



**Republic of Poland – Slovak  
Republic  
Cross-border  
Co-operation Operational  
Programme**

**2007 – 2013**

Approved on 20 December 2007

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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

### 1.1. Joint programming process

The preparations for the New Financial Perspective of the European Union 2007-2013 started in 2005. In the new period programming, the Community Initiative INTERREG converts into Initiative 3 of the EU Cohesion Policy described as the European Territorial Co-operation (ETC). One of the ETC elements is a cross-border co-operation aimed at development of cross-border activities in economy, social relations and environment through implementation of common strategies for the purpose of sustainable territorial development.

Works on preparation of the programming document for the Polish-Slovak co-operation within the New Financial Perspective started in December 2005 with the meeting of representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Poland (Managing Authority) and the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic (National Authority).

In January 2006 the Working Group was set- up including representatives of:

- Ministry of Regional Development (Poland), Ministry of Construction and Regional Development (Slovak Republic );
- Joint Technical Secretariat of the INTERREG III A PL-SK programme;
- Marshal Offices of the following voivodships: Podkarpackie, Małopolskie and Śląskie (Republic of Poland);
- Higher Territorial Units of: Žilinský Kraj and Prešovský Kraj (Slovak Republic )
- Euroregions: Beskidy, Tatry and Karpacki (Republic of Poland).

Working Group meetings took place as follows :

- 30-31 January 2006, Bratislava – first meeting of the Polish and Slovak members of the Working Group;
- 16-17 March 2006, Cracow – second meeting of the Polish and Slovak members of the Working Group;
- 10-11 May 2006, Turčianske Teplice (Žilinský Kraj) – third meeting of the Polish and Slovak members of the Working Group;
- 13-14 July 2006, Myczkowce (podkarpackie voivodeship) – fourth meeting of the Polish and Slovak members of the Working Group;
- 2-3 August 2006, Bratislava - working meeting of representatives from the Polish Ministry of Regional Development, Slovak Ministry of Construction and Regional Development and Joint Technical Secretariat;
- 9-10 August 2006, Warsaw – meeting of the Polish part of the Working Group;
- 23-24 August 2006, Vyšne Ružbachy (Prešovský Kraj) – fifth meeting of the Polish and Slovak members of the Working Group;
- 11-12 September 2006, Warsaw – working meeting of representatives from the Polish Ministry of Regional Development, Slovak Ministry of Construction and Regional Development and Joint Technical Secretariat;
- 20 September 2006, Warsaw – meeting of the Polish part of the Working Group;

- 3-4 October 2006, Wisła (śląskie voivodeship) – sixth meeting of the Polish and Slovak members of the Working Group.
- 22-23 November 2006, Bratislava - working meeting of representatives from the Polish Ministry of Regional Development, Slovak Ministry of Construction and Regional Development and Joint Technical Secretariat;
- 27-28 November 2006, Terchova (Žilinský Kraj) - seventh meeting of the Polish and Slovak members of the Working Group.
- 8 December 2006, Warsaw – working meeting of representatives from the Polish Ministry of Regional Development, Slovak Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, Joint Technical Secretariat and representatives of Polish voivodships and Euroregions.

This document was prepared based on records of the Lisbon and Göteborg Strategies.

## 1.2. Programme area

The area of the Slovak-Polish border region covers 38 096 km<sup>2</sup> (22 314 km<sup>2</sup> on the Polish side and 15.782 km<sup>2</sup> on the Slovak side). The length of the Polish-Slovak state border is 541 km, which constitutes 15,40 % of the overall length of the Polish border and 39,93 % of the overall length of the Slovak border.

The programme area consists of the following NTS III and NTS IV territorial units:

- On the Polish side of the border - NTS III (subregions): bielsko-bialski, nowosądecki, krośnieńsko-przemyski and NTS IV:
  - oświęcimski powiat (krakowsko-tarnowski subregion – NTS III),
  - pszczyński powiat (central śląski subregion – NTS III),
  - rzeszowski powiat and Rzeszów powiat grodzki (rzeszowsko-tarnobrzegi subregion – NTS III).
- On the Slovak side of the border – NTS III (regions) Žilinský Kraj and Prešovský Kraj.

The inclusion of NTS IV territorial units from the Polish border area was made on the basis of request from the self-governmental authorities located in pszczyński, oświęcimski, rzeszowski powiats and Rzeszów powiat grodzki and with the Marshalls' Offices support of Śląskie, Małopolskie and Podkarpackie voivodships.

The self-governmental authorities of powiats supported by the programme: in pszczyński, oświęcimski, rzeszowski powiats and Rzeszów powiat grodzki co-operate with the Slovak partners in the field of self-governmental activities, culture and sports. The participation of these self-governmental units in the programme will enable further development and intensification of co-operation based on partnership.

The extension of the eligible area is also justified due to the recorded co-operation in the cross-border area which has been developing since the Phare CBC Poland-Slovakia programme implementation. The bilateral contacts and co-operation between the Slovak partners and the Polish partners from pszczyński, oświęcimski, rzeszowski powiats and Rzeszów powiat grodzki have also been developing without the ERDF funds during the implementation of the INTERREG III A Poland-Slovak Republic programme 2004-2006 . Thus it is necessary to enable these powiats to further intensify and institutionalise the cooperation activities with the Slovak partners in the new programming period 2007-2013 through the inclusion into the programme.

In pszczyński, oświęcimski, rzeszowski powiats and Rzeszów powiat grodzki projects will be implemented pursuant to art. 21 of the Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund (hereinafter referred to as the Regulation on ERDF) No 1080/2006 allowing for the possibility to admit up to 20% of the ERDF contribution to the programme for the projects implementation in areas neighbouring the key supported area.

The main condition for qualifying the lead partner and other partners is their location on the supported area. In duly justified cases and subject to confirmation of the Monitoring Committee, the ERDF may, up to a limit of 20 % of the amount of its contribution to the Programme finance expenditure incurred by partners (legal entities falling in one of the categories as defined in chapter 6.1.) located in the areas neighbouring the key supported area.

Legal entities not falling in one of the categories as defined in chapters 6.1.1 - 6.1.3 (Indicative final beneficiaries) are welcome to participate in operations additionally (“additional partner”). Additional partners have to finance their activities from own resources and are not entitled to receive ERDF funding from the Programme. )



## **2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS**

The Polish-Slovak border region is an area characterised by many language, cultural, historical, and environmental and landscape similarities. For centuries the Polish and Slovak border region culture evolved influencing each other, what is particularly visible in Orawa and Spisz regions. The similarities facilitated interactions between the Polish and Slovak communities on both sides of the border.

### **2.1. Natural environment**

The Slovak-Polish border region is characterized by a big diversity and uniqueness of natural resources. Mountain and forest areas are typical elements of the landscape.

The supported area is located in Karpaty which include Centralne Karpaty Zachodnie with the alpine Tatry massif (the highest peak - Gerlach, height 2665 m) and the Podhale tectonic depression.

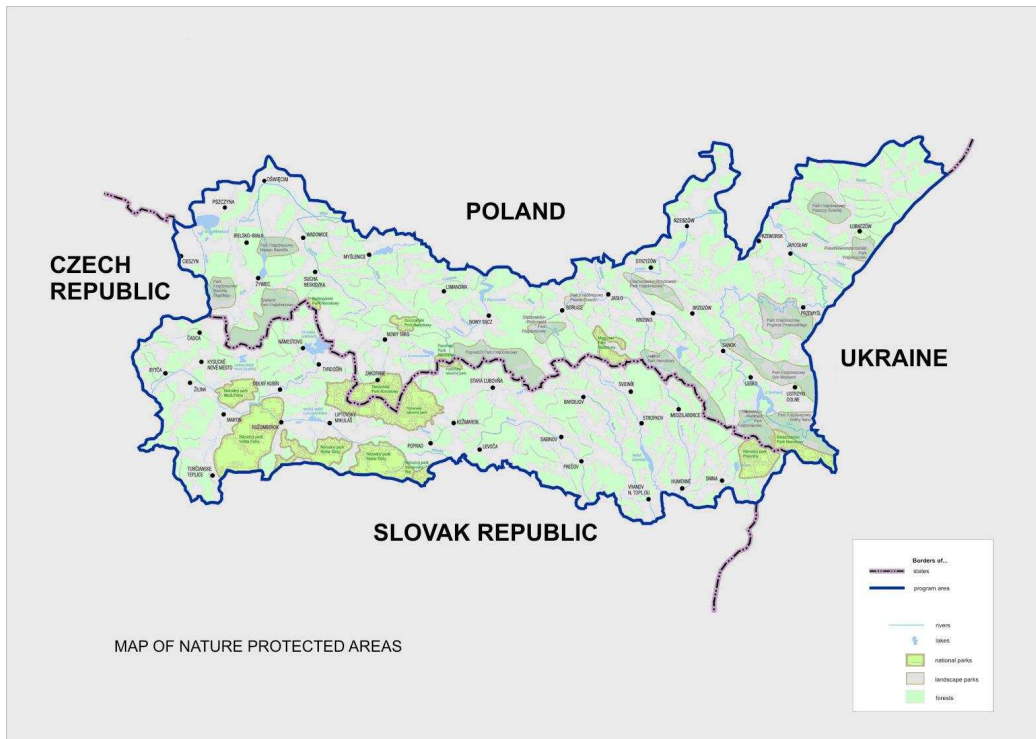
The border region belongs to the Baltic Sea (the Wisła river) and Black Sea (the Wag river) reception basins.

This area is rich in mineral and thermal water deposits which are used for health and recreational purposes (thermal swimming pools and water parks). There are springs of mineral waters used for health (spas) and consumer purposes (mineral waters bottling plant). Advantageous climatic conditions stimulate establishment of spas and medical care institutions, in particular in the central border region of the supported area. There are also other mineral resources: salt, sulphur, natural gas, crude oil and rock materials aggregates.

The border region is characterized by a high quality of the natural environment and most of all with respect to its mountain character (additionally a low population density on the Slovak side) a rather small level of its transformation.

There are environmentally protected areas in the Polish-Slovak border region - national parks: Tatrzański Park Narodowy, Pieniński Park Narodowy, Babiogórski Park Narodowy and Bieszczadzki Park Narodowy (entered into the world wide UNESCO list of protected biosphere areas), Gorczański Park Narodowy, Magurski Park Narodowy, Tatranský Národný park, Národný park Malá Fatra, Národný park Veľká Fatra, Národný park Nízke Tatry, Národný park Slovenský raj, Pieninský Národný park and Národný park Poloniny also numerous landscape parks. Besides large parks there are many other smaller picturesque areas that are strictly protected - nature reserves. The fauna of the parks includes: bears, wolves, lynxes, deer, wild pigs and in the higher parts of the Tatry – mountain chamois and marmots.

Numerous protected areas are included in the Natura 2000 network.



The conservation level of the natural environment in the supported area is better than in many other parts of both countries. Still, however, it is threatened on one side by natural disasters related to the land formation and dense afforestation and on the other side by unjustifiable, environmentally unfriendly business activities. Forested areas in dry seasons are endangered by the occurrence of forest fires.

The Polish-Slovak border area is rich in rivers. It is often at flood risk mainly resulting from a high level of rainfall and deteriorating flood control infrastructure. On the mountain areas the level of water in rivers changes frequently. Consequently, in some seasons there are deficiencies of water supplies or threat of flood in the same areas.

The water quality in rivers is still unsatisfactory. The drinking water resources risk to be endangered by development of the water supply system, if not supported by development of the sewerage system.

The length of the water supply and sewerage system in the Polish part of the supported area, pursuant to the Main Statistical Office's (GUS) statistics, grows constantly - in the years 2003 - 2004 by 264 kilometres and 690 kilometres respectively. A rapid growth of the sewerage system and improvement in the proportion of the length of the water supply and of the sewerage system indicates that in recent years there have been reductions of backlog of many years within that scope.



**Table 1 Length of the water supply system and the sewerage networks**

Region	Length of the water supply system in 2004 (km)	Length of the sewerage networks in 2004 (km)
bielsko-bialski	2871	1440
nowosądecki	3945	2487
krośnieńsko-przemyski	4594	3906
Žilinský Kraj	3323	1007
Prešovský Kraj	3845	943

Source: Polish Main Statistical Office (Regional Data Bank), Herbst M., Smętkowski M., „Zmiana sytuacji społeczno-ekonomicznej obszaru wsparcia w ramach Programu Polska-Słowacja INTERREG IIIA 2004 -2006 w roku 2005”, Centre for European Regional and Local Studies, Warsaw University, Warsaw 2006.

**Table 2 Sewage treatment plants**

Region	Sewage treatment plants	
	2003	2004
bielsko-bialski	39	42
nowosądecki	100	98
krośnieńsko-przemyski	109	110
Žilinský Kraj	68	73
Prešovský Kraj	79	81

Source: Main Statistical Office (Regional Data Bank), M. Herbst, M. Smętkowski „Zmiana sytuacji społeczno-ekonomicznej obszaru wsparcia w ramach Programu Polska-Słowacja INTERREG IIIA 2004 -2006 w roku 2005”, Centre for European Regional and Local Studies, Warsaw University, Warsaw 2006.

During the same period the situation in Slovakia was different, i.e. there was a rapid growth of the water supply networks with undergrowth of the sewerage networks (they constitute only 27% of the length of the water supply system). In 2004 on the Slovak side modernization and development of sewage treatment plants was more rapid (increase in the number by 7 objects) than on the Polish side (increase in the number by 2 objects). The percentage of the population using the sewage treatment plant on the Slovak and Polish sides is comparable and constitutes 51,5% and 50% respectively.

**Table 3 Population connected to urban waste water treatment in European countries**

Country	Population connected to urban waste water treatment (Latest data available)	
	%	year
Belgium	38	1998
Czech Republic	72	2002
Denmark	89	1998
Germany	93	2001
Estonia	71	2002
Greece	na*	na*
Spain	89	2002
France	79	2001

Ireland	70	2001
Italy	75	1995
Cyprus	35	2000
Latvia	72	2003
Lithuania	62	2003
Luxembourg	95	2003
Hungary	57	2002
Malta	13	2001
Netherlands	99	2002
Austria	86	2002
Poland	58	2003
Portugal	42	1998
Slovenia	33	2002
Slovakia	52	2003
Finland	81	2002
Sweden	85	2002
United Kingdom	86	1994
* na - Not available		

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int>

The problem of the waste disposals inconsistent with the requirements of the Environmental Law remains to be solved. The degree of implementation of the system of collection and neutralization of waste as well as the ecological awareness of inhabitants is low.

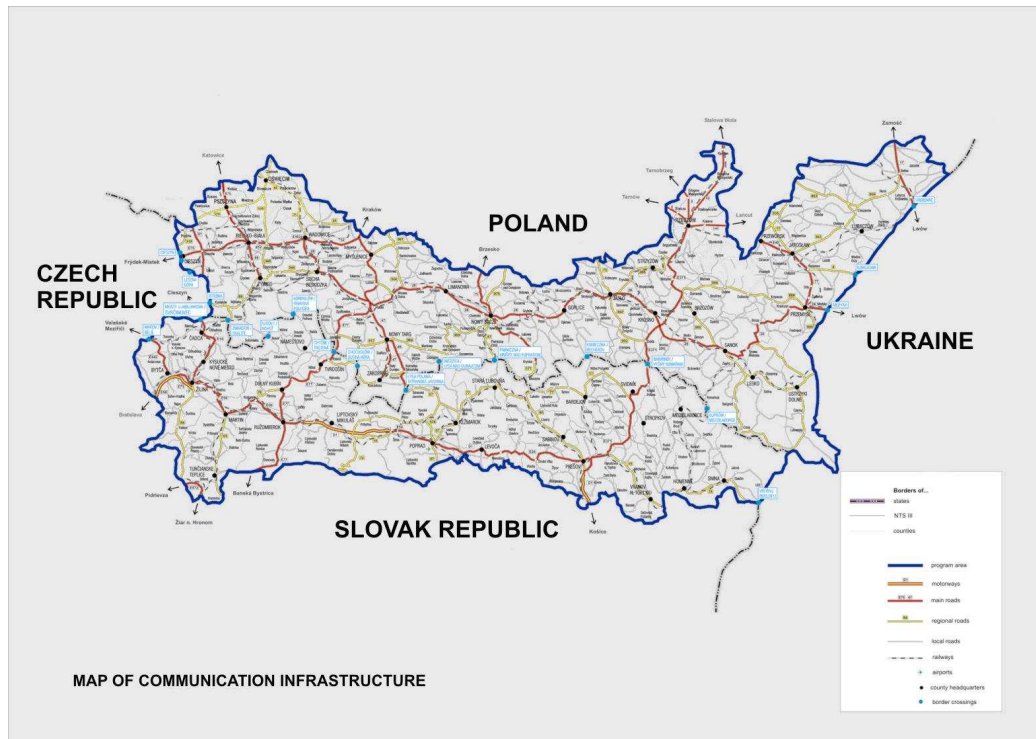
Since 1992 a constant decrease of pollutants level has been registered on both sides of the border. Restructuring of industry accompanied by the decrease of the energy consumption and emission of gases and dust has had a significant influence on such a process. A significant improvement of the air quality resulting from implementation of modern technologies has also been noted. Contamination of the air is still connected with a pollution resulting mainly from the vehicular traffic.

Land degradation resulting from erosive processes is one of the problems of the local agriculture. Water erosion causes decrease of the natural fertility of the soil, damages to the floral cover, water flows pollution and water reservoirs clogging. An important issue in the border area is the use of alternative sources of energy, especially renewable ones.

## 2.2. Transport and communication infrastructure

The current transport system in the Polish-Slovak border area refers to the historical European roads and railroads connections. On the Polish side of the border is crossed by the corridor III of the TEN-T international transport corridor network (included in the Transport Corridor Concept). Its equivalent on the Slovak side is the corridor Va. The corridor VI. - Žilina–Čadca–Zwardoń and additional corridors TEN-T (leading from Poland to Hungary) also run here. Roads and railroads which cross the border from the north to the south supplement the corridors. However, a road network requires expansion and modernization, especially in the north-south direction in order to improve the accessibility of the area.

There are 56 border crossing points operating on the Polish-Slovak border, including: 53 road crossings and 3 rail crossings. Out of them, 28 are crossings of small border traffic. There are still not enough border crossing points on the tourism routes.



The transport infrastructure has a particular significance for the growth of border areas with respect to dynamic development of the leisure industry (*leisure* – tourist, recreational, sports services, etc.), necessity to improve the border transit traffic and ensure the territorial cohesion of the border area, what is particularly challenging in the mountain areas. The Polish-Slovak border is characterized by a very diverse density of the traffic network due to the Karpaty range. On the Polish side the road density is 103,4 km per 100 km<sup>2</sup> and is higher than the national average (79,6) and almost three times higher than in the Slovak part of the supported area (32,1 km per 100 km<sup>2</sup>). In the Polish border region the quality of roads (especially the local ones) is very poor. Furthermore, on the Polish side of the supported area the percentage of dual roads and adjusted to the freight traffic (115 kN per axle) is low. In Slovakia the conditions of roads are better and also the percentage of double roads, including motorways, is higher. The safety related to the transport infrastructure is still insufficient on both sides of the border.

Currently the roads conditions do not respond to the requirements of the area, in particular with respect to business' needs.

In the mountain areas of the dispersed settlement the costs of construction and maintenance of the transport infrastructure are very high. Therefore the main roads and railroads are located in valleys, in many cases very narrow ones.

