

Interreg - IPA CBC Hungary - Serbia



The Programme is co-financed by the
European Union

*Good neighbours
creating
common future*

ABOUT PROGRAMME

Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia is the fourth generation of the cross-border programmes in the Hungary-Serbia border region. Operating on the basis of "shared management system" of the participating countries – Hungary and Serbia, the Programme funds and supports co-operation projects of non-profit organizations located in the Programme-eligible area.

Under the slogan "Good Neighbours Creating Common Future", the Programme supports the development of a stable and co-operating region and the overall quality of life in the border region. It enables economic collaboration of organizations from the two countries, nurtures the common identity, and cultural and historical heritage of the border region, and contributes to its environmental sustainability and safety.

As such, Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia may be perceived as a progression of the previous Hungary-Serbia IPA Cross-border Co-operation programme, implemented within the 2007-2013 EU financial framework.

Interreg-IPA CBC Hungary-Serbia Programme was adopted by the European Commission on December 15, 2015, as an initiative within the 2014-2020 European Union financial framework, under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). The total EU contribution to the Programme is **65,124,000 EUR**. Taking into consideration the national counterpart, as well as the contribution of project partners, the total budget of Programme is **76,616,474 EUR**.



UNDERSTANDING

THE PROGRAMME'S NAME

Interreg, also known as the European Territorial Cooperation, is the EU policy encouraging the EU regions to work together and learn from one another through joint programmes, projects and networks aimed at reducing disparities between regions and reinforcing cohesion. One of three Interreg's EU policy instruments is **IPA**.

IPA – Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance – an EU policy instrument supporting cooperation between the EU regions and countries – Hungary in this case, and pre-accession countries – Serbia in this case. **IPA** addresses five policy areas:

1. Reforms in preparation for Union membership and related institution-and capacity-building
2. Socio-economic and regional development
3. Employment, social policies, education, promotion of gender equality, and human resources development
4. Agriculture and rural development
5. Regional and territorial cooperation.

EU candidate countries, including Serbia, are eligible for all five components of IPA.

Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) component has the objective of promoting good neighbourly relations, fostering stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of the two partnering countries, and of encouraging their harmonic, balanced and sustainable development.

IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME

The Lead Beneficiary principle

The Lead Beneficiary principle is a basic requirement in all operations financed from the Programme. Lead Beneficiary represents the project, acting as the only direct contact between the project and the joint management bodies of the Programme. It is the responsibility of the Lead Beneficiary to create a well working consortium among the project partners based on a partnership agreement.

Cross-border Impact

In order to have joint projects with real cross-border effect, projects partners from both sides of the border must be involved. Projects have to be planned and implemented according to the joint cooperation criteria: joint planning, joint staffing, joint financing and joint implementation of projects. Project results should have impact on both sides of the border.

Public Procurement

The public procurement in the whole area of the cross-border Programme, both on Hungarian and Serbian territory will be carried out according to the contract procedures for the EU external actions.



ELIGIBLE AREA

The Programme area includes the following NUTS III level (or equivalent) regions in the two countries:

- In Hungary, the counties: **Csongrád**, and **Bács-Kiskun**
- In Serbia, the territories: **West Bačka**, **North Bačka**, **North Banat**, **South Bačka**, **Middle Banat**, **South Banat**, and **Srem**.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Non-profit organizations governed by public or private law for the purposes of public interest are eligible to apply with their project proposals to receive the funding within the Programme. Detailed information on eligibility of Applicants is provided in the Guidelines for Applicants for each Call for Proposals within the Programme.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Overall objective of the Programme is harmonized development of the region with intensified economic cooperation through sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.

Priorities

To achieve its overall objective, the Programme offers a broad range of opportunities for Potential Beneficiaries, within the frame of the following Priority Axes, covering specific objectives:

PA 1: Improving cross-border water management and risk prevention systems

Decreasing environmental risks (e.g. drought, flood, hail) and preventing negative effects on quality of water bodies and nature protected areas;

PA 2: Reducing traffic bottlenecks in the cross-border transport network

Increasing the capacities of border crossing and the connected transport lines through promoting development of road transport and use of sustainable transport modes (public transport, bicycle, water transport);

PA3: Encouraging cooperation in tourism and cultural heritage preservation

Creation of commonly coordinated cross-border tourism destinations based on the complementary local assets in order to ensure sustainable development of tourism potentials;

