general public.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: The website is continuously updated by the Joint Technical Secretariat with new information for the first and second target group of the Programme, mass-media etc. - documents, news, events, useful announcements for the beneficiaries, press releases, information on the activity of the Joint Monitoring Committee, Joint Steering Committee, the list of the projects approved/rejected from financing, the list of the selected and contracted projects, procedures to follow, useful contacts etc.

Interactive cross-border region map on the Programme's website (JTS)

- Target groups: potential beneficiaries/beneficiaries of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, decision-makers, representatives of the European Commission, National Authority, Managing Authority and Audit Authority, officials and experts of the county councils/district administration and mayoralities from the eligible area, of Regional Development Agencies, of the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, of the Sectorial Operational Programmes, representatives of the civil society, mass-media.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)
- Short description: In 2011, a contract services for ensuring the maintenance and the management of the application had been concluded. The official website of the Programme is the location of the interactive cross-border region map, considered not only an image of the achieved results of the financed projects in the eligible area, but also a working tool for the related reports and information concerning the Programme.

7.2.2 Promotion materials

Information materials (JTS)

- Flyer - 2.000 pcs.
- Target groups: Potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, mass-media, stakeholders and bodies involved in the management and implementation of the Programme.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)
- Quantity: 1000 pcs. in Romanian language, 1000 pcs. in Bulgarian language.

- Short description: The flyer was designed in an attractive way in order to promote the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 and its official website, in two versions, in Romanian (1000 pcs.) and Bulgarian (1000 pcs.) language. The flyer contains brief information about the two issues:
 - The Management bodies of the Ro-Bg Programme and their general concern;
 - Brief description of the Programme's website (name of the website, sections, type of information).

Promotion materials (JTS) - Totem - for promoting the RO-BG Programme

- Target groups: Joint Technical Secretariat of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Types and quantities of the materials produced: One totem was purchased and branded with the visual identity elements of the Programme.
- Short description: Designed with the visual identity elements of the Programme and placed at the entrance of the JTS headquarters, the key role of this totem is to guide the visitors/beneficiaries and to promote the Programme.

Promotion materials (JTS)

- Target groups: potential beneficiaries/ beneficiaries of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, decision-makers, representatives of the European Commission, National Authority, Managing Authority and Audit Authority, officials and experts of the county councils/district administration and mayoralities in the eligible area, of Regional Development Agencies, of the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, of the Sectorial Operational Programmes, representatives of the civil society, mass-media.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Programme (JTS TA beneficiary)
- Types and quantities of the materials produced: The materials were purchased and branded with the visual identity elements of the Programme and delivered to the target groups (See Annex 3).

7.2.3 Press-cutting services (JTS)

- Target groups: Managing Authority, National Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat, Audit Authority, representatives of the European Commission, officials and experts of the county councils/district administration and mayoralities from the eligible area etc.
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Programme (JTS TA beneficiary).
- Short description: Two specialized press-cutting services were contracted by the Joint Technical Secretariat in order to monitor the presence of the Programme in the Romanian, respectively Bulgarian media. Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 was an active on both Romanian and Bulgarian mass-media. The information regarding the projects implemented in the framework of the Programme showed that the progress achieved, the impact and the results are considerable for the strategic outputs of the Programme.

7.2.4 Electronic and phone communication

Designated email addresses are available to provide to the potential beneficiaries/beneficiaries the opportunity to address enquires and questions regarding the Programme, and to offer them all necessary information and receive useful feedback: helpdesk_rob@calarasicbc.ro (Joint Technical Secretariat) and rob@mdrt.ro (Managing Authority).

At the same time, the potential beneficiaries/beneficiaries and all the interested people have the possibility to contact by phone the JTS representatives to request information related to the Programme.

7.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN (JTS AND MA)

Evaluation of the 2010 Communication Plan (MA)

- Target groups: potential beneficiaries/beneficiaries of Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, decision-makers, representatives of the European Commission, National Authority, Managing Authority and Audit Authority, officials and experts of the county councils/district administration and mayoralities from the eligible area, of Regional Development Agencies, of the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, of the Sectorial Operational Programmes, representatives of the civil society, mass-media..
- Financing source: Technical Assistance of the Programme (MA TA beneficiary).
- Short description: During May-August 2011, the Managing Authority has conducted both a qualitative and quantitative research to measure the level of awareness and knowledge regarding the Programme among the general public, the mass media representatives and Programme beneficiaries from Bulgaria and Romania. The conclusions and the recommendations of the study revealed the following aspects:

1. For the General Public

The most widely used information channel among the general public as regards the current affairs of their localities of residence or county / district was the television, followed by the Internet and personal networks. There were, however, differences among Romanians and Bulgarians as regards accessing information channels: Romanians used information channels more, although not their personal networks.

Media impact generated high levels of awareness about cooperation activities between Romanian and Bulgarian institutions. The popularity of these activities was highest amongst those who frequently relied on the media for information, especially printed press.