In spite of the fact that in the Polish-Slovak border region there are located some renowned IT enterprises, the area is characterized by a low level of information technology and insufficient access to teleinformatic services.

The Prešov region has the lowest of all Slovak regions index of households with the access to internet and households with computer devices (2,54%). In the Žilina region 2,65% households have an access to internet. On the Polish side on average 11,6 % households own a computer and 6,4 % have access to internet.

The reasons for the low level of accessibility of the IT in the region are the physical inaccessibility of the IT infrastructure, especially in the mountain regions (regions with

low population density), high costs of connection to internet and of obtaining quality e-services and software in relation to purchasing power of inhabitants.

### 2.3. Economy

Both southern Poland and northern Slovakia border areas are less developed economically than other parts of the countries. On one hand, low level of growth is registered in both Polish subregions. On the other hand, the Slovak regions and the bielsko-bialski subregion show a high growth dynamics (tables below).

**Table 4 GDP/hab in PPS (EUR)**

NTS III	2003	2002
nowosadecki	6 169,7	5 941,5
bielsko-bialski	10 479,7	10 230,3
krosniensko-przemyski	6 246,3	6 123,5
Žilinský Kraj	9 090,0	8 977,5
Prešovský Kraj	6 858,5	6 791,4

Source: Eurostat, August 2006

**Table 5 GDP per capita in Poland and Slovakia (EUR)**

NTS III / Country	2003	2002
<b>Poland</b>	<b>5 514</b>	<b>5 273</b>
bielsko -bialski	5 769	5 501
krośnieńsko-przemyski	3 446	3 279
nowosądecki	3 344	3 152
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>5 433</b>	<b>4 773</b>
Žilinský Kraj	4 291	4 036
Prešovský Kraj	3 251	3 928

Source: [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl), [www.statistics.sk](http://www.statistics.sk)

As for the economic performance data (GDP/hab in PPS), productivity (value added) and investments (gross fixed capital), western part of region (bielsko-bialski subregion – Poland and Žilina region – Slovakia) were considered as the fast growing regions in both countries. Less developed regions with deeper disparities are situated in the eastern part of the programme area. Nowosądecki, krośnieńsko-przemyski subregions on the Polish side and Prešovský Kraj on Slovak side belong to the less developed regions (in view of economic performance, tm. GDP/hab in PPS) in both countries. This part of the region, less affected by transformation process shows higher unemployment (especially of long term unemployed and young people), lower accessibility to TEN-T and lower competitiveness, performance and lower standard of life quality for inhabitants (especially in rural areas).

In the border region there is a relative high share of employment in manufactory and a lower share of services. Employers in high-tech and medium high-tech enterprises

and knowledge intensive services are more concentrated in the western part of the border region (Małopolskie, Žilinský Kraj and partly bielsko-bialski NTS III region). For example, Małopolskie NTS II region belongs to the large R&D area, with high scientific-research potential (employment in the R&D sector - 13.4% of the national employment, high share of people with higher education (10.1%) - 2<sup>nd</sup>. place in the country, 3<sup>rd</sup>. position in the country in terms of the number of students - over 190 000 on an annual basis with an increasing trend, almost 30 000 graduates annually, out of whom over 6 000 graduate of technical universities, large number of scientists, 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the country in terms of the number of academics, higher education base growing on the territory of the whole voivodship, proper scientific base, 32 universities and academies).

Efficiency of science and research, measured by patent applications to the EPO (2003) is very low in the target region (excluding bielsko-bialski subregion). In 2003 on average not more than 25 applications per million employees were registered. The average value in EU25 was in 2003 more than 416 patent applications per million employees. A significant gap is characteristic for all new member states and is generally affected by a low level of R&D expenditure (GERD) in the whole border region and insufficient innovative performance (measured by value added, patent applications, gross fixed capital) of enterprises in the border region. The most efficient region in this area is bielsko-bialski subregion. Referring to human resources in science and technology industries, nowosadecki, bielsko-bialski and partly Žilinský NTS III region, obtain higher employment in high-tech, medium-high-tech manufactory and knowledge intensive services than the average value in both countries. In the whole region, especially in Žilinský Kraj and bielsko-bialski subregion there are rich, well skilled and qualified human resources in medium tech manufacture, which are still attractive for foreign direct investments, especially in automotive (Fiat, Opel, Isuzu, Kia), high-tech industry (ITC Technologies, Electronics, including optoelectronics and microelectronics, Materials' engineering, Life sciences, medical sciences, health care sciences, Biotechnologies and genetic engineering, Environmental protection, recycling sciences and unconventional energy sources, Design and manufacturing of measurement and research equipment), chemistry, aviation, food and wood industry clusters.

On the Polish side of the border a big role in the economic structure is played by the primary economic industry. In 2004, 27,3% of the overall number of the employees (5,4% more than the national average) was employed in the agriculture and forestry industry. The employment in the production and construction industry (secondary industry) was 28,7% and in the service industry 44%.

In 2003, in the Polish part of the border, GDP per capita in the krośnieńsko-przemyski subregion was equal to 13,353 PLN (3,446 EUR; 1 EUR = 3,8748 PLN, average exchange rate of March 2006) and exceeded the value of 2002 by 646 PLN (167 EUR). In the nowosadecki subregion GDP per capita was equal to 12,958 PLN (3.344 EUR) in 2003, and was higher than in 2002 by 744 PLN (192 EUR). The highest increase in the GDP value was noted in bielsko-bialski subregion, reaching 22.353 PLN (5.769 EUR) per capita in 2003, while in 2002 was equal to 21.314 PLN (5.501 EUR). Both in the krośnieńsko-przemyski and nowosadecki subregions the GDP value in 2003 was noticeable lower than average in Poland, i.e. 21.366 PLN (5.514 EUR) in 2003. In the same time the value of GDP in bielsko-bialski subregion exceeded that value by 255 EUR.

On the Slovak side of the border in 2004 the employment structure revealed the highest percentage of people employed in the tertiary industry (57,6%), then in the secondary industry (37,6%) and the lowest percentage in the employment structure was in the primary industry (4,8%).

**Table 6 Employment structure**

Region	Employment structure in 2004 (%)		
	Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing	Industry and construction	Services
Poland *	19,2	26,8	53,9
EU25 *	5,1	25,2	69,7
bielsko-bialski **	8,2	40,9	50,9
nowosądecki **	33,4	24,0	42,6
krośnieńsko-przemyski **	33,9	25,1	41,0
Slovak Republic <sup>/1</sup>	5,2	35,3	59,5
Žilinský Kraj <sup>/1</sup>	4,5	41,2	54,3
Prešovský Kraj <sup>/1</sup>	6,2	36,9	56,9

Source: \* Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland 2005, Warszawa 2005; \*\* Main Statistical Office (Regional Data Bank),

<sup>/1</sup> Employed in the economy of the SR by economic activities as of December 31, 2004; for enterprises with 20 and more employees, estimates for small enterprises up to 19 employees and private entrepreneurs non-registered in the Business Register and their employees

The Slovak employment structure was transformed very quickly - the employment in the service industry in 2004 in comparison to 2002 increased by 5,3%. In Poland the available statistics do not reveal significant changes.

The growth of market services on the Polish side is low - in many powiats of the nowosądecki and krośnieńsko-przemyski subregions the percentage of those services on the labour market does not exceed 10%. The production industry grows mainly in urban centres. Furthermore, in many cases the industry is represented by enterprises related to deteriorating industries and requires restructuring.

The sector of small and medium size enterprises in the area of the Polish-Slovak border region is characterized by a low level of competitiveness and productivity. Although in many areas SMEs constitute the majority of existing enterprises, their share in the foreign trade and investments is low. The same is valid for foreign direct investments in these areas.

The majority of SMEs are mainly family businesses (often related to handicraft traditions) employing a small number of employees. The lack of easily accessible financial capital makes their development difficult.

## 2.4. Population

The population in the Polish-Slovak border region at the end of 2004 numbered 4,772,731 people.

The Polish part of the border region was inhabited in 2004 by 2,950,392 people (7,7% population of Poland). The population density - 140 people/km<sup>2</sup> exceeded the average for Poland (122 people/km<sup>2</sup>).

The Slovak part of the border region was inhabited in 2004 by 1,490,874 people, (27,7% population of the Slovak Republic). The population density was 94 people/km<sup>2</sup> and was lower than the national average (110 people/km<sup>2</sup>).

The population of the Polish part of the region, the highest in the west (the oświęcimski powiat 378 people/km<sup>2</sup>) decreases in the eastern direction reaching the lowest numbers in the border region with Ukraine (the bieszczadzki powiat 20 people/km<sup>2</sup>). Such a distinct diversity does not occur on the Slovak side.

In both parts of the border region a positive index of the natural growth has been noted in recent years. Despite the negative migration balance in 2003 and 2004 both sides registered an increase in the number of population.

The population structure with respect to the age on the Polish side of the border is characterized by a higher percentage of population in the pre productive age than on average in the country and constitutes 26%, exceeding the average by 7%. The percentage of the population in the post productive age is close to the national average and in consequence the percentage of population in the productive age is relatively low. The ratio of the number of people in non productive age per 100 people in the productive age is unfavourable, in comparison to the national average (57) and constitutes 65 in the krośnieńsko-przemyski subregion, 60 in the nowosądecki subregion and 58,3 in the bielsko-bialski subregion. Such a demographic structure results in increased costs of maintenance of the educational, sports child care related infrastructure and also causes higher unemployment among young people.

The population structure on the Slovak side of the border (i.e. Žilinský region, Prešovský region) is characterized by a higher percentage of inhabitants in pre-productive age (the national average in 2003 was 17,6% and in 2004 17,1%) especially in Prešovský region (exceeding by 3,8% the national average for both years) and in Žilinský region (by 1,4% in 2003 and by 1,3% in 2004.) The percentage of the inhabitants in productive age in Žilinský region was 63,4% in 2003 and 63,7% in 2004 (the national average respectively - 63,8% and 64%). In Prešovský region the percentage of populations in productive age is lower (by 1,5% in 2003 and 1,4% in 2004). The percentage of the population in post-productive age is lower than the national average (Slovak average -18,7 % in 2003 and 19% in 2004). The average age in the monitored urban areas is lower than the Slovak average. The Slovak regions, in comparison to the Polish ones, are characterized by a bigger number of working population per the overall number of population.

According to demographic projection on NTS III level to 2025 (SR) or 2030 (PL) there was identified a significant trend of ageing of population, during the whole programming period in all NUTS target regions (excl. nowosądecki NTS 3 region). In every NTS III region the share of post-productive part (65+) of the population will increase, the share of pre-productive part (0-14) will decrease and the productive (15-64) part (especially in SR) of population will rapidly decrease. There are not significant disparities or differences in structure of mid-term demographic development between NTS III regions in the programme target area.

Another big challenge to the labour market, especially in nowosądecki and Prešovský regions, in the part of the border region, is high share of young people (15-24 years old) registered as unemployed, exceeding the EU average and the national average in both countries. The main reason is low efficiency of educational systems in the border region and low mobility of labour forces. The low employment rate on the side of labour demand is connected with low quality of available labour power on the market and low productivity rate of SMEs (especially in the eastern part of the region).

On the Slovak side in all described *okresy*, except the Turčianske Teplice and Medzilaborce *okresy*, the increase in the number of population is noticeable. In comparison to the national average and the Polish part of the region, the Slovak border area reveals a favourable age structure with a higher percentage of people in the pre-productive age and the lower percentage of people in the post-productive age, although also here the tendency of aging of the society is observable.

**Table 7 Working and non-working age population in 2004**

Region	Working and non-working age population in 2004***			
	pre-working (%)	working (%)	post-working (%)	people in non-productive age per 100 people in the productive age
EU25*	19,5	60,7	19,7	65
EU15*	19,3	60,3	20,3	66
Poland**	21,2	63,5	15,3	57
Slovakia*	21,7	63,9	14,3	56
bielsko-bialski**	21,5	63,2	15,4	58
nowosądecki**	26,1	59,9	14,0	67
krośnieńsko-przemyski**	24,0	60,8	15,2	64
Žilinský Kraj	18,3	63,7	17,9	57 <sup>/1</sup>
Prešovský Kraj	20,8	62,5	16,6	60 <sup>/1</sup>

Source: \* own calculations on the basis of EUROSTAT data, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int>

\*\* Main Statistical Office (Regional Data Bank),

\*\*\* The working age population refers to males aged 18-64, and females aged 18-59.

<sup>/1</sup> The working age population refers to males aged 15-59, and females aged 15-54 in SR.

**Table 8 Total employment rates**

Region	Total employment rate in 2004 (%)
EU25	63,3
Slovakia	57,0
Poland	51,7

Source: EUROSTAT, "Portrait of the European Union 2006", <http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int>

The current settlement network results to a high extent from the suburban character of that region located far from major economic and social centres of both countries. The major towns on the Polish side are: Bielsko-Biała, Nowy Sącz, Przemysł, Rzeszów. Kraków and Katowice metropolitan area are located beyond the supported area but still have a strong influence on the border region.

In the Slovak part of the region the settlement system is formed out of a big number of small country towns among which towns with 20 – 60 thousand inhabitants constitute regional centres. The settlement structure includes many towns: Žilina – Martin and Prešov – Košice are the most important ones, the other are: Poprad – Spišská Nová Ves – Kežmarok, Liptovský Mikuláš – Ružomberok – Dolný Kubín and Michalovce – Vranov/Topľou – Humenné. The biggest towns are Prešov and Žilina, regions' capitals.

The urbanization rate on the Polish side of the border is lower than in other Polish regions; in the nowosądecki and krośnieńsko-przemyski subregions this value is almost two times lower than the national average

**Table 9 Urbanization rates in Poland and Slovak Republic of the supported area**

Region	Urbanization rate in 2004 (as of 31 XII in %)
Poland	61,5
bielsko-bialski	51,7
nowosądecki	32,1
krośnieńsko-przemyski	35,1
Slovak Republic	55,6
Žilinský Kraj	50,8
Prešovský Kraj	49,3



Source: Main Statistical Office (Regional Data Bank)

**Table 10 Urbanization rates in European countries**

Country	Urbanization rate	
	%	year
Austria	67	2001
Belgium	100	2001
Denmark	85	1998
Finland	81	1995
France	75	1999
Germany	85	2001
Greece	60	1991
Ireland	58	1996
Italy	75	1986
Luxembourg	92	2000
Netherlands	80	1999
Portugal	70	2001
Spain	75	2001
Sweden	84	1995
United Kingdom	72	2001
Cyprus	69	2001
Czech Republic	79	2001
Estonia	69	2000
Hungary	65	2002
Latvia	69	1998
Lithuania	68	1998
Malta	91	2000
Poland	62	2002
Slovakia	56	2001
Slovenia	51	2002

Source: Urban-rural relations in Europe, ESPON 1.1.2 Final Report, Table 3.2. Main components of national approaches on delimitation of urban and rural population; [http://www.espon.eu/mmp/online/website/content/projects/259/649/file\\_1182/fr-1.1.2\\_revised-full\\_31-03-05.pdf](http://www.espon.eu/mmp/online/website/content/projects/259/649/file_1182/fr-1.1.2_revised-full_31-03-05.pdf)

In recent years the number of inhabitants with vocational, secondary and higher education on the Polish and Slovak sides increased, as well as the number of students.

In 2004 in comparison to the previous year the number of students on the Slovak side increased by 23%, on the Polish - by 5,5%.

The percentage of population having secondary and higher education increased, however the connections between the labour market and educational trends were not observed.

In the Polish-Slovak border area the situation on the labour market is difficult. In both countries the unemployment rate in the border areas exceeds the national average; however, a positive trend of the decrease of the unemployment rate has been registered. On the Polish side the unemployment rate at the end of 2004 was 19,3%, whereas the national average reached 19%. On the Slovak side of the border the recorded unemployment rate was 14,54%, whereas the average unemployment rate in the whole country as of 31 December 2004 was 13,07%.

**Table 11 The unemployment rate in % at the end of the month**

	December 2005	June 2006
Poland	17,6	16,0
Małopolskie voivodship	13,8	12,3
Podkarpackie voivodship	17,9	17,1
Śląskie voivodship	15,4	14,2
Slovak Republic	11,4	10,4
Žilinský Kraj	9,3	8,0
Prešovský Kraj	15,8	14,6

Source: Headquarters of the work, social things and family – [www.upsvar.sk](http://www.upsvar.sk), Labour Offices of Małopolskie, Podkarpackie, and Śląskie Voivodships - [www.wup-krakow.pl](http://www.wup-krakow.pl), [www.wup-rzeszow.pl](http://www.wup-rzeszow.pl), [www.wup-katowice.pl](http://www.wup-katowice.pl)

## 2.5. Tourism

The Polish-Slovak border region is characterised by features and qualities needed to develop and use the area for the purposes of recreation, tourism, ecotourism and agrotourism.

Rich natural environment, cultural heritage, positive image of the area and the tourist infrastructure constitute basis for development of the year-long tourism and recreation, especially where numerous winter sports centres are located.

However, besides places well prepared for tourism and recreation located mainly in the western part of the area, there are also areas where the tourist infrastructure is underdeveloped. In the border area still there are places of a big but unused potential for tourism development. In particular, it refers to the western part of the area where the natural wonders, historical and artistic sites as well as other tourist attractions are still not fully introduced in the market economy.

In the supported area there are numerous prestigious spas, however, their standard is not always adjusted to the EU standards.

International cultural and sports events constitute a significant dimension of the cross border co-operation. Festivals, competitions, exhibits, folklorist events contribute to establishment of direct relations between local communities and Polish and Slovak self-governments.

Tourism is an important branch of the local economy on both sides of the border. The potential Polish-Slovak border region is an ideal place for development of cross-border tourism. It is estimated that (counting each crossing of the border separately) 4 m Slovaks and over 5 m Poles cross the border per year. However, for Poles Slovakia is often a stage of the journey heading south of Europe. In turn, although 95% Slovak tourists crossing the border remain in the border zone, their stay is shorter than 24 hours.

The Slovak part of the supported area is in comparison to the Polish one better equipped with the tourist infrastructure. However, the tourist infrastructure on the Polish side of the border is used more intensively. In 2003 on the Polish side there

were 24 guests falling for one lodging place and on the Slovak side 21. Such a difference intensified in 2004 and the ratio of the number of guests per a lodging place increased in Poland up to 25 and decreased in Slovakia down to 19.

Tourism belongs to the sectors of economy which will show profit on both sides of the border region only in the long term perspective. Currently the main problem for both sides constitutes the decreasing performance and efficiency of tourism services (excl. nowosadecki NTS III region), especially in the Slovak part of region. Since 2002 the number of tourist accommodations in the area is decreasing. The number of tourists spending at least one night in the programme area in accommodation grew in a significant manner in the past 3 years, more significantly in nowosadecki and bielsko-bialski subregions only. Another serious long-term problem for the region is the low quality of offered services. By developing tourism infrastructure (including bed places) the room occupancy rate in the past two years is slowly growing only in nowosadecki subregion. In comparison to the EU average a very low room occupancy rate can be observed: on the Slovak side an average is about 30% and on the Polish side of the border region the highest rate is 40% in nowosadecki subregion. Insufficient level of utilization of tourism potential (located mainly in the mountain regions), is determined on one hand by inaccessibility and low quality of cross border infrastructure and on the other hand by low quality of tourism services.