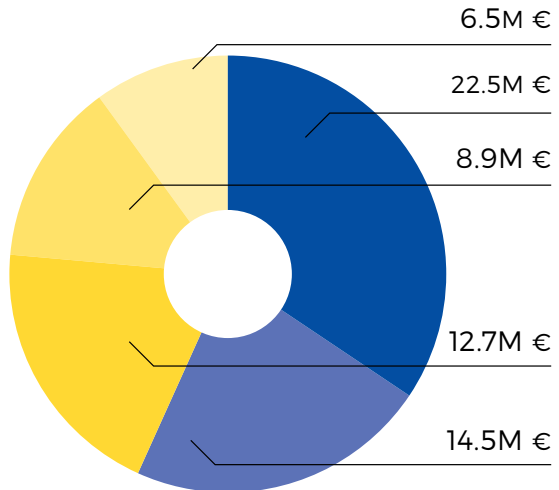
Promoting co-operation activities in the field of culture, leisure, sport, and nature protection;

PA 4: Enhancing SMEs' economic competitiveness through innovation-driven development

Enforcing the growth capabilities and employment potential of SMEs through the development and adaptation of new technologies, processes, products or services (PA 4 is not open within the Strategic Call for Proposals);

Additionally, the Programme includes the Priority Axis 5 – **PA 5: Technical Assistance**, which is not a subject of Calls for Proposals, as it provides funding exclusively for the management of the Programme and is aimed at increasing the overall project quality.

- PA 1: Improving cross-border water management and risk prevention system
- PA 2: Reducing traffic bottlenecks in the cross-border transport network
- PA 3: Encouraging cooperation in tourism and cultural heritage preservation
- PA 4: Enhancing SMEs' economic competitiveness through innovation-driven development
- PA 5: Technical Assistance



CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

Three Calls for Proposals are planned within the Programme. **Strategic Call for Proposals**, which is intended for the projects of strategic value for the Programme area, encompasses three Priority Axes of the Programme – PA1, PA2, and PA3. **The Second Call for Proposals** and the **Third Call for Proposals** are intended for a broader range of Applicants and activities, compared to the Strategic Call, and they cover all four Priority Axes of the Programme – PA 1, PA 2, PA 3 and PA 4.

PROGRAMME BODIES

European Commission (EC) is a donor of the IPA funds (Community contribution), establishing the IPA regulations.

Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) supervises and monitors the Programme implementation, and it is responsible for project selection. Its operations are regulated by the Rules of Procedures of the JMC.

Managing Authority (MA) is the Prime Minister's Office in Hungary. The MA bears the overall responsibility for the management and implementation of the Programme towards the European Commission. However, it is directly supported by the Joint Secretariat (JS), and may delegate certain tasks to the hosting institution of the JS.

National Authorities (NA) are the Prime Minister's Office, Deputy State Secretariat for International Affairs in Hungary and the European Integration Office (SEIO) of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. They represent the participating countries in the Programme – Hungary and Serbia, respectively. They bear responsibility for setting up the control system in order to validate the expenditures at national level and for ensuring national state co-financing. Moreover, the National Authorities are responsible for investigation of suspicion of irregularities, declaration of irregularities and handling of irregularities.

Certifying Authority (CA) is the Directorate of EU Assistance of the Hungarian State Treasury. The Certifying Authority's main task is drawing up certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment and submitting them to the European Commission.

Audit Authority (AA) is the Directorate General for Audit of European Funds (EUTAF) in Hungary. This body, functionally independent from the Managing Authority and the Certifying Authority, is responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system. The work of the AA is assisted by the Group of Auditors.

Joint Secretariat (JS) assists the Programme bodies – MA, CA, AA, JMC and NAs in carrying out their respective duties. The JS provides assistance to Applicants. By keeping the regular contact with Lead Beneficiaries of contracted projects, and checking and approving the applications for reimbursement, it supports efficient project implementation in both sides of the border. The JS is set up within Széchenyi Programme Office Non-profit LLC (SZPO), as a hosting institution on the basis of a contract with the MA, and has members in Budapest and Szeged in Hungary.

Joint Secretariat Antenna (JS Antenna) contributes to the implementation of tasks delegated to the JS. The JS Antenna is set up in Subotica, Serbia in order to ensure a geographically balanced implementation of the Programme through serving applicants' needs in the Serbian border area, as well.

Control Bodies (CB) are set up by each partner state, and the responsible control body of each partner state checks the Beneficiary reports, along with invoices or accounting documents submitted on the territory of the controller. It verifies on-the-spot the delivery of the products and services co-financed, the soundness of the expenditure declared, and the compliance of such expenditure and related (parts) of projects with relevant EU- and national rules.



Disclaimer:

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