The popularity of the Programme was higher in Romania (34%) than in Bulgaria (24%). Furthermore, awareness of the Programme was higher among middle-aged and older respondents (between 31-60 years) than among younger ones and higher among respondents with high education degrees than those with less education or training. There was a part of the general public that was more informed as regards the Programme than the rest, a group formed by highly educated individuals living in county / district capital cities in their thirties and forties.

Only 71% of those who knew about the Programme and/or knew something about it could name its general objective and only 7% of the entire population knew what kinds of projects

could be financed through this Programme. Furthermore, only 6% of the entire population was aware of a project financed through the Programme.

Overall, the impact of media instruments was about 67% (19% of the entire population) while the impact of the instruments particular for the Programme was about 32%, i.e. 9% of the entire population. Based on the impact of general (media) communications instruments used in information and publicity campaigns is concerned, it was not possible to distinguish the most frequently used information source as several information channels were used, television and the Internet in particular. In the case of specific instruments, outdoor communications and the browsing of the Programme's site achieved the greatest impact.

The Programme's main management structures are less popular, yet the evaluation of the activity of these structures was generally positive. Respondents' interest in being informed about the Programme's further activities was not very high. Those who expressed a wish to find out more about the Programme's further activities preferred to use media channels (television, Internet and the printed press). Only 5% of respondents had ever visited the Programme's website, but the level of satisfaction with the site was high on all evaluated dimensions.

2. The Mass Media

The representatives of the media preferred the Internet, the television and the printed press (in this order) as sources of information about local current affairs. The share of those who informed themselves through activities they participated in was higher than among the general population. In addition, Romanian media representatives relied on more sources of information than their Bulgarian counterparts.

The share of those who had heard of activities carried out in cooperation between Romanian and Bulgarian institutions, organizations or companies was 80%, significantly higher than among the general public. The level of awareness regarding the Programme was significantly higher among this group than in the general population: 87% of the respondent media representatives had heard about the Programme.

Almost two-thirds of those who had heard and knew something about the Programme, i.e. over 50% of journalists included in the study, stated that they knew what kinds of projects could be financed. Slightly over half of media representatives had heard at least about one such project implemented as part of the Programme. Data indicate significant differences as regards the popularity of such projects among Romanian and Bulgarian journalists: while 60% of Romanian media representatives said they knew of at least one project, only 19% of their Bulgarian counterparts stated the same.

Judging the impact of information channels on the level of information during the Programme, the printed press, the Internet and participation in targeted activities were at the top of the hierarchy, amounting to about 50%. The impact of audio-visual media was smaller, although comparable to that of the Programme's presentation brochure, amounting to around 40% of those who had heard about the Programme.

Journalists were in general content with the volume and quality of information activities, but were dissatisfied with the ways in which this information was detailed for the overall population (although the role of media institutions in this regard should have been more

substantial and active) or with the ways in which the institutions managing the Programme offered assistance to those who wished to inform themselves about it.

Media representatives' awareness of the institutions managing the Programme was higher than that of the general public and the evaluation of these institutions was generally positive.

Interest to find out more about the Programme and its projects was high among this group of respondents: 61% expressed interest or great interest. Romanian journalists were more interested than their Bulgarian counterparts. The most preferred intended channels of information were the Internet and activities of the Programme. Interestingly, Romanian journalists preferred to receive information through events organized as part of the Programme, while the Bulgarian media representatives expressed a preference for online sources: newsletters and the website of the Programme.

The Programme's website had been visited by around one-third of respondent journalists. Overall more Bulgarian media representatives had done this than their Romanian colleagues. A vast majority of those who had visited the website said they were in general satisfied with it, although satisfaction levels among Bulgarian respondents were consistently lower on all evaluated aspects than among Romanian journalists.

3. The Beneficiaries

The information-seeking behaviour of the Programme beneficiary or applicant organizations' representatives was different from that of the general public, much more based on the use of the Internet (91%) or the printed press or on activities they participate in. Classical information channels, such as radio and television, as well as personal networks, were relied upon less frequently. There were differences in patterns of information-seeking among applicants and potential applicants, the former preferring to obtain information through leaflets or activities, while the latter through the classical information channels.

A vast majority of those interviewed had heard of activities carried out by institutions, organizations or companies in Romania in cooperation with institutions, organizations or NGOs from Bulgaria. The share of those aware of such cooperation projects was significantly higher among Romanian respondents.

4 out of 5 respondents stated that they were aware of the Programme's main objective. Data suggests that a greater share of Bulgarian respondents indicated this to be the case. Furthermore, NGOs out of all institutions appeared to be the most informed as regards the main objective of the Programme. A greater share of applicants and beneficiaries are aware of the main objective of the Programme than the share of potential applicants.

Almost three quarters of all beneficiaries or applicants said they knew what kinds of projects could receive financing through the Programme. In this regard the Bulgarians were more informed than their Romanian counterparts and NGOs representatives were the most informed of all beneficiaries as concerns the other objectives of the Programme.