## **2.6. Historical and cultural heritage**

The number and richness of historical and cultural objects as well as cultural institutions prove the large variety of the supported area.

The border region is inhabited by various ethnic groups, national minorities and followers of various religions.

In the supported area there are many monumental Roman-Catholic, Greek – Catholic, Jewish historical sites and also those related to the Orthodox Church and Protestantism. They are often listed in the register of artistic treasures but are in a bad technical condition or are vandalized. Many historical sites from this region are also on the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

Many places are subjects of the religious worship and the destinations of pilgrimages (e.g. sanctuaries, churches, Orthodox churches, chapels).

In many parts of the area there are rural settlements with well preserved traditional architecture and vernacular culture.

The monuments such as architectural complexes (urban, palace-park, estate-park, castles, cloisters, open-air ethnographical museums), objects and buildings (defensive, military, industrial, craft, wooden, cemeteries, etc.) represent all periods and styles. It is also worth paying attention to monumental transportation systems (e.g. fortress roads, canals) and numerous historical regions (e.g. Orava, Spiš).

They are of a specific importance not only for preserving the history but they are also tourist attractions.

The folk art in the supported area is expensed in architecture, interior design, objects of every day use and working tools. Customs and ceremonies, musical and dancing traditions are cultivated by numerous singers, choirs, song and dance groups. Also laces, embroideries, tissue paper, glass painting, wooden sculptures and other handcraft objects are produced by local artists and craftsmen.

On the Slovak side of the border the year 2004 brought in comparison to 2003 a decrease of the official number of people visiting cultural institutions. Although the number of theatres or libraries did not fall, the number of people visiting those objects

decreased by 2,5% and 2,4% respectively. The opposite situation can be observed in the Polish part of investigated area where the number of people using the cultural infrastructure increased within a year by 8%.

## 2.7. Context indicators

**Table 12 Context indicators**

NTS	Žilinský Kraj	Prešovský Kraj	Bielsko-Bialski	Nowosądecki	Krośnieński-Przemyski	Oświęcimski powiat	Pszczynski powiat	Rzeszowski powiat	Rzeszów powiat grodzki
Area (km <sup>2</sup> ): total 38 096	6 801	8 981	2 352	7 478	10 332	406	473	1 219	54
Number of inhabitants <sup>1)</sup> total 4,77 mil.	694 129	796 745	646 166	1 105 529	941 111	153.457	104 129	172 445	159 020
Population per km <sup>2</sup>	102	89	275	148	91	378	220	141	2961
Natural increase per 1000 inhabitants <sup>1)</sup>	1,2	4,1	0,5	3,3	0,6	0,6	2,8	1,6	1,6
Net migration per 1000 inhabitants <sup>1)</sup>	0,43	3,09	1,9	0,1	-1,5	0,1	1,4	6,8	-5,2
Agricultural land (% of total area) Rural population (% of total population)	36,26 49,16	42,95 50,75	41,2 48,33	46,35 67,87	48,39 64,9	51,34 44,45	57,87* 75,4	68,08 88,2	0 0
Legally protected areas possessing unique environmental value in % of total area <sup>2)</sup>	58,13	36,46	39,78	76,58	61,86	0,59	2,03	33,5	0,2
Unemployment rate <sup>1)</sup>	11,1	17,5	13,6	19,4	21,5	18,2	12,4	11,7	8,7
Employment by sectors (in %) <sup>1)</sup>	4,61	6,24	1,05	33,42	33,93	12,32	2,39	2,81	0,04
- Agriculture	41,84	37,29	44,33	24,00	25,09	44,25	61,29	1,27	4,09
- Industry	53,55	56,47	54,62	42,58	40,98	43,43	36,32	1,71	8,79
- Services									
GDP per capita <sup>3)</sup>	4 753	3 601	5.769	3.344	3.466	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available

1) data from end of the year 2004 (SK) (PL)

2) National Parks and Protected Landscape Areas

3) data from end of the year 2003 (SK) (PL), in EUR (1 EUR = 3,8748 PLN average exchange rate of March 2006), 1 EUR = 37,455 SKK average exchange rate of March 2006 )

\* available data from the end of the year 2001

## 2.8. SWOT analysis

Field	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<b>Natural environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique value of the natural environment and the landscape</li> <li>• Protected areas of the international significance and attractiveness (national and landscape parks, NATURA 2000 areas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underdeveloped sewerage system and sewage treatment plants</li> <li>• Emission of dust and gas pollutants</li> <li>• High price of alternative and renewable sources of energy</li> <li>• Low level of ecological awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Transport and communication infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closeness of the European transport corridors</li> <li>• Big number of border crossings</li> <li>• Presence of major IT companies in the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low quality of the existing transportation infrastructure</li> <li>• Insufficient number of border crossings at tourist trails</li> <li>• High costs of maintenance and modernization of the transport infrastructure at the submountain and mountain area</li> <li>• Underdeveloped IT network and service</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse and numerous mineral resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High unemployment rate</li> </ul>
<b>Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advantageous population age structure</li> <li>• Mutual liking and curiosity</li> <li>• Similarity of the Polish and Slovak languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High percentage of people in non-productive age</li> <li>• Negative migration balance</li> <li>• Inhabitants pauperization (in some regions)</li> <li>• Inefficient resources and IT equipment in educational and cultural institutions</li> <li>• Lack of coordination of educational services with needs of the labour market</li> <li>• Low percentage of higher educated people per the total number of inhabitants</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many tourism attractive areas for its physical and geographical features</li> <li>• Abundant therapeutic mineral and thermal water resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient use of historical, cultural and natural features of the region with respect to tourism development</li> </ul>
<b>Historical and cultural heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richness and diversity of culture, traditions and folklore</li> <li>• Diversity of craft traditions</li> <li>• cultivation of vernacular traditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad condition of many historical and cultural sites</li> </ul>

<b>Field</b>	<b>OPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<b>Natural environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of more extensive use of alternative and renewable sources of energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of natural sources as a result of urbanization processes</li> <li>• Occurrence of natural disasters and environmental disasters</li> </ul>
<b>Transport and communication infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of IT network and new IT technologies and extending area of accessibility of the broad band Internet</li> <li>• Development of international European corridors, regional transport network and multimodal platforms</li> <li>• Improvement of communicational accessibility of frontier areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disadvantageous situation at the fuel market</li> <li>• Delays in implementation of programmes of development of the transport infrastructure, especially national programmes of international significance and high investment costs</li> <li>• Negative impact of transport on the natural environment, nature reserves and protected areas</li> <li>• IT exclusion of a part of inhabitants of the border area</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attractiveness of the region for investments</li> <li>• Development of SMEs due to the increased EU funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence of a high level of sustained unemployment</li> </ul>
<b>Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive index of the natural growth</li> <li>• Development based on experience in cross-border co-operation within culture, health care (spas) and integrated rescue systems</li> <li>• Development of co-operation of self-governments, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations</li> <li>• Increase in the number of people with higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fading community and solidarity awareness</li> <li>• Emigration of the younger generation (particularly with higher education)</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New, larger and better hotel offer as result of development of tourist services</li> <li>• New leisure trends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakening of the competitive position of the region due to dynamic development of tourist services in other areas</li> </ul>
<b>Historical and cultural heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of the regional identity</li> <li>• Using the regional identity, tradition and history for promoting the region and formation of services and tourist products aimed at the European market</li> <li>• Traditional craft and industry as the basis for development of local entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fading of regional customs and traditions as a result of spread of the mass culture and globalization process</li> <li>• Degradation of the conditions of historical sights, historical municipal zones, nature reserves and landscapes</li> </ul>

### **3. THE EXPERIENCES IN CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES**

The Programme of Cross-Border Co-operation Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic 2007 – 2013 is a continuation of programmes co-financed from the Community budget. Its aim is to support activities related with development of Polish and Slovak cross-border co-operation.

#### **3.1. PHARE CBC Programme**

Financial assistance of the European Union in this area commenced from establishing Phare Cross-Border Co-operation Programme Poland – Slovak Republic (Phare CBC) in the year 2000. The programme was an initiative of the European Parliament and its general objective was to promote activities for development of co-operation between the communities on both sides of the border. Four editions of the Phare CBC Programme (2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003) supported activities aimed at development of transportation infrastructure, environmental protection, increase in competitiveness of enterprises, improvement of quality of life of the inhabitants and development of local co-operation networks on both sides of the border.

Allocation of financial resources with respect to four editions of the Phare CBC Poland – Slovak Republic Programme amounted to EUR 32 000 000, i.e. 16 million for the Polish and 16 million for the Slovak side. The following projects were financed from these resources:

- 12 large infrastructural project of cross-border significance (6 on the Polish side and 6 on the Slovak side);
- 4 editions of the Small Project Fund: the Small Project Fund financed local non-investment activities within the scope of: local democracy, economic development, tourism, cultural exchange and environmental protection. The SPF assisted local initiatives whose value ranged from EUR 1 000 to 50 000;
- 1 edition of the Small Infrastructure Project Fund (SIPF) and 1 edition of the Business Grant Scheme (BGS). Within their scope local investment activities were financed, primarily in the area of transportation infrastructure, development of entrepreneurship, culture and education. Grants for individual projects varied from EUR 50 000 to EUR 300 000.

Lesson learned from implementation of the Phare CBC programme show that medium scale infrastructural projects (EUR 50 000 – EUR 300 000) were most appreciated by local communities. The minimum level of support from the EU funds in the amount of EUR 2 million for an individual project which was adopted within the framework of the Phare Programme constituted a serious impediment in numerous cases, due to the fact that obtaining proper co-financing was often beyond financial possibilities of the applicants on the state level. This lesson was taken into account while preparing the Interreg IIIA programme.

Large infrastructural projects (whose value amounted to EUR 2 million) implemented within the framework of Phare CBC were significant from strategic objectives, yet on the level of local communities they were relatively little “visible”, because one programme edition comprised four projects on average. On such an extensive area as the Polish-Slovak border this was only a drop in the ocean of needs. Medium size infrastructural projects implemented under the last edition of the programme (2003, Business Grant Scheme) met greater interest of the local communities. The conducted interviews indicate that the local communities identify the activities co-financed by the EU mainly with this edition of the programme and with the “smallest” component of Phare CBC, which was the Small Project Fund. The Business Grant

Scheme and the Small Project Fund have also brought measurable benefits with respect to the applicants' experience in preparation and implementation of projects. The experiences suggest that it was mainly thanks to the SPF (within the framework of which several hundred projects were successfully completed) that the beneficiaries learnt how to plan projects in the context of achieving objectives, prepare indicators of outputs and results, implement activities in accordance with the EU regulations and co-operate with partners on the other side of the border.

The Small Project Fund implemented at the Polish-Slovak border turned out to be one of the most important components of the Phare CBC PL-SK Programme and it was continued in a slightly changed, more decentralised manner within the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIA Poland – Slovak Republic (Activity 2.3 Micro-projects).

Increased interest of the applicants and effective implementation of micro-projects (activity 2.3) in INTERREG IIIA have resulted in the fact that in the financial perspective 2007 – 2013 a proportional increase in the EU funds for this objective is forecasted.

### **3.2. Community Initiative INTERREG III A**

After ten candidate countries joined the European Communities, the Polish and Slovak border became an internal border of the European Union. In 2004, activities co-financed from the pre-accession programme Phare CBC were replaced by the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIA, financed from the European Regional Development Fund. INTERREG IIIA, similarly to Phare CBC, was aimed at facilitating cross-border co-operation between the neighbouring regions by means of implementation of common strategies and activities.

Allocation of financial resources for the years 2004 and 2006 for the INTERREG IIIA PL-SK amounted to EUR 26,668,960, including ERDF funds amounted to EUR 20 001 719.

Steering Committee approved 315 projects in the following measures:

- 26 projects within measure 1.1 – technical and communication infrastructure;
- 23 projects within measure 1.2 – environmental protection infrastructure;
- 31 projects within measure 2.1 – development of human resources and support of entrepreneurship;
- 39 projects within measure 2.2 – protection of natural and cultural heritage;
- 196 projects within measure 2.3 – support of local initiatives (micro-projects).

The previous experiences from implementation of Community Initiative INTERREG IIIA PL-SK indicate that:

- Greater emphasis should be placed on conduct of training sessions for potential applicants. Despite the fact that beneficiaries who have experiences from implementation of Phare CBC and INTERREG IIIA prepare better quality applications, they still have insufficient knowledge with respect to determination of indices, defining general and particular objectives, understanding the cross-border impact and understanding horizontal policies of the EU. Previous experiences indicate that the greatest number of problems is caused by proper definition of the cross-border impact. Taking into account the fact that this is one of the most important criteria for selecting projects in the cross-border co-operation programmes, special



emphasis has to be put on training the applicants in this field during the 2007 – 2013 Programme.

- The factor that might have a positive impact on the efficiency of implementing the programme and documenting best practices is the conduct of on-going evaluation. In the 2004 – 2006 programme such evaluation was not possible to implement due to the fact that the extension of the EU took place in the second half of the budget perspective 2000 – 2006 and also because the evaluation culture was only being developed in the administration system of the new member states. In the course of implementing the 2007 – 2013 programme middle-term evaluation research will have to be conducted.
- A very important factor which conditions efficient implementation of the programme is proper delimitation of the eligible area. In the case of cross-border programmes, the key element of rational management of the funds is establishing such area of support that will provide the applicants with a real chance of obtaining co-financing. The INTERREG IIIA PL-SK programme did not provide the opportunity of implementing projects outside the area closely adjoining the border, thanks to which it was possible to avoid submission of significant number of infrastructural projects, which had no chance for support due to their significant distance from the border and which had slight cross-border significance. This solution allowed for carrying out the process of selecting applications within a shorter time and saved disappointment for some applicants whose projects had no chance for being selected due to the above reasons.

The above conclusions are taken into account in this programme.

## **4. COMPLIANCE OF PROGRAMME DOCUMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL POLICIES**

### **4.1. Compliance with the Community Policies**

The Operational Programme for Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation is in conformity with the regulations concerning the basic strategy and EU programming documents, primarily with regard to goal definition and priorities.

In implementation of principles laid down in Article 9 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, the Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme 2007-2013 ensures coherence of support from the ERDF with the actions, policies and priorities of the Community. In particular, activities to be supported within the Programme will be compliant with both the development goals contained in the renewed Lisbon Agenda and with the sustainable development principles laid down in the Göteborg Strategy. Based on the renewed Lisbon Agenda, the Communication from the Commission of 5 July 2005 COM (2005) 0299 "Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs: Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013" defines the following priorities for the cohesion policy:

- improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving their environmental potential;
- encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies; and

- creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

The 2007-1013 Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme will contribute to the implementation of priorities in the renewed Lisbon Agenda and Community Strategic Guidelines at the level of goals, priorities and support criteria. All projects submitted will be screened taking into account their contribution to achieving the goals defined in the Lisbon Agenda and the Göteborg Strategy. This will be reflected in the project evaluation criteria. In addition, this aspect will also be considered when the final decision on co-financing the projects will be made.

The Programme will ensure compliance with the Treaty establishing the European Community and other related documents. The Programme takes account of the important regulations contained in the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, as well as in Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund.

Article 3 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund reads:

‘The action taken under the Funds shall incorporate, at national and regional level, the Community's priorities in favour of sustainable development by strengthening growth, competitiveness, employment and social inclusion and by protecting and improving the quality of the environment.’

The Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme is consistent with the European Social Policy Agenda adopted in 2000. This Agenda fits, among others, in the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda which also defines the main direction of social policy activities. Above all, this concerns the fight against poverty and all forms of exclusion and discrimination, with the aim of promoting social integration. The goals formulated in Nice are as follows:

- to provide access to employment, resources, rights, goods and services for everyone;
- to prevent the risk of social exclusion;
- to protect the most vulnerable, to mobilise all responsible institutions active in the field of economic social policy.

The programming document is also reflected in general directives concerning economic policy and directives concerning the European Employment Strategy, including the macro - and microeconomic policy and employment policy intended to ensure new jobs and economic growth.

It is expected that the Programme will contribute to the creation of information society in line with the strategic framework contained in the initiative “i2010 – A European Information Society”. It will primarily concern activities aimed to fulfil the goals of this initiative, mainly by increasing access to information technologies which enable environment protection, monitoring and implementation of the programme in case of natural disasters by increasing production and ICT servicing – accessibility for SMEs. All priorities of the Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme include activities aimed at developing the information society.

The Programme will comply with the Community policies (incl. EU directives) on environment protection, improvements in the natural environment and possible positive developments. This relates primarily to the fulfilment of the obligations found in the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC, the Birds Directive 79/409/EC and directives concerning the European network of protected areas NATURA 2000. Financial support will be granted to those projects which aim to maintain biological diversity and improve the natural environment, with consideration for the NATURA 2000 sites located within areas supported under the Programme.

Projects co-financed by the Operational Programme will fully respect the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, the Habitats and Birds Directives. Appropriate screening criteria will be applied at the projects' selection stage to ensure that the projects are compliant with the above mentioned Directives. Co-financing of projects having negative impact on potential Natura 2000 sites in Poland (i.e. sites that in the Commission's view need to be designated on 1/05/2004, but were not designated by Poland) will not be permitted.

Financial support under the Programme of Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation will be granted, *inter alia*, to projects which may have a significant impact on implementation of priorities laid down in the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. This is related to the fact that Member States and their societies should focus their efforts on activities related to climate change and clean energy, public health, social exclusion, demographics and migration, management of natural resources, sustainable transport. The sustainable development policy will also be implemented at the regional level. The Programme will support institutions and important initiatives for sustainable development.

In keeping with Article 16 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, the Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme has adopted steps "to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation." Efforts to ensure equal employment opportunities for women and men, aimed at guaranteeing one of the key principles, i.e. gender equality, will be considered when defining the selection criteria for projects qualifying for financial support. The Programme takes account of the fact that the area supported by the Programme covers important labour market problems which, alongside support for the employment of women and creation of new jobs for women, call for actions in the field of specialised education.

Efforts will be taken to ensure complementarities between EU interventions under the Common Agricultural Policy by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and activities concerning territorial collaboration, supported from ERDF. The Programme will also guarantee co-ordination of support from various funds. The key factor ensuring avoidance of duplication with the EAFRD interventions will be the bilateral (Polish-Slovak) character of all projects selected for co-financing under the programme.

All projects submitted within the Programme will be evaluated taking into account the state aid provisions. In case of assistance in meaning of Article 87 of the Treaty establishing European Community the assistance will be provided in accordance with the state aid '*de minimis*' rules or aid covered by one of the block exemption regulations, or will be notified to the European Commission in the meaning of Article 88 (3) of the Treaty.

One of the key principles adopted under the Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme is the sustainability of outcomes. This principle will be verified at the programming and project selection stage as well as during the evaluation. The supported projects will have to demonstrate institutional and financial sustainability after the support ends.

The additionality rule, laid down in Article 15 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 will also be observed. According to that rule, contributions from the Structural Funds shall not replace public or equivalent structural expenditure by Member States. Compliance with this rule will be ensured in the process of project evaluation.

In accordance with Articles 47 and 48 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 an evaluation of the Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme will be carried out to assess the effects of the Programme with regard to the European Union's criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, as well as the environmental impact of cross-border collaboration, compliance with the rule of non-discrimination and equal opportunities, contribution to the achievement of Community strategic goals as well as added value via Community support.

The responsibility for detailed supervision over implementation of Community policies lies with the Managing Authority.

## **4.2. Compliance with the national policies**

Projects implemented under the Operational Programme for Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation 2007-2013 will complement the actions taken under the national programmes defined in the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF).

Poland has prepared a document entitled "The National Cohesion Strategy" (National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 in support of growth and jobs). The Polish-Slovak Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme fits well into that strategic goal of NSRF which consists in creating an environment for improving the competitiveness of knowledge-based economy and entrepreneurship to ensure higher employment, and in increasing social, economic and spatial cohesion; it will also contribute to the implementation of the following horizontal goals:

- improving the quality of human capital and increasing social cohesion,
- building and upgrading the technical and social infrastructure which plays a crucial role for improving Poland's competitiveness,
- improving competitiveness and innovativeness of enterprises, particularly the manufacturing sector with a high added value, and development of the service sector,
- increasing the competitiveness of Polish regions and counteracting their social, economic and spatial marginalisation.

In the Slovak Republic the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) was adopted in August 2007. The core part of the NSRF is derived from Slovakia's economic and social development strategy. The text of NSRF contains a detailed description of that strategy. It assumes that the growth of knowledge-based economy and its increasing share in the society will give Slovak citizens a higher living standard, comparable to that of the most developed European economies, and will also provide for their needs while maintaining good condition of the environment for future generations.

The aim of Slovak Republic's NSRF is to achieve a considerable growth in competitiveness and productivity of the Slovak economy until 2013, in compliance with principles of sustainable development. This is aimed to ensure sustainable economic and social development for Slovakia and, on the other hand, allow to eliminate tension and discrepancies in leveraging Slovakia's key development factors. The NSRF of the Slovak Republic attaches particular importance to the development of infrastructure and accessibility of regions, support for innovativeness and informatisation and human resources development.

The Republic of Poland - Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme refers to both national priorities, concerns both national programmes and, by its strategy, contributes to the fulfilment of goals in the cross-border context. The projects implemented under the Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme fit into the actions carried out under other operational programmes.

Projects supported under the Republic of Poland –Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme will be complemented by operational programmes managed by competent ministries. Conformity of programmes is also ensured at the regional level. The Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme was created in collaboration with the regions concerned and this is how conformity with the regional development goals was achieved.

In 2007-2013 the Republic of Poland –Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme will support only those projects which involve partners from the two countries and which benefit the communities of both countries. Those must be truly cross-border projects at all stages of preparatory work and implementation. Each project will have a lead partner in accordance with Article 20 of the ERDF Regulation.

### **4.3. Coherence with other operational programmes**

The Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic Cross-border Co-operation Operational Programme 2007-2013 is complementary to the following cross-border operational programmes to be implemented on the Polish side of the border.

- Operational Programme of Cross Border Cooperation Czech Republic – Republic of Poland 2007-2013. The overlapping territories are: Bielsko-bialski subregion and adjoining: pszczyński powiat.
- Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013. The overlapping territories are Krośnieńsko-przemyski subregion and adjoining region: Rzeszowsko-tarnobrzeski subregion.

Within the framework of the **Operational Programme of Cross Border Cooperation Czech Republic – Republic of Poland 2007-2013** are envisaged the following priorities: “Strengthening of accessibility, environmental protection, risk prevention”, “Improvement of conditions for development of business environment and tourism” and “Support of local communities”.

The programme: **Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013** includes the core objective: responding to the common challenge of

sustainable social and economic development through cross-border cooperation and integration. There are envisaged three priorities of the programme: “Increasing competitiveness of the border area”, “Improving the quality of life” and “Networking and people-to-people cooperation”. The programme is implemented under the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. In each of the cross-border programmes is included the priority axis: “Technical assistance”.

There are transnational programmes which also encompass territorial units covered by the Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic Cross-border Co-operation Programme.

**Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013** covers the whole territory of Poland. The strategic objective of the programme is: to strengthen the development towards a sustainable, competitive and territorially integrated Baltic Sea Region by connecting potentials over the borders.

There are the **Central Europe Operational Programme**, which includes the whole territory of Poland and the Slovak Republic. Within the framework of the programme, there are four prioritized thematic areas: “Facilitation innovation across Central Europe”, “Improving accessibility of and within Central Europe”, “Using our Environment Responsibly”, “Enhancing Competitiveness and Attractiveness of Cities and Regions”.

### **Coherence with national and regional programmes implemented within the framework of the Convergence objective**

The Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic Operational Programme 2007-2013 is complementary to the other operational programmes implemented under the Convergence objective in Poland.

Priority axis I: Development of cross –border infrastructure is complement to the other prioritized thematic areas of the following operational programmes.

- Operational Programme (hereinafter OP) Infrastructure and Environment (mainly the following priority axes: Waste and sewage management, Waste management and earth surface protection, Management of resources and environmental risk prevention, Nature protection and shaping ecological attitudes, Environmentally friendly transport, Environmentally friendly energy infrastructure, Competitiveness of the regions).
- OP Innovative Economy (mainly the priority axis: Creation and development of the information society).

The complementary activities to the Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic Operational Programme are also implemented within the Regional Operational Programmes (hereinafter ROPs) for the period 2007-2013: Regional Operational Programme of Podkarpackie Voivodship, Regional Operational Programme of Małopolskie Voivodship, Regional Operational Programme of Śląskie Voivodship. ROPs are also focusing on the development of transportation, communication and environmental infrastructure.

**ROP Małopolskie** priority axes: *Infrastructure for economic development* and *Environmental protection infrastructure* are complementary to the priority axis of the Operational Programme.

Within the priority axis *Infrastructure for economic development*, projects concerning the road infrastructure, public communication and the economic activity zones are supported.

Within the priority axis *Environmental protection infrastructure*, projects concerning the water and waste water management which are aimed at improving of the air quality and increasing the utilization of the renewable sources of energy, waste management are supported. There are also promoted undertakings contributing to the improvement of the ecological safety and to the protection against the effects of natural disasters.

**The ROP Podkarpackie** priority axis: *Environmental protection and threat prevention* promotes projects concerning environmental infrastructure, anti-flooding infrastructure and the rational management of water resources in order to preserve and to protect the biological and landscape biodiversity and to combat and prevent threats in this voivodeship. The activities implemented within this priority axis, e.g. concerning the monitoring of natural environment will be complementary to the activities executed within the priority axis of the Operational Programme of European Territorial Cooperation.

Priority axis II. Social and economic development is complementary the priority axes of the following operational programmes:

- OP Infrastructure and Environment (mainly priority axis: Culture and cultural heritage),
- OP Human capital (mainly priorities: Development of education and competencies in the regions, Regional staff of the economy, Labour market open for everybody and promotion of social integration, Development of human resources and adaptative potential of enterprises).
- OP Innovative Economy (mainly priorities: Investments in innovative undertakings, Innovation diffusion, Creation and development of the information society).

ROPs are also supporting the tourism development and cultural heritage promotion.

The following priorities axes of the **ROP Śląskie**: *Tourism* and *Culture* are complementary with the Operational Programme priority axis 2: *Social and economic development*.

Within the Priority axis 3: *Tourism*, activities which will contribute to the improvement of the quality of tourism infrastructure of the region and which concerns constructing and developing of the regional tourism products, improving the access to tourism information and aimed at development of the tourism offer will be promoted.

The priority axis 4: *Culture* promotes projects concerning the cultural infrastructure, system of cultural information and cultural promotion. The projects which will contribute eg. to the enhancement of the quality of the cultural offer, concerning the creation of the system of cultural information, investments in cultural institutions are supported. The activities implemented within this priority axis show a high potential synergy effects with the Operational Programme.

The main aim of the activities implemented within the ROP Podkarpackie priority axis: *Tourism and culture* is to increase the share of tourism in the regional economy and to protect the cultural heritage and cultural institutions development.

Within Priority axis III of the Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic Operational Programme are implemented projects which are complementary to other measures supported within the other OPs.

The territory of Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border co-operation Operational Programme is partially overlapped in the Slovak Republic with the

operational programme: Programme of cross-border co-operation Slovak Republic – Czech Republic 2007 – 2013. The overlapping territory is the Žilina region.

The Slovak Republic – Czech Republic operational programme includes two priority axes (except Technical assistance) – “Support of socio-cultural and economical development of cross-border region and improvement of cooperation” and “Accessibility development of cross-border territory and development of environment”. Both of the priority axes are in harmony with the priority axes of Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme. The similar orientation of priority axes make possible of mutual support of development in the border triangle of Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic – Czech Republic.

The Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic acting as Managing Authority in the Programme of Cross-border Co-operation Slovak Republic – Czech Republic 2007 – 2013 and as national body responsible for coordination of programme relevant activities in the Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border Co-operation Operational Programme is responsible for administration tasks of both programmes and assures that potential overlapping will be avoided for the supported projects within similar priority axis.

The Slovak Republic – Czech Republic operational programme includes two priority axes (except Technical assistance) – “Support of socio-cultural and economic development of cross-border region and improvement of co-operation” and “Accessibility development of cross-border territory and environmental protection”. Both of the priority axes are in harmony with the priority axes of Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme. The similar orientation of priority axes makes possible the mutual support of development in the border triangle of Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic – Czech Republic.

The coherence of priority axes of Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border co-operation programme with other operational programmes in frame of convergence aim in the Slovak Republic can be mainly seen as follows:

The coherence of Priority axis I.: Development of cross-border infrastructure can be proved mainly with the priority axes of the operational programmes :

- OP Transport (mainly the priority axes focused on modernization of main train corridors TEN-T, intermodal transport and building high way, road infrastructure)
- OP Society Informatisation (mainly the priority axes Electronisation of public administration and development of services, Increase of access to the broadband internet, support of territory without accessibility to broadband internet);
- OP Environment (mainly the priority axes: Integrated protection, economical water using and flood protection, Waste management, Protection and regeneration of natural environment and landscape);
- Regional operational plan (mainly the priority axes: Settlement regeneration, Regional communication, which secure the transport service of region).

The coherence of Priority axis II.: Social and economic development is to be observed mainly with the priority axes of operational programmes :

- OP Employment and Social Inclusion (mainly the priority axis: Support of employment);
- OP Competitiveness and Economic Development (mainly the priority axis: Support of competitiveness of the enterprises and services mainly by promoting of innovation, focused on support of cooperation between enterprises and science and research institutions, building of new infrastructures, clusters,



innovations centres etc., next priority axis focused on support of SMEs acting in tourism);

- OP Science and Research (the main priority axis focused on improving conditions for science and research institutions and cooperation between Science and Research institutions etc.)

Regional OP (mainly the priority axes: Development of tourism and cultural potential of regions, Settlement regeneration). There can be also find out the coherence with Regional OP mainly in the priority axes supported tourism and conservation of cultural heritage

Priority axis III.: Micro scheme project is to be observed mainly with the priority axes of Regional OP, mainly the priority axis support of tourism and conservation of cultural heritage.

No overlapping of the Priority axes I.,II.,III. with the other operational programmes (first of all the Regional OP) is mainly due to the fact, that the Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border co-operation operational programme supports the transport and environmental infrastructure, as well as the services and, tourist attractions and tourist facilities of cross-border character.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is the financial instrument of the Rural Development Programme for 2007 – 2013 in Poland. In Slovak Republic there will be a Rural development Programme financed out of the EAFRD during the programming period 2007-2013. The main differentiation in terms of possible overlaps between the projects financed from the Operational Programme and the Rural Development Programmes implemented in Poland and in Slovak Republic must be the added value and the cross border impact for border region.

The operational programme in Slovak Republic for water services and fish farming is being currently under preparation. It seems that there are no overlaps between activities planned to be supported from OP SK-PL and OP Fish breeding in Slovakia. The Ministry of Construction and Regional Development as national body together with the Managing Authority and the joint Monitoring Committee ensures that appropriate consultation with other donors will be provided before project approval in order to avoid any double funding.

In Poland there will be implemented Operational Programme Sustainable development of the Fisheries Sector and Coastal Fishing Areas 2007-2013 co-financed from EFF.

Each operation selected for the Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic Operational Programme must show the cross-border impact and it can mark the line between financing of project from ERDF and EAFRD, EFF.

The projects assessment by the joint panel of experts (including regional experts) and the decision taken by the Monitoring Committee will guarantee that the risk of double financing will be avoided.

The participation of the regional representatives within the Monitoring Committee in the decision making process by is the guarantee that the projects will be parallel implemented to the other projects executed within the other programmes and the synergy effect will be achieved.

## **5. STRATEGY**

### **5.1. Joint cross-border strategy**

The socio-economic analysis of the Polish-Slovak cross-border area and the SWOT analysis constitute the basis for elaboration of the joint strategy. The experience and lessons gained during the implementation of the INTERREG IIIA Poland-Slovak Republic programme were incorporated during the process of formulation and identification of the strategy for the cross-border area.

The cross-border area is characterised by the unique value of natural environment and the landscape, which make this area attractive for tourists, investors and inhabitants. The structure of population is advantageous. The similarity of languages and the existing linkages in various spheres on both sides of the border will facilitate further contacts and cooperation among citizens, organisations and entrepreneurs. This area is located near the European transport corridors and there are many crossings. The presence of IT companies in the region is observed. However there are some factors which influence the situation in the cross-border area.

The identified weaknesses of the eligible area cover inter alia: lack of good quality transportation and communication infrastructure, degradation of natural environment.. The state of natural environment deteriorates due to emission of gas pollutants, underdeveloped sewerages system and sewage treatment plants. The low level of ecological awareness among citizens is identified.

The changes in the socio-economic situation of the border area are observed but their pace is low. The situation on the labour market is still very difficult. The high unemployment rate and the negative migration balance, pauperization of inhabitants are recorded. The educational services should be coordinated on the border area to meet the requirements of the labour market. The natural and cultural potential that provides good conditions for the development of the SME is not fully utilized.

In order to better utilize factors that constitute the ground for the competitiveness of this area and to better utilize the existing potential on both sides of the border – the intensification of co-operation and creation networks in many fields should be promoted. The strategy takes into account the specific features of the border area and its border. The strategy is concentrated on the key elements identified in the SWOT analysis.

The joint cross border strategy focuses on the spatial integration of the border area and its better accessibility through combating existing barriers in transportation, communication and environmental infrastructure.

Thus, within the Programme investments which will contribute to the development of the existing transportation and environmental infrastructure will be promoted. The undertaken actions will improve the accessibility of the border area and the convenient location could be better utilized. There will be promoted undertakings to make use of geothermal water. Thus, the actions will be aimed at better utilization of renewable sources of energy.

The development of common systems of inhabitants protection against natural disasters, joint planning and better management of environmental services in the border area will be supported. There will be promoted cooperation in these fields through the elaboration of common plans, etc. The development of IT network and new IT technologies will improve the communication accessibility of the border area and it will also facilitate the cooperation in the field of risk prevention and environmental protection.

There will be supported activities in the field of risk prevention, thus enhancing the attractiveness of the cross-border area for tourists and investors.

The special attention is paid to the cross-border co-operation in tourism and in the field of protection of cultural and natural heritage. The cross-border strategy encompasses creating of thematic networks. In order to support the socio-economic development of the border area and to create conditions for its further growth the cross border cooperation will be promoted. This will help to better utilize resources and to create new work places in SME sector, in particular in tourism. The cooperation among institutions of the business environment, labour market institutions, guilds, association, research centres, labour market institutions, research centres, schools, and other organisation will be promoted. The established and developed cooperation will also cover areas like innovative technologies, know how transfer, creation of institutional networks. This will enable to facilitate the exchange experiences and innovation to SMEs.

The undertaken activities will be aimed at protection of cultural and natural heritage. There will be promoted services and new tourism products, basing on the traditional craft and industry of the border area which are constituting the ground for development of local entrepreneurship. The challenge for the border area are networks in different fields involving universities, scientific institutes, research institutions, the institutions of business environment and organisations of entrepreneurs area. This will contribute to the establishment of the institutional structure of the cross-border cooperation.

The partnership co-operation in different spheres makes a contribution to the socio-economic development of the Slovak-Polish border region and its sustainable development. The intensification of cooperation through the networks of collaborating subjects will be of utmost importance for the efficient implementation of the joint cross-border strategy.

Priority axes were defined on the basis of the joint strategy elaborated for the eligible area.

The global objective of the joint strategy is:

**The intensifying of Polish-Slovak co-operation based on the partnership in the interest of the sustainable development of border region.**

**Indicators of achievement:**

<b>Name of the indicator</b>	<b>Type of indicator</b>	<b>Baseline 2007</b>	<b>Indicator's target value (2015)</b>	<b>Sources of information</b>
Number of joint cross-border projects fulfilling at least two of four criteria of program	output	0	150	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of joint cross-border projects fulfilling at	output	0	100	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the

least three of four criteria of program				Programme (2015)
Number of joint cross-border projects fulfilling all four criteria of program	output	0	50	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)

The priorities and measures of this programme seek to use the strengths and opportunities of the cross-border region for common solving of main problems.

In line with the global objective, the programme document aims at supporting the following specific objectives for co-operation in the cross-border region:

- The development of Polish-Slovak partnership co-operation within the range of improvement of the cross border infrastructure condition oriented towards spatial integration, better accessibility and attractiveness for inhabitants, investors and tourists
- The promote of Polish-Slovak partnership co-operation for sustainable social-economic, environmental and cultural development of the Polish – Slovak cross border region
- To promote local initiatives and establish cross-border contacts through implementation of microprojects based on people to people actions.

The specific aims support the activities that will be in accordance with national strategies contribute to reach the aims of Lisbon and Göteborg strategy in cross-border connections and thus create better conditions toward integration and coherence of common region.

Stated specific aims will be fulfilled by the three thematically oriented priority axes and by one supported priority axis, which are developed in more detail in the Chapter 6.

While pursuing the specific objectives for development, it is necessary to regard the following aspects:

- creation of common vision of integrated regional economy, social cohesion and good neighbourhood relations
- stable economic growth on the both sides of the border
- creation of facilities for security in the Polish-Slovak border region
- nature conservation and cultural heritage protection
- needs of the local social groups.

## 6. PRIORITY AXES

Due to differences among regions and inside them, the priority axes and subjects described below have a considerably broad scope in the areas covered with the programme. The economic structure on the Slovak side of the border, where the service sector prevails, differs from the Polish side with dominant agriculture. On the Polish side of the border the situation is differentiated (for instance, in the industrial part of bielsko-bialski subregion). There are also considerable differences in population density and education level. On the basis of a joint diagnosis of the social and economic situation in the Polish and Slovak border area common strategic priorities were determined, and they are reflected in the proposed programme. Many different institutions from different parts of the border area and from different industries should participate in the programme.

Supported priority axes are as follows:

- Priority axis I.: Development of cross-border infrastructure
- Priority axis II.: Social and economic development
- Priority axis III.: Supporting local initiatives (micro projects)
- Priority axis IV.: Technical assistance

The following description focuses on the programme priorities, detailed information on separate subjects will be described in a supplementary document.

### 6.1. Priority axes and subjects description

#### 6.1.1. Priority axis I. Development of cross-border infrastructure

##### Background situation

The Polish-Slovak border area needs considerable investments that will contribute to the development and improvement of the infrastructure that is neglected at present. Within the Programme framework, joint measures will be supported if they are with benefit for the population on the both sides of the border that is they have a remarkable cross-border effect. Such operations shall be conducted on two levels: road and communication infrastructure and the environmental infrastructure including protection against natural disasters.