Over half of the respondents knew of at least one project financed through the Programme. A larger share of Romanian respondents offered examples of such projects when compared to Bulgarian respondents. Furthermore, applicants and beneficiaries were aware of at least one project when compared to potential applicants, who were least aware.

The incidence of the main communication instruments used in the Programme was higher for some of these instruments among beneficiaries than the journalists. The Internet, participation in information activities of the Programme and the reading of the presentation brochures were the most effective means of information-seeking for this group, relied upon by over 60% of respondents. A greater share of Romanian respondents had watched the Programme's publicity advertisements or media coverage, while Bulgarians were more likely to have read information about the Programme online.

Satisfaction with information activities regarding the Programme was generally positive, with a greater share of positive responses as regards the volume and quality of information activities and greater dissatisfaction with regard to the implementation of the Programme's procedures and with regard to the assistance offered to those wishing to apply for funding. Levels of overall satisfaction were higher among applicants and beneficiaries than among potential applicants.

The popularity of the managing institutions of the Programme was high among journalists and in general terms respondents assessed the activity of these institutions positively.

The most part of the information regarding the implementation of the Programme was obtained from the website of the Programme, followed by information obtained directly from those involved in the management of the Programme and from information materials. A greater share of Bulgarian respondents said they used written materials to obtain information, while more Romanian respondents accessed members of the Programme's managerial team or information points for the same purpose.

In general, the levels of satisfaction with the quality of obtained information as regards the Programme were high, although overall Romanians, applicants and beneficiaries were more satisfied than Bulgarians and the potential applicants.

Two-thirds of the respondents said they found it very easy or quite easy to obtain information of interest regarding the Programme. A greater share of public authorities, applicants and beneficiaries stated that they obtained information very easily than did the potential applicants, NGOs representatives and cultural, research and educational institutions.

Journalists identified as the main means of improving access to information the organization of media campaigns, although these respondents also mentioned as secondary means direct action, the timely offering of information and updating of the available information.

Over three quarters of respondents had visited the Programme's website, most of them regularly. A greater share of Bulgarian respondents, NGOs representatives, applicants and beneficiaries relied on the Programme website as a source of information than employees of public authorities, those of cultural, research and educational institutions and potential applicants. Respondents' satisfaction with the website was high.

Recommendations

The recommendations regarding the optimization of the Programme's information and communication activities formulated are based on the conclusions of the surveys conducted and the good practices in communication revealed by this investigation.

The adaptation of information activities to the characteristics of those whom the communicated messages target must be based on these good practices so that the desired outcomes are achieved and integrated into the overall outcomes of the Programme. The communication plan cannot be implemented outside the Programme and communication needs to be maintained throughout the implementation of the Programme, thus turned into an integrative component rather than a simple accessory of the Programme.

As far as messages are concerned, distinctions have to be made between:

- the information sought by different target groups,
- awareness raising / popularizing the Programme among the general public,
- the need for detailed, technical, specific information destined for beneficiaries, applicants and potential applicants.

While the public does not require more than mediated information, general and sometimes superficial, based on media coverage about the implementation of the Programme's activities, beneficiaries / applicants tend to seek other types of information in particular, more detailed and in-depth information derived from the documents of the Programme or especially from other beneficiaries' / applicants' direct experiences.

Therefore in relation to communication with the general public it is recommended:

- On-going flow of information towards media outlets (specially classical media: television, radio channels and printed press),
- The maintenance of the Programme's visibility through appropriate communication instruments (the presence of billboards, inscriptions on sites where the Programme's activities are being implemented etc.),
- The presence of members of the Programme's managerial team(s) at public activities.

As far as communication with the media is concerned, it is recommended:

- Maintaining contact with journalists and media outlets and inviting them to all organized events,
- The organization of roundtables with the aim of evaluating the media's feedback and presenting the communication-related objectives of the Programme in order to enhance (potentially correct) the transparency and fluidity of the informational flow,
- The inclusion of media institutions on the list of online communication channels.

In respect to communication with beneficiaries it is recommended:

- The organization of regular county/district-level meetings with the participation of the beneficiaries. The role of these meetings should be the facilitation of information exchange and detailing the mechanisms and procedures of the Programme,
- The organization of meetings for Romanian and Bulgarian beneficiaries in order to facilitate the exchange of information and specific experience, but also to identify solutions, opportunities and potential partners in relation to shared problems,

- The stimulation of debates regarding the financed projects, the stages of these projects, the highlighting of outcomes in terms of positives and negatives in order to improve the dissemination of information and to improve transparency,
- On-going flow of information through the Internet (newsletters, emails, website(s)), the purpose of which would be to periodically deliver updated Programme-related general (news, latest issues etc.) and specific (modifications, good practices etc.) information.

These recommendations were taken into consideration for the 2012 Annual Information and Communication Plan.