<p><b>Main objective of the priority</b></p>	<p>The development of Polish-Slovak partnership co-operation within the range of improvement of the cross border infrastructure condition oriented towards spatial integration, safety, better accessibility and attractiveness for inhabitants, investors and tourists</p>
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**Indicators of achievement**

Name of the indicator	Type of indicator	Base line 2007	Indicator's target value (2015)	Sources of information
<b>Allocation to Priority 1.</b>			<b>67 685 338 EUR</b>	43 % of the ERDF Programme allocation
Number of joint projects	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of partners	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of kilometers of new / modernized cross-border communication connections	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of population benefiting from the new/modernized communication infrastructure	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>70 000</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Women		<b>0</b>	<b>35 000</b>	
Men		<b>0</b>	<b>35 000</b>	
Number of population served by the new/modernized environmental protection infrastructure	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>60 000</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Women		<b>0</b>	<b>30 000</b>	
Men		<b>0</b>	<b>30 000</b>	
Number of towns/villages benefiting directly from the new/modernized communication infrastructure	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>180 000</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of lasting Polish-Slovak partnership contacts	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	JTS – information from beneficiaries – one year after completion of the Programme (2016)

An increase of investments in the road and transportation infrastructure may have an impact on the improvement of accessibility of the areas located away from the national centres of development. Such measures should make it possible to profit from a convenient geographical location, described above as one of the advantages

of this region, for the development of transit transportation as well as transportation on the local level - "day-to-day" transportation (small roads, access to schools, offices, health care centres, etc).

While planning investments related to the infrastructure in the areas of Polish-Slovak border, the environmental conditions related directly to the development of economic infrastructure, will be taken into consideration. Joint measures aimed at improvement of environmental infrastructure that are to be financed under this Priority, should considerably contribute to the preservation of the natural resources, as well as the sustained developed of the border area.

Examples of expected results are:

- removing major "narrow throats" or lacking connections in local transportation network in the border area, which slow down the development of the social and economic relationships restricted not only by existing state borders, but also due to difficult natural conditions,
- preservation and protection of the natural heritage in this area through further measures aimed at reduction of the environmental pollution that could be seen on the both sides of the border,
- joint and coordinated projects and programmes for infrastructure development in the border region.

**Operational aims of priority axis:**

- Improvement of direct connections in the field of transport and communication between Polish and Slovak side of border area.
- Improvement of condition of environmental protection infrastructure in the border area
- Improvement of condition of cross-border infrastructure within the range of protection against natural disasters
- Utilization of renewable energy sources
- Development of information community
- Support of direct investments to the infrastructure in the border areas
- Support of strategic projects

**SUBJECT 1:           COMMUNICATION and TRANSPORTATION  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

According to the description of the social and economic situation, the Polish-Slovak border area requires building a new transportation infrastructure, as well as modernisation and development of the existing one, mainly the road connections. Due to limited resources the programme does not include large investments. Smaller-scale activities will be promoted that aim mainly at an improvement of direct connections between the Slovak and Polish sides of the border area or improvement of a particular area availability for economic and tourist purposes.

Within the framework of subject 1, construction, development and modernization of the existing transport infrastructure, including road connections are supported. There are supported projects, the aim of which is, in particular, to connect areas on both sides of the border. The implemented activities should contribute to supplementing

missing connections in the local infrastructure of cross-border and local nature and to improve safety in the Polish-Slovak border area.

The assistance may also be granted to projects, the aim of which is to develop and modernize of infrastructure facilitating crossing the border, eg. through modernization and construction of the local roads leading to the border. The function of the border crossings will have to be changed when Poland and the Slovak Republic join the Schengen area. Thus, there will be supported projects concerning the border buildings which will have to be adapted to new functions of the border crossings.

Moreover, joint plans and programmes for development of transportation infrastructure should be prepared in order to create a coherent cross-border system. New solutions within the scope of multi-modal transport may be promoted. Appropriate studies and concepts will be prepared that refer to major infrastructural investments meaningful for the cross-border areas, including the ones related to the existing connections and planned transportation corridors and connections with the corridors of transport tracks of local and cross-border importance. This measure will allow also measures related to the broadly understood safety, in particular the safety on the road - co-operation of different rescue and public order services. Large investments may be executed within the framework of other national or domestic programmes of infrastructure development.

An important element of investments implemented under this measure should be activities of mainly infrastructure character aimed at a development of telecommunication networks and contributing to a development of the information society, taking into consideration modern communication solutions (the Internet).

## **SUBJECT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

The situation of natural environment needs improvement in many cases, so the implementation of cross-border projects may be very profitable. Units responsible for implementation of measures that have an impact on the environmental infrastructure should closely protect the areas of NATURA 2000 network defined in the EU Member States. The local authorities on both sides of the border expect a co-operation, for instance within the scope of sewage treatment and waste management. Still, within the framework of this programme it is possible to support joint planning and working out programmes enabling implementation of large investments of cross-border importance. The assistance may be also granted to minor investment projects concerning environmental protection. It refers mainly to projects related to water supply and sewage disposal, sewage treatment and waste management, water and air pollution and natural disasters prevention. As far as waste management is concerned, the measures solving the problem of illegal waste disposal sites as well as measures enabling reuse of waste or its removal in a way that is not harmful for the environment, and solutions concerning a reduction of a negative environmental impact of noise and electromagnetic radiation will be promoted.

An extremely important element of the cross-border system of environment protection is protection against natural disasters, in particular flood prevention infrastructure that is not developed sufficiently. Defects in the flood infrastructure in the entire region may cause a natural disaster from which the areas on both sides of the Polish-Slovak border would suffer. The subject includes also activities enabling the monitoring and reacting to environment pollution endangerments. While planning new elements of the flood system or renewing the existing elements (e.g. water reservoirs) their economic use should be also taken into consideration.



This subject is also directed to promote renewable energy sources, rationalisation of use of available natural resources reducing the harmful impact of human activities on the environment.

The protection of the special cross- border biotopes is very needed in the Polish - Slovak region. The environmental infrastructure leading to this protection will be supported (e.g. strengthening of environmental guidance units in protected areas etc.).

In the interest of regional development it is possible to make use of geothermal water potential in existing region. For its capacity utilization purpose it is assumed to support planning, research and geothermal water use, as a base of developing tourism, unconventional energy resources, etc.

**Indicative list of activities:**

- construction of cross-border infrastructure of regional and local importance for improvement of direct connections between PL and SR sides of the border area
- development of the systems to improve the quality and efficiency of public transportation and multimodal transport , including “soft” activities related information and communication, e.g. co-ordination of time schedules
- investments in accessibility and quality of regional and local roads, cycle tracks, regional and local inland waterways in border area
- joint planning and better management of transport services in the border area
- construction of cross-border infrastructure in the field of environment, nature protection, natural resources, renewable energy and systems to increase their quality
- development of common systems of inhabitants protection against natural disasters
- joint planning and better management of environmental services in border area,

**Indicative final beneficiaries:**

- self-government units and their unions and associations
- administration units established by state or self-government units established by self-government in purpose of providing of public services
- non profit NGOs

**Eligible final beneficiaries are:**

- Subjects with legal subjectivity based on the local relevant laws
- Subjects without legal subjectivity, to whom their superior unit (having legal subjectivity) will delegate particular full powers and which will assume financial responsibility for implemented project.
- Subjects without legal subjectivity, on behalf of whom their superior unit will apply for grant (with identification which subject will implement the project)
- Subjects with their seats outside the eligible area, under the condition to have competences and performances in the eligible area and the project activities will have the impact on the supported area (respecting the 20% flexibility rule)

## 6.1.2. Priority axis II. Social and economic development

### Background situation

On one hand the areas at the Polish-Slovak border present a smaller pace of social and economic changes and a high unemployment rate is observed there, but on the other hand they have a considerable natural and cultural potential that provides good conditions for development of the tourist service sector. The projects implemented within this Priority are to contribute to the usage of this potential and to the social and economic development of the region. Three subjects were selected here and they focus on the development of tourism, protection of national and cultural heritage and establishing a network of cooperating Polish and Slovak partners.

Special measures should be taken to improve a difficult situation on the labour market. A cross-border co-operation can lead to a more effective use of human resources. It enables creation of new work places, particularly in SME sector, mainly in tourism. Still in order to establish new companies it is necessary to achieve a certain level of entrepreneurship, that makes it possible to use the internal potential (including handicraft and craft tradition/ disappearing and niche jobs/ using natural methods in agriculture or good conditions for the trade development). In this aspect the exchange of information and knowledge between Polish and Slovak partners prove very profitable. In order to achieve this it is necessary to promote co-operation between institutions of the business environment, labour market institutions, guilds, associations, congregations, research centres, schools and other organisations of the economic self-government, mainly in tourism. Their co-operation will contribute to a more effective use of human resources and increase of entrepreneurship.

The field of co-operation includes the promotion of innovative technologies, know-how transfer and creation of institutional networks in order to facilitate the exchange the experiences and innovation to SMEs and strengthen links between the research centres and enterprises. The implementation of these measures is essential for the cross-border area in order to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based economy.

The economic development of the areas near the Polish-Slovak border is bound with a rich natural and cultural heritage. The scope of cross-border co-operation related to the protection of natural and cultural heritage is very broad, in particular when connected with promotion of tourism.

<b>Main objective of the priority</b>	To promote Polish-Slovak partnership co-operation for sustainable social-economic, environmental and cultural development of the Polish – Slovak border region
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### Indicators of achievement

Name of the indicator	Type of indicator	Base line 2007	Indicator's target value (2015)	Sources of information
Allocation to Priority 2.			<b>53 518 639 EUR</b>	34 % of the ERDF Programme allocation
Number of joint projects	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the

				Programme (2015)
Number of partners	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>500</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of renovated historical objects	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>90</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of initiatives which contribute to protection of biodiversity	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of institutions involved in network activity	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of tourist products	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>350</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of course participants which raised their qualifications	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>5000</b>	JTS – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Women		<b>0</b>	<b>2500</b>	
Men		<b>0</b>	<b>2500</b>	
Number of partnership agreements binding after the completion of a project	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	JTS – information from beneficiaries – one year after completion of the Programme (2016)
Number of population benefiting from the projects aimed at increasing the safety	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>40000</b>	JTS – information from beneficiaries –after completion of the Programme (2015)
Women		<b>0</b>	<b>20000</b>	
Men		<b>0</b>	<b>20000</b>	
Number of employees of rescue services having completed the courses	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>300</b>	JTS – information from beneficiaries –after completion of the Programme (2015)

**Expected exemplary results are:**

- increase of the tourist potential in the cross-border region,
- improvement of qualifications of the inhabitants in the border area and strengthening of the local SMEs through development of co-operation between

educational institutions, organisations, economic associations, including tourist ones.

**Operational aims of priority axis:**

- Growth of tourist attractiveness of border region
- Preservation of regional cultural heritage
- Protection of nature's biodiversity
- Creation of thematic networks of partnership co-operation and thematic clusters
- Development of human resources and education
- Increase utilisation of information and telecommunication technology

**SUBJECT 1: DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION IN TOURISM**

The Polish-Slovak border region is characterized by a big diversity and uniqueness of natural resources. The assets of the cross-border area include tourism assets and historical and cultural heritage environment. There are historical sites which are in the World Heritage List of UNESCO. The Polish-Slovak cross-border area has a specific predispositions to develop tourism due to its physical and geographical features, richness of medicinal and thermal waters and the landscape value. These features can attract tourists and investors.

These assets could contribute to the economic development of the cross-border area through a creation of new work places in SME sector, including those in tourism, and further to the socio-economic development of the Polish-Slovak border area.

Joint actions implemented within this Subject should be aimed at the development of tourist infrastructure. A pressure will be put on investments related to the development of existing and probable spas and public health care institutions. An improved situation in this industry would contribute to the reduction of the problem of marginalisation resulting from unemployment.

There are supported projects aimed at new tourist products and strengthening existing cooperation between partners in the field of tourism and economic development of the border region.

The co-operation in the area of tourism, sports and recreation also may be profitable, since in a long run it may be the main development factor of the region. It is also necessary to continue to tighten the relationships between Polish and Slovak tourist organisations and associations. Such contacts may contribute to promoting the entrepreneurship.

Moreover, learning Polish and Slovak languages and exchange of information and data should be encouraged in order to develop cross-border tourism. Additionally, co-operation between spas may help to develop this special sector of tourism.

The region provides promising conditions for development of ecotourism and agrotourism. We should support the efforts aimed at co-operation in this sector between different tourist centres and organisations on both sides of the border.

Also the meaning of regional tourist products in the border area should be underlined, their promotion and protection should be strengthened, and the activities to increase safety of tourists resting or practicing sports in the mountain areas should be supported.

## **SUBJECT 2: PROTECTION OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

The Polish-Slovak border area is known for its rich natural and cultural heritage. The area of the Polish-Slovak borderland is characterized by rich natural, cultural and landscape heritage. The great variety of monuments representing all periods and styles, historical and cultural buildings, cultural institutions is conducive to implementation of the joint activities, also in the field of tourism. This rich cultural heritage resources are attractive not only for the local communities (especially young person), but also for tourists, investors, from outside the supported area.

The activities undertaken within the subject in question are aimed at both the natural and cultural heritage protection and its better utilization. However, the assistance is granted only to these kind of projects which are of particular importance to the development of cooperation among cultural, educational, ecological and research institutions, churches and religious associations. These activities are important for strengthening cooperation between partners from both side of the border, to create networks and to “shorten distance” in business contacts.

While making use of this and at the same time contributing to the protection of these resources, measures will be supported aimed at establishment of thematic networks connecting places with similar characteristics and at development of new tourist offer and products (for instance wooden churches or Gothic routes). Assistance and creation of new tourist products using the cultural and natural values of the border area is essential here. Due to cross-border activities, the areas with such characteristics may be more efficiently promoted outside Poland and Slovakia. In order to preserve the cultural heritage of the region it is necessary to prepare joint projects enabling the local communities to preserve their identity, for example, through integrated cultural and tourist products. Here it is essential to support activities of cultural institutions, also within the scope of infrastructure, on both sides of the border and to trigger establishment of centres of cultural co-operation and exchange. We should also ensure sufficient protection of cultural heritage objects (protection and care for monuments) and natural heritage (nature monuments, protected areas). Activities that make these qualities available while protecting their monumental or natural value at the same time, should be promoted.

Joint measures aimed at protection of different species of plants and animals should be taken. It is also important to carry out actions intended to raise ecological awareness. Joint programme to protect nature, cultural and historical heritage could be prepared.

We should also support prevention of the cross- border threats for fauna and flora and programmes for their protection.

## **SUBJECT 3: NETWORKING**

The measures taken within this subject will have a form of co-operation commenced between collaborating institutions, both on the Polish and Slovak sides of the border.

Such networks will be a materialisation of the existing co-operation of the institutions that has been often conducted for a longer time, but there were no formal financial instruments supporting such form of co-operation. The networks made within this subject will be thematic networks referring for example to economic, educational, cultural co-operation as well as co-operation concerning safety on both sides of the border. The thematic networks will also concentrate on improving the potential of the cross-border area in the field of research and development and innovation. Thus, within the framework of subject 3 co-operation among the universities, scientific institutes, research institutions, the institutions of business environment and organisations of entrepreneurs is promoted.

The networks will enable an exchange of information, better co-operation and establishment of new institutional structures of the cross-border co-operation. As result of these activities new solutions, strategies and policies should be established. Within this subject it will be also possible to take “soft” measures (for instance organising meetings, working groups, trainings), as well as implement small infrastructural investments except communication infrastructure related to the establishment or improvement of the existing network. The established networks will characterise with flexibility and capability to grow together with the increase of thematic scope of a network.

Regional and local government units, universities, rescue services, public health care institutions social and professional organisations, organisations of entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations and other entities interested in co-operation within the framework of a network will be able to join such network.

A network may be established by at least three entities (including one foreign partner), and one of them will be an overall lead partner responsible for project management and co-operation network developed in such a project.

**Indicative list of activities:**

- support of development co-operation networks of economic and civil participants that will deal with the relevant thematic activities in supported areas
- development of common education services
- common systems development of labour market and social services
- cross-border co-operation development between businesses, research and development institutions
- support of cross-border development of industry activities and industry clusters
- support for development of new products and better management in tourism, culture and tradition crafts
- investments to cross-border tourist infrastructure
- organize common cross-border undertakings in the area of tourism and culture
- investments connected with natural and cultural heritage protection
- support of creating common products of culture, tourism, and traditional crafts
- support of common rescue system
- development and implementation of joint e-services

**Indicative final beneficiaries:**

- self-government units and their unions and associations
- administration units established by state or self-government units established by self-government in purpose of providing of public services
- non profit NGOs
- European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation

**Eligible final beneficiaries:**

- Subjects with legal subjectivity based on the local relevant laws
- Subjects without legal subjectivity, to whom their superior unit (having legal subjectivity) will delegate particular full powers and which will assume financial responsibility for implemented project
- Subjects without legal subjectivity, on behalf of whom their superior unit will apply for grant (with identification which subject will implement the project)
- Subjects with their seats outside the eligible area, under the condition to have competences and performances in the eligible area and the project activities will have the impact on the supported area (respecting the 20% flexibility rule)

**6.1.3. Priority axis III. Supporting local initiatives (micro projects)**

**Background situation**

Within this priority small projects, such as “**people for people**” are implemented. This instrument will be a continuation of “Joint Small Project Fund: existing within Polish-Slovak PHARE CBC programme and a separate Measure within the Interreg IIIA Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2004-2006. The general purpose of supporting local initiatives is a development and intensification of co-operation between communities on both sides of the border that in the future should improve the situation both in the field of culture, education, tourism and sports as well as in the social and economic sphere. Co-operation between people living in the border area (for instance between local cultural and educational institutions) improves good relationships between neighbours. It is also possible to support measures for groups socially marginalised (handicapped, minorities etc.). The measures under this priority (e.g. organisation of conferences and exhibitions, working out studies and publications) encourage local institutions and citizens to get involved in joint initiatives. Financing small local initiatives may be a ground for bigger joint cross-border projects. During the implementation of this priority it will be possible to implement small infrastructural investments related with “soft” nature measures.

Last but not least, for common regional development it is necessary to support education, know-how exchange in the field of educational systems, educational institutions in order to increase general education level and to raise the effectiveness of education process in the border region.

No single one-time projects will be supported but only projects which will continue the project idea and will be followed by integrated activities within given fields of partners’ co-operation.

<b>Main objective of the priority</b>	To promote local initiatives and establish cross-border contacts through implementation of microprojects based on people to people actions.
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**Indicators of achievement**

Name of the indicator	Type of indicator	Base line 2007	Indicator's target value (2015)	Sources of information
<b>Allocation to Priority 3.</b>			<b>26 759 320 EUR</b>	17 % of the ERDF Programme allocation
Number of joint projects	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>1 200</b>	Implementing Institutions for this priority – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of partners	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>2 400</b>	Implementing Institutions for this priority – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of projects contributing to supporting equal opportunities for women and groups being socially marginalized	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	Implementing Institutions for this priority – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of joint events being organized for the first time	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	Implementing Institutions for this priority – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Number of course participants which raised their qualifications	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>1 000</b>	Implementing Institutions for this priority – final reports of beneficiaries after completion of the Programme (2015)
Women		<b>0</b>	<b>500</b>	
Men		<b>0</b>	<b>500</b>	
Number of partnership agreements binding after the completion of a project	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>400</b>	Implementing Institutions for this priority – information from beneficiaries – one year after completion of the Programme (2016)
Number of institutions co-operating after the projects' completion	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>600</b>	Implementing Institutions for this priority – information from beneficiaries – one year after completion of the Programme (2016)



**Operational aims of priority axis:**

- Establishing and strengthening of direct contacts between Polish and Slovak communities of the border area
- Developing a basis for further projects in the future

The subjects, to be implemented within this Priority, will be described in a supplementary document.

**Indicative list of activities:**

- strengthening mutual co-operation
- renewal and maintenance of the regional cultural traditions
- development of human resources and education
- development of common cross-border undertakings in the area of education, sport and culture
- support of creating common products of culture, tourism, and traditional crafts
- supporting small infrastructure projects

This priority will be implemented through umbrella project which will be managed by the respective partners on the Polish side (Euroregions) and Slovak side Self governing regions (Higher Territorial Units). Each of these bodies will fulfil either the lead partner role or the role of project partner within umbrella projects coordinating microprojects.

Euroregion or Self governing regions when assuming the role of the lead partner for the umbrella project is not entitled to apply for financial resources within Priority 3 as a beneficiary.

**Indicative final beneficiaries:**

- self-government units and their unions and associations
- administration units established by state or self-government units established by self-government in purpose of providing of public services
- non profit NGOs
- European Groupings of Territorial Co-operation

**Eligible final beneficiaries are:**

- Subjects with legal subjectivity based on the local relevant laws
- Subjects without legal subjectivity, to whom their superior unit (having legal subjectivity) will delegate particular full powers and which will assume financial responsibility for implemented project.
- Subjects without legal subjectivity, on behalf of whom their superior unit will apply for grant (with identification which subject will implement the project)
- Subjects with their seats outside the eligible area, under the condition to have competences and performances in the eligible area and the project activities will have the impact on the supported area (respecting the 20% flexibility rule)

Details on the implementation and financial flows within microprojects will be defined in the supplementary document.

#### **6.1.4. Priority axis IV: Technical assistance**

##### **Background situation**

The technical assistance (TA) will be used in order to ensure effective and transparent management of the programme and its effective functioning. This priority includes establishing and financing expenses of the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat, national co-financing contracts preparation and first level control activity of the Slovak Ministry of Construction and Regional Development. It will also cover operation costs of Info Points in Slovakia, including costs of organising work meetings and operation costs. Cost related to the preparation of the programme for the next period, referring to the new financial perspective, must be taken into consideration.

Within this priority the costs of programme promotion as well as its assessment and evaluation will be supported. A plan of communication activities comprising numerous seminars and information campaigns will be prepared. Exchange of information on the project propositions will be encouraged. It is also possible to take measures in order help the beneficiaries to work out project concepts and look for partners. Usage of information techniques (the Internet) should be promoted and promotional and informational activities of the regional contact points should be supported.

Special attention shall be given to the services provided by the INTERACT II programme. This EU-wide programme focuses on the good governance of territorial cooperation and provides needs-based support to stakeholders involved in implementing programmes under the European Territorial Co-operation objective. The target groups for INTERACT are primarily the authorities to be established according to Council Regulations 1083/2006 and 1080/2006 as well as other bodies involved in programme implementation. In order to ensure maximum benefit from the INTERACT programme for the implementing bodies of this programme, the use of INTERACT services and documentation as well as the participation in INTERACT seminars will be encouraged. Related costs are eligible under Technical Assistance.

If regions in the programme area are involved in the Regions for Economic Change initiative the Managing Authority commits itself to:

- a) make the necessary arrangement to support innovative operations with cross-border/transnational impact that are related to the results of the networks,
- b) foresee a point in the agenda of the Monitoring Committee at least once a year to discuss relevant suggestions for the programme, and to invite representatives of the networks (as observers) to report on the progress of the networks' activities;
- c) describe in the Annual Report actions included within the Regions for Economic Change initiative.

<b>Main objective of the priority</b>	Assuring implementation, management, promotion, monitoring and control of the program
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### Indicators of achievement

Name of the indicator	Type of indicator	Baseline 2007	Indicator's target value (2015)	Sources of information
<b>Allocation to Priority 4.</b>			<b>9 444 466 EUR</b>	<b>6% of the ERDF Programme allocation</b>
Established and operating Managing, Certifying and Audit Authorities and Joint Technical Secretariat, Info Points	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	JTS – after approval of program by EC – in the course of Program implementation
Operating data processing system	Output	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	JTS – internal data – in the course of Program implementation
Number of trainings organised	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	JTS – internal data – in the course of Program implementation
Website concerning the program	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	JTS – internal data – in the course of Program implementation
Number of submitted projects	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>600</b>	JTS – internal data – in the course of Program implementation
Mid-term and ex-post evaluation	Output/Result	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	External evaluation specialist – evaluation reports – in half of Program implementation (2011) and after its completion (2016)
Number of trained persons (M/F)	Result	<b>0</b>	<b>2 000</b>	JTS – internal data – after completion of the Program (2015)

### Operational aims:

- management support
- programme implementation
- programme control
- programme promotion
- programme monitoring
- programme evaluation

**Indicative list of activities:**

- preparation of materials for the project selection, their consideration and continuous monitoring of project implementation
- programme administration
- preparation of the Monitoring Committee/Subcommittee meetings
- verification and control of operations on the place of their implementation
- operation of the monitoring system designed for programme administration, continuous monitoring and evaluation
- consultations with applicants during project preparation
- information and publishing accordance with article 69 Regulation No. 1083/2006
- training for the implementation structures
- programme evaluation
- participation in the meetings organized in the framework of INTERACT II programme
- first level control activities on Poland and Slovak side

**Indicative final beneficiaries:**

- Managing Authority
- Slovak Ministry of Construction and Regional Development (national co-financing contracts preparation and first level control activity)
- Joint Technical Secretariat
- Other organizations participating in the programme implementation

## 6.2. List of interventions due to categories

Categorisation of Funds assistance for 2007-2013		Priority axis	Priority axis	Priority axis	Priority axis
		I.	II.	III.	IV.
<i>Table 1:</i>	<i>Codes for the priority theme dimension</i>				
<b>Code</b>	<b>Priority theme</b>				
<b>Research and technological development (R&amp;TD), innovation and entrepreneurship</b>					
1	R&TD activities in research centres				
2	R&TD infrastructure ( <i>including physical plant, instrumentation and high-speed computer networks linking research centres</i> ) and centres of competence in a specific technology				
3	Technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks between small businesses (SMEs), between these and other businesses and universities, post-secondary education establishments of all kinds, regional authorities, research centres and scientific and technological poles ( <i>scientific and technological parks, technopoles, etc.</i> )		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
4	Assistance to R&TD, particularly in SMEs ( <i>including access to R&amp;TD services in research centres</i> )				
5	Advanced support services for firms and groups of firms				
6	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes ( <i>introduction of effective environment managing system, adoption and use of pollution prevention technologies, integration of clean technologies into firm production</i> )				
7	Investment in firms directly linked to research and innovation ( <i>innovative technologies, establishment of new firms by universities, existing R&amp;TD centres and firms, etc.</i> )				
8	Other investment in firms				
9	Other measures to stimulate research and innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs				
<b>Information society</b>					
10	Telephone infrastructures ( <i>including broadband networks</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
11	Information and communication technologies ( <i>access, security, interoperability, risk-prevention, research, innovation, e-content, etc.</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
12	Information and communication technologies (TEN-ICT)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
13	Services and applications for the citizen ( <i>e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
14	Services and applications for SMEs ( <i>e-commerce, education and training, networking, etc.</i> )		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
15	Other measures for improving access to and efficient use of ICT by SMEs				
<b>Transport</b>					
16	Railways				
17	Railways (TEN-T)				
18	Mobile rail assets				
19	Mobile rail assets (TEN-T)				
20	Motorways				
21	Motorways (TEN-T)				

22	National roads				
23	Regional/local roads	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
24	Cycle tracks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
25	Urban transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
26	Multimodal transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
27	Multimodal transport (TEN-T)				
28	Intelligent transport systems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
29	Airports				
30	Ports				
31	Inland waterways ( <i>regional and local</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
32	Inland waterways (TEN-T)				
<b>Energy</b>					
33	Electricity				
34	Electricity (TEN-E)				
35	Natural gas				
36	Natural gas (TEN-E)				
37	Petroleum products				
38	Petroleum products (TEN-E)				
39	Renewable energy: wind	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
40	Renewable energy: solar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
41	Renewable energy: biomass	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
42	Renewable energy: hydroelectric, geothermal and other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Environmental protection and risk prevention</b>					
44	Management of household and industrial waste	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
45	Management and distribution of water ( <i>drinking water</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
46	Water treatment ( <i>waste water</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
47	Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
48	Integrated prevention and pollution control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
49	Mitigation and adaptation to climate change				
50	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
51	Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection ( <i>including Natura 2000</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
52	Promotion of clean urban transport				
53	Risk prevention ( <i>including the drafting and implementation of plans and measures to prevent and manage natural and technological risks</i> )	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
54	Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Tourism</b>					
55	Promotion of natural assets		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
56	Protection and development of natural heritage		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
57	Other assistance to improve tourist services		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Culture</b>					
58	Protection and preservation of the cultural heritage		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
59	Development of cultural infrastructure		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
60	Other assistance to improve cultural services		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Urban and rural regeneration</b>					
61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Increasing the adaptability of workers and firms, enterprises and entrepreneurs</b>					
62	Development of life-long learning systems and strategies in firms; training and services for employees to step up their adaptability to change; promoting entrepreneurship and				

	innovation				
63	Design and dissemination of innovative and more productive ways of organising work				
64	Development of specific services for employment, training and support in connection with restructuring of sectors and firms, and development of systems for anticipating economic changes and future requirements in terms of jobs and skills				
<b>Improving access to employment and sustainability</b>					
65	Modernisation and strengthening labour market institutions				
66	Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
67	Measures encouraging active ageing and prolonging working lives			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
68	Support for self-employment and business start-up				
69	Measures to improve access to employment and increase sustainable participation and progress of women in employment to reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market, and to reconcile work and private life, such as facilitating access to childcare and care for dependent persons		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
70	Specific action to increase migrants' participation in employment and thereby strengthen their social integration				
<b>Improving the social inclusion of less-favoured persons</b>					
71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people; combating discrimination in accessing and progressing in the labour market and promoting acceptance of diversity at the workplace				
<b>Improving human capital</b>					
72	Design, introduction and implementation of reforms in education and training systems in order to develop employability, improving the labour market relevance of initial and vocational education and training, updating skills of training personnel with a view to innovation and a knowledge based economy				
73	Measures to increase participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle, including through action to achieve a reduction in early school leaving, gender-based segregation of subjects and increased access to and quality of initial vocational and tertiary education and training		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Investment in social infrastructure</b>					
75	Education infrastructure				
76	Health infrastructure				
77	Childcare infrastructure				
78	Housing infrastructures				
79	Other social infrastructure				
<b>Mobilisation for reforms in the fields of employment and inclusion</b>					
80	Promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives through the networking of relevant stakeholders		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level</b>					

81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reduction of additional costs hindering the outermost regions development</b>					
82	Compensation of any additional costs due to accessibility deficit and territorial fragmentation				
83	Specific action addressed to compensate additional costs due to size market factors				
84	Support to compensate additional costs due to climate conditions and relief difficulties				
<b>Technical assistance</b>					
85	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
86	Evaluation and studies; information and communication				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Table 2: Codes for the form of finance dimension</b>					
<b>Code</b>	<b>Form of finance</b>				
1	Non-repayable aid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Aid (loan, interest subsidy, guarantees)				
3	Venture capital (participation, venture-capital fund)				
4	Other forms of finance				
<b>Table 3: Codes for the territorial dimension</b>					
<b>Code</b>	<b>Territory type</b>				
1	Urban				
2	Mountains				
3	Islands				
4	Sparsely and very sparsely populated areas				
5	Rural areas (other than mountains, islands or sparsely and very sparsely populated areas)				
6	Former EU external borders (after 30 April .2004)				
7	Outermost region				
8	Cross-border cooperation area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	Transnational cooperation area				
10	Inter-regional cooperation area				
00	Not applicable				
<b>Table 4: Codes for the economic activity dimension</b>					
<b>Code</b>	<b>Economic activity</b>				
01	Agriculture, hunting and forestry				
02	Fishing				
03	Manufacture of food products and beverages				
04	Manufacture of textiles and textile products				
05	Manufacture of transport equipment				
06	Unspecified manufacturing industries				
07	Mining and quarrying of energy producing materials				
08	Electricity, gas, steam and hot water supply				
09	Collection, purification and distribution of water				
10	Post and telecommunications				
11	Transport				
12	Construction				



13	Wholesale and retail trade				
14	Hotels and restaurants				
15	Financial intermediation				
16	Real estate, renting and business activities				
17	Public administration				
18	Education				
19	Human health activities				
20	Social work, community, social and personal services				
21	Activities linked to the environment				
22	Other unspecified services				
00	Not applicable				

## 7. FINANCING PLAN

### 7.1. Annual financial contribution from the ERDF

**Table 13 Annual financial contribution from the ERDF**

	ERDF (in EUR)
2007	22 339 438
2008	21 225 197
2009	21 493 387
2010	22 136 134
2011	22 795 978
2012	23 399 543
2013	24 018 086
<b>Grand Total 2007 - 2013</b>	<b>157 407 763</b>

### 7.2. Community contribution and the national counterparts, and the rate of the ERDF contribution

**Table 14 Community and national contributions (in EUR)**

Priority axis	Community Funding	National Public funding*	National private funding	Total funding	Co-financing rate	For information	
	a	b	c	d=a+b+c	e=a/d	EIB	Other funding
Priority axis I.: Development of cross-border infrastructure	67 685 338	11 944 471	-	79 629 809	85%	-	-
Priority axis II.: Social and economic development	53 518 639	9 444 466	-	62 963 105	85%	-	-
Priority axis III.: Supporting local initiatives (micro projects)	26 759 320	4 722 233	-	31 481 553	85%	-	-
Priority axis IV.: Technical assistance	9 444 466	1 666 670	-	11 111 136	85%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>157 407 763</b>	<b>27 777 840</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>185 185 603</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Rules on national co-financing of projects within the Slovak Republic follow the Financial Strategy of Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds for Programming Period 2007 – 2013 approved by the Government of Slovak Republic

### 7.3. Indicative breakdown of the Community contribution by category

<b>Indicative breakdown of the Community contribution from ERDF by category</b>		
<b>Dimension 1 Priority axis</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Amount (in EUR)</b>	<b>%</b>
3	629 631	0,4
10	629 631	0,4
11	629 631	0,4
12	629 631	0,4
13	629 631	0,4
14	629 631	0,4
23	33 055 630	21,0
24	6 296 311	4,0
25	2 361 116	1,5
26	1 574 078	1,0
28	787 039	0,5
31	472 223	0,3
39	314 816	0,2
40	157 408	0,1
41	314 816	0,2
42	472 223	0,3
43	157 408	0,1
44	1 888 893	1,2
45	2 046 301	1,3
46	6 296 311	4,0
47	787 039	0,5
48	1 574 078	1,0
50	314 816	0,2
51	1 574 078	1,0
53	2 361 116	1,5
54	2 361 116	1,5
55	12 592 621	8,0
56	12 592 621	8,0
57	14 166 699	9,0
58	12 592 621	8,0
59	12 592 621	8,0
60	7 870 388	5,0
61	1 101 854	0,7
66	314 815	0,2
67	472 223	0,3

<b>69</b>	314 815	0,2
<b>73</b>	1 416 670	0,9
<b>74</b>	1 416 670	0,9
<b>80</b>	1 574 078	1,0
<b>81</b>	629 631	0,4
<b>85</b>	4 407 417	2,8
<b>86</b>	4 407 417	2,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>157 407 763</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>Dimension 2</b>		
<b>Form of finance</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>157 407 763</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Dimension 3</b>		
<b>Territory</b>		
<b>8</b>	<b>157 407 763</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>157 407 763</b>	<b>100</b>

## **8. IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM**

### **8.1. LEVEL OF PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Article 14 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund, the common organization structure was created for programme management and implementation.

The main elements of this structure are:

Managing Authority

Certifying Authority

Audit Authority

The other elements of the organisational structure involved in the programme implementation are:

Control Bodies according to the Article 16 (1) of EC Regulation no 1080/2006 about ERDF

Joint Technical Secretariat

Info Points (HTUs) located on the Slovak side

Regional Contact Points located on the Polish side

On the base of the regulation according to the Article 63 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, Programme Monitoring Committee (hereinafter MC) was established.

The role determination of individual subjects is written in the text of this chapter, contacts details of individual programme bodies are stated in complementary document.

Division of responsibilities between the Polish and Slovak programme partners will be defined in the memorandum of understanding after approval of the Operational Programme of Republic of Poland -Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co-operation 2007-2013.

## **8.2.1. ACTIVITIES OF MANAGING STRUCTURES**

### **8.2.2. MANAGING AUTHORITY**

In accordance with the agreement of the Member States involved in this programme the role of the Managing Authority shall fulfil the Polish Ministry of Regional Development with the seat in Warsaw.

In accordance with Article 60 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and Articles 14 and 15 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund, the Managing Authority shall be responsible for:

- managing and implementing of the operational programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management;
- preparation and implementing of the supplementary document and ensuring that programme implementation is compliant with this document;
- representing the programme in front of the European Commission;
- ensuring compliance of the operational programme and supplementary document with community and national law;
- ensuring that operations are selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the operational programme and that they comply with applicable Community and national rules for the whole of their implementation period;
- ensuring that the evaluations of operational programmes referred to in Article 48(3)
- ensuring that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been validated by the controller referred to in Article 16(1) the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund;
- signing contracts with the Lead Partners and laying down the implementing arrangements for each operation,
- ensuring that there is a central system linked with Slovak system for recording and storing in computerized form accounting records for each operation under the operational programme and that the data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, audits and evaluation are collected;
- ensuring that beneficiaries and other bodies involved in the implementation of operations maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to the operation without prejudice to national accounting rules;

- setting up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of Article 90 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund;
- ensuring that the Certifying Authority receives all necessary information on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure for the purpose of certification;
- guiding the work of the Monitoring Committee and providing it with the documents required to permit the quality of the implementation of the operational programme to be monitored in the light of its specific goals;
- drawing up and, after approval by the Monitoring Committee, submitting to the Commission the annual and final reports on implementation;
- ensuring compliance with the information and publicity requirements laid down in Article 69 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund;
- setting up a Joint Technical Secretariat.

In conformity with the established implementation system, the Managing Authority shall be responsible for execution of tasks connected with payments service to the Lead Partner. On behalf of the Managing Authority, these tasks are executed, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD), by the department responsible for bank accounts services and for effecting payments (at present it is the Finance and Economics Department in MRD).

The Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic will support the Managing Authority in coordination of programme relevant activities in the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of Construction and Regional Development is responsible for payment of the state budget to the Slovak Lead partners/Partners.

The relation i.a. between the Managing Authority and the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR will be defined in the Memorandum of Understanding.

### **8.2.3 Certifying Authority**

Duties of the Certifying Authority (CA) shall be performed by the Department of the Certifying Authority at the Ministry of Regional Development of Poland with the seat in Warsaw.

In accordance with Article 61 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and Article 14 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund a single Certifying Authority of the programme shall be set up, responsible in particular for:

- drawing up and submitting to the Commission certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment;
- certifying that:
  - the statement of expenditure is accurate, results from reliable accounting systems and is based on verifiable supporting documents,

- the expenditure declared complies with applicable Community and national rules and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the programme and complying with Community and national rules;
- ensuring for the purposes of certification that it has received adequate information from the Managing Authority on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure included in statements of expenditure;
- taking account for the purposes of certification of the results of all audits carried out by or under the responsibility of the Audit Authority;
- maintaining accounting records in computerised form of expenditure declared to the Commission;
- keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation. Amounts recovered shall be repaid to the general budget of the European Union, prior to the closure of the operational programme by deducting them from the next statement of expenditure.

In accordance with Article 14 of Council Regulation no 1080/2006, the Certifying Authority receives payments made the EC. On behalf of the Certifying Authority the Department responsible for bank accounts servicing and effecting payments shall be responsible for accepting funds from the EC (at present it is the Finance and Economics Department in MRD).

#### **8.2.4 Audit Authority**

Member States participating in an operational programme shall appoint the Audit Authority (AA) situated in Poland, (General Inspector for Treasury Control – Ministry of Finance with seat in Warsaw).

In accordance with Article 62 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and Article 14 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund, Audit Authority of the programme shall be responsible in particular for:

- ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme;
- ensuring that audits are carried out on operations on the basis of an appropriate sample to verify expenditure declared;
- presenting to the Commission within nine months of the approval of the operational programme an audit strategy covering the bodies which will perform the above mentioned audits, the method to be used, the sampling method for audits on operations and the indicative planning of audits to ensure that the main bodies are audited and that audits are spread evenly throughout the programming period;
- by 31 December each year from 2008 to 2015:
  - submitting to the Commission an annual control report setting out the findings of the audits carried out during the previous 12 months period ending on 30 June of the year concerned in accordance with the audit strategy of the operational programme and reporting any shortcomings found in the systems for the management and control of the programme.

The first report to be submitted by 31 December 2008 shall cover the period from 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008. The information concerning the audits carried out after 1 July 2015 shall be included in the final control report supporting the closure declaration which is mentioned below;

- issuing an opinion, on the basis of the controls and audits that have been carried out under the responsibility of the Audit Authority, as to whether the management and control system functions effectively, so as to provide a reasonable assurance that statements of expenditure presented to the Commission are correct and as a consequence reasonable assurance that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;
  - submitting, where applicable, acc. to Article 88, a declaration for partial closure assessing the legality and regularity of the expenditure concerned;
- submitting to the Commission at the latest by 31 March 2017 a closure declaration assessing the validity of the application for payment of the final balance and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions covered by the final statement of expenditure, which shall be supported by a final control report.

The Audit Authority shall ensure that the audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards.

In accordance with Article 71(2,3) of Council Regulation No 1083/2006, the Audit Authority will prepare the report and the opinion on the compliance of the management and control systems of the operational programme with Articles 58-62 of Council Regulation No 1083/2006.

Where the audits and controls are carried out by a body other than the Audit Authority, the Audit Authority shall ensure that such bodies have the necessary functional independence.

Audit Authority shall be assisted by a group of auditors (established on the basis of the Article 14 of the European Parliament and Council Regulation No. 1080/2006) comprising a representative of each member State participating in the programme and carrying out duties provided for in Article 62 of the Council Regulation No. 1083/2006. The group of auditors shall be set up at the latest within three months of the decision approving the programme. It shall draw up its own rules of procedure. It shall be chaired by the Audit Authority for the programme.

The participating Member States may decide by unanimity that the Audit Authority shall be authorised to carry out directly the duties provided for in the Article 62 of the Council Regulation No. 1083/2006 in the whole territory covered by the programme without the need for a group of auditors.

### **8.2.5 Control Bodies**

The member state is according the Article 70 and further of the EC regulation 1083/2006 responsible for the management and control of operational programme in particular:

- ensuring that management and control systems for operational programmes are set up in accordance with Articles 58 to 62 and function effectively



- preventing, detecting and correcting irregularities and recovering amounts unduly paid together with interest on late payments where appropriate. They shall notify these to the Commission and keep the Commission informed of the progress of administrative and legal proceedings.

In order to provide appropriate funds absorption and agreements with national rules and rules of Community under the individual projects given from the side of Control bodies (Article 16 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund) the Control bodies were established in both countries.

On the Slovak side, the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development SR is authorized as the 1<sup>st</sup> level Control Body.

On the Polish side, the Ministry for Regional Development will appoint the relevant institution responsible for the 1<sup>st</sup> level control.

The key control subjects are:

1. Verification if declared expenses respond to the project items stated in the approved application (including approved changes during the implementation)
2. Verification of actual delivery of co-financed products and services
3. Verification of expenses eligibility and correctness of declared expenses from the accounting point of view
4. Verification if required expenses were duly spent
5. Verification of compliance with internal rules and Community rules (for example public procurements, public support, publicity and so on).

The verification includes administrative, financial, technical and material parts of the project.

The verification consists of administrative documents control and documents submitted by the beneficiary and also from the on-the-spot inspection, where the physical project implementation and its declaration are performed. The administrative verification will be accomplished for all projects and expenses, the verification on-the-spot will be provided on the sample projects. The implementation of administrative verification and on-the-spot-inspection will follow written procedures.

### **Irregularities**

Each beneficiary, according to the Article 20 on ERDF, participating in the project, shall assume responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure which it has declared.

All bodies participating in the Programme implementation are obliged to report to the Managing Authority on the found suspected irregularities. The Managing Authority investigates the irregularities supposed to have occurred and it hands over the ones that prove to be justified, on the basis of the findings of control, to the competent bodies in order to initiate administrative or judicial proceedings. Report of Control Bodies are always necessary to regard as justified.

Simultaneously, the Managing Authority shall immediately report, according the informing system, to the competent bodies of any justified suspected irregularities in utilisation of the Structural Funds.

### **8.2.6 Info Points**

On the Slovak side Info points will be located within two Higher Territorial Units with the seats in Prešov and Žilina regions. They will provide assistance to the JTS in carrying out the necessary tasks. Their responsibility will be mainly to inform the potential applicants about the Programme and grant fund possibilities and to assure

the consultancy to the applicants in the scope of preparing of progress reports and requests for payment as well as to co-operate in the scope of implementing the Communication action plan.

The activities of both Info points will be paid by Technical Assistance (2 part-times are foreseen).

### **8.2.7 Regional Contact Points**

On the Polish side, the JTS activities may be supported by the Regional Contact Points from Śląskie, Małopolskie, Podkarpackie voivodships located in the Marshall Offices respectively in Katowice, Kraków and Rzeszów. These additional activities will not be financed from the EU funds.

Regional Contact Points are to inform the potential applicants about the Programme and to assure the consultancy to the applicants as well as to co-operate in the scope of implementing the Communication action plan.

### **8.2.8. Joint Technical Secretariat**

In accordance with Article 14 p. 1 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund the Managing Authority shall set up a Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), which will be located on the Polish side.

The JTS office will employ the Polish and Slovak staff.

In particular, the JTS shall assist the Managing Authority, Monitoring Committee and, where appropriate, the Audit Authority, in carrying out their respective duties. Moreover it shall:

- assist the Monitoring Committee with organization and formal preparation of it's meetings;
- prepare draft minutes of MC meetings;
- implement relevant MC decisions;
- draw up reports on programme implementation;
- preparation of a pack of documents for potential final beneficiaries/applicants and ensure their accessibility;
- organise training (in co-operation with local authorities) for potential beneficiaries and give information and advice on the proper preparation of the application;
- issue a call for proposals;
- register all projects;
- provide and coordinate the formal and the eligibility assessment;
- coordinate technical project assessment process of the applications, which includes:
  - provide quality assessment assisted by regional experts
  - prepare project info sheets;
  - run the data base on the submitted projects;
  - carry out information activities and promotion on the programme;
  - perform other activities necessary to properly implement programme;
  - introducing and updating of the data in common monitoring system.

### **8.2.9. Monitoring Committee**

In accordance with Article 63 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund the Monitoring Committee is set up that shall satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the operational programme. The rules of procedure of the Monitoring Committee will define the composition of this Committee. In defining the composition of the Committee, the principle of partnership will be respected through the inclusion of competent authorities, socio-economic partners as well as any other appropriate bodies representing civil society, environmental partners and non-governmental organisation and bodies responsible for promoting equality between men and women. When members of the Monitoring Committee have an interest in a project application, they must declare this interest and restrict their participation in the assessment and decision-making concerning the project.

The MC shall comprise representatives of the Polish and Slovak sides.

At its own initiative or at the request of the Monitoring Committee, a representative of the Commission shall participate in the work of the Monitoring Committee in an advisory capacity.

MC operations shall be defined in MC Rules of Procedure.

In accordance with Articles 65 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and Article 19 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation no 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund, the Monitoring Committee shall mainly:

- consider and approve the criteria for selecting the operations financed within six months of the approval of the operational programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs;
- approve the operations/projects to be supported from ERDF;
- periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets of the operational programme on the basis of documents submitted by the Managing Authority;
- examine the results of implementation, particularly the achievement of the targets set for each priority axis and evaluation according to Art 48.3 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006;
- consider and approve the annual and final reports on programme implementation referred to Article 67 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund ;
- be informed of the annual control report, or of the part of the report referring to the operational programme concerned, and of any relevant comments the Commission may make after examining that report or relating to that part of the report;
- it may propose to the Managing Authority any revision or examination of the operational programme likely to make possible the attainment of the Funds' objectives referred to in Article 3 or to improve its management, including its financial management;
- consider and approve any proposal to amend the content of the Commission decision on the contribution from the Funds;
- following planned evaluations the Monitoring Committee may:

- take actions for removing the imperfections;
- approve the supplementary documents.

For micro projects a separate Monitoring Subcommittee shall be established. All relevant competences will be defined in SubMC Rules of Procedure.

### **8.3. Monitoring and evaluation systems**

The Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee shall ensure the quality of the implementation of the operational programme. The Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee shall carry out monitoring by reference to financial indicators and the indicators referred to in Article 37(1)(c) of General Regulation specified in the operational programme.

Data exchange between the Commission and the Member States for this purpose shall be carried out electronically, in accordance with the implementing rules of the General Regulation (Article 103(3) of General Regulation).

For the programme monitoring annual and final reports on implementation shall be prepared. For the first time in 2008 and by 30 June each year, the Managing Authority shall send the Commission an annual report and by 31 March 2017 a final report on the implementation of the operational programme.

The reports shall include the information according to the Article 67 (2) of Regulation No. 1083/2006.

The Commission will inform on admissibility of the annual and final reports according to the Article 67 (3) and (4) of Regulation 1083/2006.

Every year, when the annual report on implementation is submitted, the Commission and the Managing Authority shall examine the progress made in implementing the operational programme, the principal effects achieved over the previous year, the financial implementation and other factors with a view to improving implementation.

Any aspects of the operation of the management and control system raised in the last annual control report, referred to in Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation No. 1083/2006, may also be examined.

After the examination the Commission may make comments to the Member State and the Managing Authority, which shall inform the Monitoring Committee thereof. The Member State shall inform the Commission of the action taken in response to those comments.

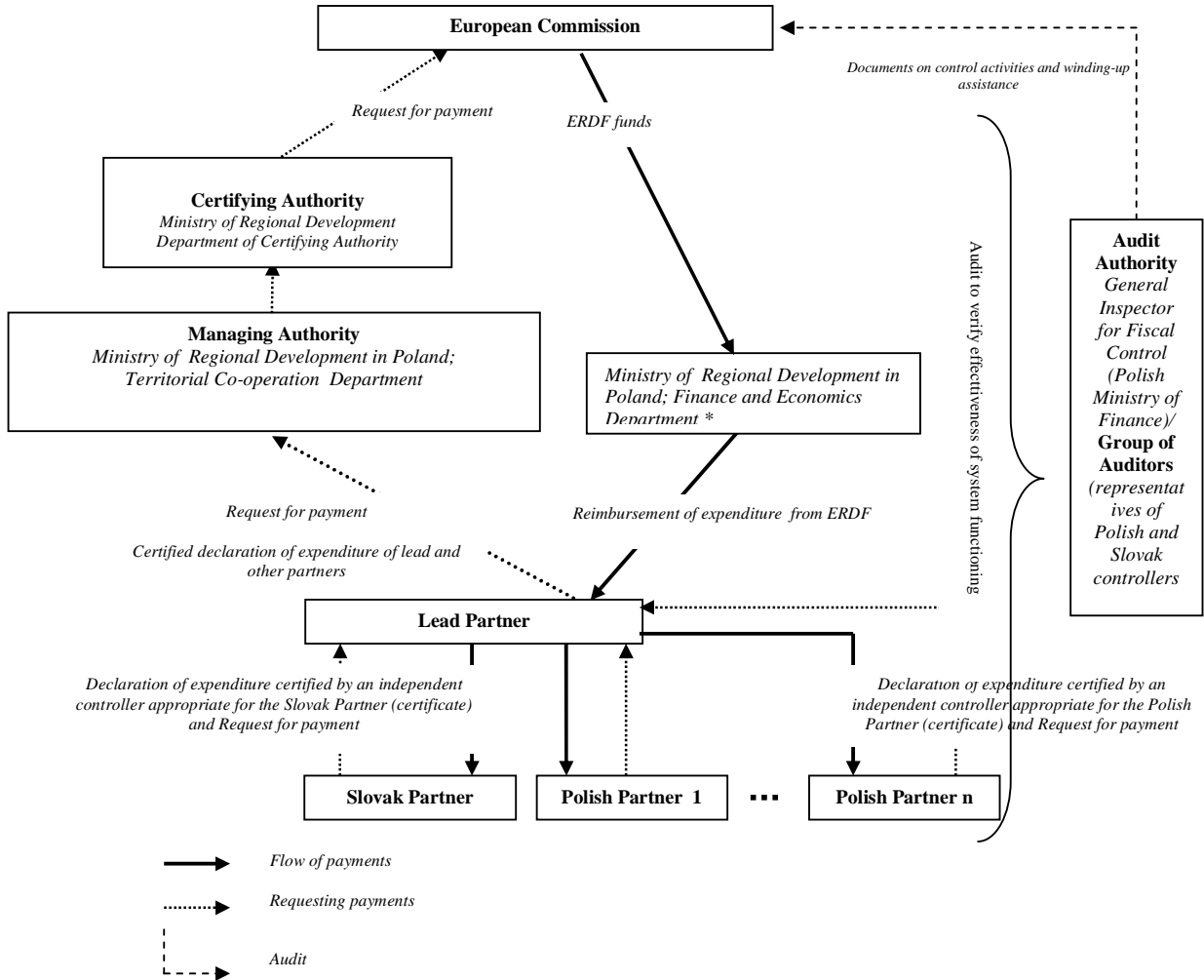
When the ex post evaluations of assistance granted over the 2000 to 2006 programming period, where appropriate, are available, the overall results may be examined in the next annual examination.

During the programme implementation the evaluations linked to programme monitoring may be made (especially when programme monitoring reports reveal departures from the goals set in the operational programme or when there are proposals to revise the programme). The Monitoring Committee will decide about such on-going evaluations and about their thematic scope. The evaluations should be made by external experts.

## 8.4. Financial management

### 8.4.1. Financial flows

The financial flows are described by the following chart:



\* servicing of the Programme's account, accepting financial resources from the EC on behalf of the Certifying Authority and reimbursement to the Lead Partner on behalf of the Managing Authority.

In accordance with the above chart, requesting payments and ERDF refunding take place in the following way:

The project partner prepares a declaration of expenditure incurred in the given period of project implementation and submits it to the national 1<sup>st</sup> level control body in order to gain a certificate. At the same time, the lead partner is obliged to have a declaration of his expenditure certified by his national 1<sup>st</sup> level control body. The subject of control is defined in p. 8.2.5 of this document.

Next, the project partner submits a request for payment together with a certificate to the lead partner.

The lead partner submits the request for payment on behalf of all beneficiaries implementing the project. The request for payment together with the result of the 1<sup>st</sup> level control which has been carried out by the 1<sup>st</sup> level control body are submitted to the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority verifies the beneficiary's request for payment together with the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> level control and makes reimbursement to the lead partner. The unit responsible for payments service to the lead beneficiary is the department responsible for bank accounts servicing and effecting payments (at present it is the Finance and Economics Department within the Ministry of Regional Development). It makes reimbursement of the ERDF funds on the account of the lead partner in question. Then, according to the Article 20 of ERDF Regulation, the lead partner transfers the ERDF funds to the other beneficiaries participating in the project.

On the basis of requests for payment (which have been verified on the basis of approved procedures) from leading beneficiaries and on the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> level control of the individual project partners' expenditures - the Managing Authority issues the Certificate and the declaration of expenditure and the request for interim payment and submits them to the Certificate Authority in the agreed time.

After verification of these documents the Certifying Authority issues the Certificate and declaration of expenditure and the request for interim payment to the European Commission.

The reimbursement from the European Commission is sent on the Programme's account (operated in EUR) which is conducted by the Minister of Regional Development in the National Bank of Poland. The account servicing is provided on behalf of the Certifying Authority by the Economics and Finance Department.

The Slovak lead or project partners will sign separate contracts for the national co-financing with the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR. The national co-financing will be transferred by the relevant institutions in accordance with the rules defined in a separate document.

In accordance with Article 17 (3) of the ERDF Regulation, if the lead beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment from a beneficiary, the Member State on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the Certifying Authority for the amount unduly paid to that beneficiary. Details concerning the mutual budgetary accountability of the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic will be regulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

### 8.4.2. Financial Control

The financial control will be provided in accordance with the Community and the relevant national legislation.

The financial control of the funds for the Operational Programme of Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic cross-border co-operation is provided by the following institutions:

<b>1<sup>st</sup> level control body</b>	
Republic of Poland	Slovak Republic
Ministry for Regional Development will appoint responsible institution for control of projects	The Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR

<b>System audits and audits on operations</b>	
Republic of Poland	Slovak Republic
Audit Authority (General Inspector for Treasury Control of Poland) assisted by group of auditors	
Treasury Control Offices in regions covered by the programme	<i>Audit and Control of International Funds Department at the Ministry of Finance in cooperation with the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR</i>

<b>Winding-up of the programme</b>	
Republic of Poland	Slovak Republic
Audit Authority (General Inspector for Treasury Control of Poland) assisted by group of auditors	

The subject of the 1<sup>st</sup> level control is defined in p. 8.2.5 of this document.

The subject of the system audits, audits on operations and winding-up of the programme made by or under responsibility of the AA is also defined in p. 8.2.5 of this document. Detailed information on management and control system shall be prepared in a separate document.

## **8.5. Application procedure, evaluation and implementation of projects**

### **8.5.1. Preparation of the application**

The applicant at the stage of application preparation should ensure that the basic requirement of the programme is fulfilled – the cross-border effect which among other things means in practice that there must be at least two partners in the project coming from Poland and Slovakia. One of the partners must be a lead partner, which is fully responsible for the project, both for content and financial side. According to European Council's regulations the partner co-operation must be based on at least two of the following criteria:

- 1) Joint development
- 2) Joint implementation
- 3) Joint staffing
- 4) Joint financing

Joint application form is to be prepared by both member states in Polish and Slovak language versions. The electronic form is available at website of Managing Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat, Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR, Info Points and Regional Contact Points.

The application forms must include among other things information concerning:

- partners
- activities and purposes of project
- financial plan
- time table
- indicators

On the stage of project idea preparation the applicants are assisted in Poland by the respective Regional Contact Points and in Slovakia by Info points.

Info Points and Regional Contact Points advise to the prospective applicants on the requirements of the programme and assist with drawing up the application form. The above mentioned institutions are acting in compliance with the Joint Technical Secretariat, Managing Authority and Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR.

### **8.5.2. Submitting of applications**

The programme provides for the system of submitting applications after announcing the call of proposals. The call is announced after agreement with Managing Authority, whereas the announcements on the call of proposals are published in the local press and on the websites of Managing/, Joint Technical Secretariat, Info Points and Regional Contact Points

The commencement and closure dates of the call must be specified in the announcement.



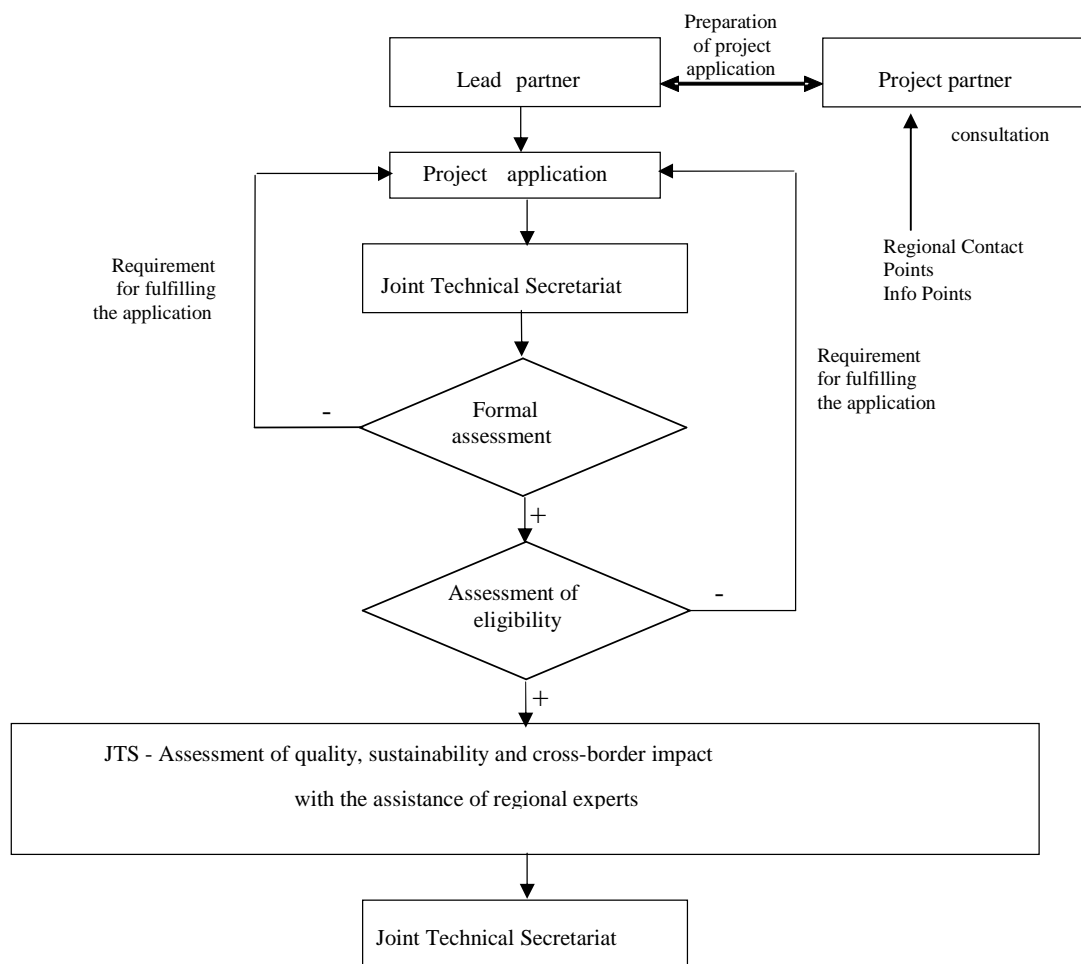
The Info and Regional Contact Points will have constant consultation with applicants. All submitted applications shall respect the lead partner principle, as a basic principle.

All Polish and Slovak lead partners' projects will be directly submitted to the Joint Technical Secretariat where they will be registered.

In the case of microprojects and networking projects – implemented in the scope of umbrella projects – the applications will be directly submitted to the relevant lead partner or project partner. On the Polish side there are the relevant Euroregions and on the Slovak side the relevant Higher Territorial Unit. The fact that different institutions are responsible for management of local initiatives will not result in any difficulties in programme implementation regarding flow of information, project's approval and coordination. Euroregions on the Polish side and Higher Territorial Units on Slovak side are relevant partners and have at their disposal professional, highly qualified human resources, which make them, on European scale, one of the most advanced and experienced units with large institutional intelligence managing cross-border co-operation funds.

A similar management system was introduced while implementing Community Initiative INTERREG III A Poland – Slovak Republic. Euroregions on the Polish side and Higher Territorial Units on the Slovak side have proven their competence, flexibility, swiftness in taking decisions and high level of professional experience at the stage of projects submitting, assessment and implementation.

### Submitting and evaluating of applications



#### Application assessment

All applications submitted to the Joint Technical Secretariat are subject to:

- formal assessment
- eligibility assessment
- quality assessment.

#### **8.5.3. Formal assessment**

In the formal assessment the following elements are taken into account: completeness of the application including annexes, and activities, minimum own contribution rate, conformity to the state aid rules, lack of duplication with other EU programmes etc.

#### **8.5.4. Eligibility assessment**

Subject of eligibility assessment is to check and verify eligibility of the project (including implementation area and eligible costs), as well as the eligibility of the applicant according to the programme document.

All project proposals not fulfilling the formal or eligible criteria have to be rejected. Applications fulfilling all formal and eligible requirements have to be subject to quality assessment.

#### **8.5.5. Quality assessment**

The applications have to be submitted directly to the Joint Technical Secretariat, which is responsible for the assessment process. This assessment will be provided by the JTS. In addition, external experts (representatives of institutions acting in the field of environment, economy, transport or occasionally of other OP interventions) can also be consulted. In Slovakia, external experts will be nominated by self-governing regions. The nominated external experts will be selected by the JTS. The JTS prepares a proposal for each application highlighting its weaknesses and strengths to provide a basis to the Joint Monitoring Committee for its decision. Transparency of the assessment process has to be ensured and any conflict of interest has to be avoided.

Technical assessment is carried out on the basis of the following technical criteria:

##### **Project impact**

- Cross-border impact and level of partnership
- Regional impact
- Cross-cutting themes

##### **Project feasibility**

- Quality and logic of project design (including indicators of achievement and implementation schedule)
- Applicant's management capacity

Budget (to what extent are the proposed expenditures necessary for the implementation of the project and correspond to the market prices?)

### **Project sustainability**

Long-term organizational and financial sustainability

As a result of technical assessment, a ranking list is prepared which is then sent to members of the Monitoring Committee. Info Sheet, constituting a summary of the project, is prepared for every project specified in the ranking list.

### **8.5.6. Decisions on co-financing and signing of the agreement**

Final approval of projects' proposals is the responsibility of the Monitoring Committee. Monitoring Committee approves the projects on the basis of internal regulations in the form of Rules of Procedure. The decision of the Monitoring Committee is final and cannot be appealed against. Joint Technical Secretariat publishes at its website a list constituting a summary of applications approved for co-financing.

On the basis of Monitoring Committee's decision, JTS informs in writing the applicants on the decision concerning co-financing. The decision on co-financing may be issued conditionally, which means that the beneficiary must fulfil a certain condition in a specified period of time.

Having received the positive decision on ERDF co-financing the beneficiary signs an agreement with the Managing Authority (national co-financing for every Slovak project shall be ensured by the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR). The agreement includes among others information on the financial amount of the project, with specification of EU contribution in specified phases of project's implementation, as well as national co-financing sources.

## **9. PUBLICITY AND THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME**

The programme publicity and information on operations will be provided pursuant to the Article 68 of General Regulation. The aim is to inform the beneficiary on the programme of cross-border co-operation and on the role of Community in Poland – Slovak Republic cross-border co-operation, in a transparent way.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 2 of the Executive Regulation, the Managing Authority of the programme is responsible to form the Communication Plan on the basis of which the information on support sources under programme will be spread.

The Monitoring Committee will be informed during its meetings on the Communication Plan implementation, on information and publicity actions.

The Communication Plan should be compliant with the Article 2(2) of Executive Regulation and contain the following data:

- objectives and objectives' programme groups
- strategy of informational and promotional activities with regard to recommendations of Community for national, regional and local level
- indicative budget for the plan implementation

- departments or other authorities responsible for Communication Plan implementation
- how the informational activities and publicity are prepared with regard to the transparency and programme compliance and Community Regulations.

The objective of the Communication plan is to provide information on Operational Programme and about European structural funds to all applicants. Moreover, its objective is to increase the public awareness on the European Union in promoting cross-border co-operation and provide transparency of mutual interventions.

The main target groups of the Communication plan are:

- regional and local administration authorities and other authorities of public administration
- economic and social partners
- Non Governmental Organizations
- European information centres
- general public in cross-border region

The range of information and promotional activities

Planned activities

- spread of information gained from all organizations participating in the programme implementation and from recipients about programme implementation requirements including continuously published results of Monitoring Committee meetings, mainly by using web pages and bulletins
- close co-operation with media in both countries (radio, TV, press) in order to spread fundamental information about support in the scope of the programme and also to present model or pilot projects.

Planned outputs:

1. The web page including:

- information on the main programme documents
- contacts to all organizations participating in the programme implementation
- actual information on programme – programme implementation state, the list of approved projects including the amount of provided support, timetable of planned actions including the dates of the Monitoring Committee meetings
- hypertext links to other web pages concerning European Union and its operation
- answers on the most frequent questions concerning programme

2. Information materials:

- brochures, leaflets, CD-ROM concerning the programme
- posters, flags and other products to promote EU

3. Information meetings and trainings:

- at least two times per year to train the target groups

It is necessary to present the information on implementation of information promotion activities in the report from programme implementation. After the programme implementation, it is necessary to elaborate the final monitoring report.

Beneficiaries are regularly informed on the regulations concerning information spreading. The monitoring process of project implementation is focused on maintenance of the regulation for the project marking.

The authorities competent for the information and promotion activities:

- Managing Authority – responsible for provision of information to potential beneficiaries on the possibilities to gain support and for the promotion of the whole programme and its results with the assistance of Joint Technical Secretariat, Info Points (on the Slovak side) and Regional Contact Points (on the Polish side);
- Joint Technical Secretariat – takes the whole responsibility for provision of information and programme promotion. It is mostly responsible for:
  - publishing complete information on the programme on the web page
  - publishing brief information on the programme in brochures and leaflets
  - development of the annual and final reports for the European Commission
  - implementation of information activities with regard to management, monitoring and programme evaluation
- Info Points in the Slovak Republic, located in the border area (supported from TA) and Regional Contact Points on the Polish side (not supported from TA) provide assistance and consultancy for project applicants

Euroregions and High Territorial Units within Priority axis III. Microprojects will be responsible for provision of information to potential beneficiaries and promotion in this field.

## **10. IT DATA AND THE PROCEDURES BETWEEN THE MEMBER STATES AND COMMISSION FOR THE EXCHANGE OF COMPUTERISED DATA**

Data exchange between European Commission and programme Managing Authority will be carried out through the information exchange system pursuant to the Article 40 of the Executive Regulation.

In accordance with art. 58 and art.60 of the General Regulation a reliable accounting, monitoring and financial reporting system in computerised form is being developed by the Managing Authority (i.e. Territorial Cooperation Department in the Ministry of Regional Development).

The system (working name Evit@) will not be based on Polish national SIMIK 2004-2006 system. It will record and store accounting records for each operation under the programme and collect data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, audits and evaluation.

The database will collect among others the following information on operations:

- project number, title and indication of the priority,
- approval date and contracting date,
- starting and completion date,
- eligible expenditure and total public expenditure,
- information on lead beneficiary and other project partners including contact details and information on bank account of the lead beneficiary,
- progress reports delivered by the lead beneficiary,

- total eligible expenditure for which applications for reimbursement have been made and total eligible expenditure declared from operation and included in the statement of expenditure sent to the Commission,
- expenditure paid in areas adjacent to the eligible area and expenditure paid outside the Community,
- payments made to the lead beneficiaries,
- information on verifications and audits.

Data will be collected in compliance with the requirements set in Annex III of the Implementing Regulation, taking into account the specificity of the territorial co-operation programmes.

In order to transfer computer files to the Commission the database administration system will have the ability to create interface files in accordance with Art. 14 of the Implementing Regulation.

It is foreseen that all modules of the system will be fully operational in December 2008.

The Managing Authority is responsible to provide input of data into the system and regularly update all documents regarding the Operational Programme.

The data exchange will be provided on the basis of electronic signature, which is pursuant to Article 5 Regulation 1999/93. The rules concerning the use of electronic signature will be determined by the European Commission.

The data considered by the Commission will be the date of sending the document to the Commission after its inputting to the system. The document is considered as sent, when it is signed with electronic signature in the system.

The expenses related to the system development are reimbursed by the Commission from the budget in accordance with Article 43 of the Executive Regulation. Any expenses, which arise during the development of cross-border co-operation between national and common system, local and common system and any expenses related to the adjustment of national and regional systems to the requirements of programming period will be legitimate expenses in accordance with Article 44 of Executive Regulation.

In the case of force majeure, system failure or insufficient connection, the Managing Authority may send the required documents to the Commission in paper form using the formulas given in appendix of the Executive Regulation (i.e.: IIa, IIb, IIIb, IV, V, VII, VIII, VIIIa, VIIIb, VIIIc, VIII d, IX, IXa, IXb, IXc, IXd a X). As the causes of force majeure cease to exist, the Managing Authority is responsible to insert the required documents into the system. In this case, the date of sending is the date when the document was sent in the paper form.

## 11. EX-ANTE ANALYSIS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION AND INFORMATION ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT

### Ex-ante analysis

The Ex-ante evaluation is aimed at improving the programme and optimizing the quality of programme implementation within the financial allocation. It was conducted by the evaluation team comprising experts specialized in evaluation methods, cross-border co-operation as well as regional development and competitiveness. The first draft report of the evaluators related to the draft operational programme of October 2006. The Ex-ante evaluation was an interactive process when suggestions made by the evaluators were being considered by the programme partners and subsequently taken into account in the preparation of the next drafts of the programme document.

The mission of ex-ante evaluation has been achieved through performing of following evaluation objectives:

1. Appraisal of the socio-economic analysis and the **relevance** of the strategy to the needs identified,
2. Evaluation of the rationale of the strategy and its **consistency**, including:
  - In-depth analysis of the objectives and priorities of the programme;
  - Evaluation of the consistency of the strategy, including the sufficiency of the allocated financial resources to the strategy proposed;
  - Assessment of policy risk in the choice of priorities.
3. Appraisal of the **coherence** of the strategy with regional, national and supra-national (pan-Baltic) policies and the Community Strategic Guidelines (incl. The Lisbon Strategy and Gothenburg Strategy),
4. Evaluation of expected **results and impacts**
5. Appraisal of the proposed **implementation system**
  - Assessment of the implementing provisions proposed for managing, monitoring and evaluating the programme, including an examination of previous experience and an appraisal of possible bottlenecks. The evaluator took into account the experiences of the implementation of the INTERREG III A and its relevance for programming of crossborder programmes in EU borders;
  - Evaluation of the quality and extent of partnership arrangements.

On the key components of the ex-ante evaluation (points 1 – 5 above) the question of the Community added value was also kept in mind when carrying out the evaluation. On all the points for evaluation, the work reflected to the level of financing of the programme.

The general opinion of the evaluators is that the Programme is a coherent programme for cross-border co-operation with well structured description of the co-operation area characteristics, objectives and priorities of co-operation as well as implementing provisions.

- The analysis of the programme area is improved, more detailed description of the problems and connections; the situation analysis is properly supported by data.
- SWOT analysis is coherent with the analysis of the programme area and the observations are mentioned in the proper categories.

- Strengthening logical relation between the problems identified and the opportunities as well as intervention areas and goals.
- The indicators correspond to the system of objectives, interventions and priorities.
- The proposed implementation chapter is in line with the relevant regulations, and therefore is supposed to be able to manage the programme.

However, a number of remarks/recommendations were proposed in order to improve the quality of the programme.

### **Main findings during the evaluation process**

The Programme strategy was assessed as compact and correspondent to prevailing needs regarding the development process of the cross - border cooperation area. The vision of Programme strategy adumbrated new challenges for cross-border regional development.

Bottlenecks were identified by analysis of economic data and with regards to the competitiveness.

In the strategic part of the Programme draft, there was no clear vision (or general objective) and mission (specific objectives) drew out, which would be achieved through implementation of the Programme.

Suggested measures (subjects) were described in general way and the distinctions between were not visible enough. In cases of subject 2.1 and 2.2 the strip lines between some measures was not clear enough.

Suggested strategy and measures described in the Programme enable the achievement of cross-border cooperation region needs and objectives as well as the implementation of the programme should increase the attractiveness of CBC region for investors, citizens and tourists.

### **Main recommendations as following have been taken into consideration during programming process:**

Complete the analysis especially in economic structure and performance (in relation to high-tech industries, services and innovation performance), human resources (employment) and tourism.

- Re-fine objectives
- Split subject 2.1 and 2.2 under priority axis 2
- Complete description of indicative activities

More detailed information about the above mentioned recommendations are included in the ex-ante report and have been considered by the bodies responsible for the preparation of the programme. Full version of the Ex-ante evaluation report is attached to the programme.

The suggestions were presented by the evaluators during the interviews with the Managing Authority representatives and concerned specific formulations included in the draft programme. The essential recommendations referring to the programme description of priorities and activities within as well as to improvement of the analysis were taken into account during the programming phase and will be kept in mind at the programme implementation phase. Interactive ex-ante evaluation process and constructive comments of the evaluators led to the improvement of the draft programme document.



## **Strategic environmental assessment**

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive) requires a formal environmental assessment of the programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The purpose of the SEA is to ensure that environmental consequences of the Programme are identified and assessed during the Programme preparation process and before its adoption.

Taking into account the specificity and scale of the European Territorial Co-operation programmes which consists mainly in strengthening of co-operation at cross-border level between partners involved, direct impact of the Programme on the environment is not likely to be tangible. However, in a long term of activities undertaken within the Programme, especially those directly related to environmental issues, may have influence on sustainable development of the Programme area.

SEA has been carried out by EKODORA (Consultancy and Engineering Office). First draft of environmental report was prepared in April 2007 and referred to the draft Operational Programme from March 2007.

## **Non technical summary of SEA**

The SEA Report contains the following information on : procedure and method of assessment, coherence of the Programme, state of the environment, results of the SEA, monitoring and conclusions and recommendations

The SEA Report has been produced in accordance with recommendations of the authorities which determine its scope on a statutory basis. The SEA discusses the structure and contents of the Programme and distinguishes the pro-environmental goals.

In its principal section it analyses possible environmental and sustainable-development-related after-effects of the implementation of the priorities defined in the Programme. All the priorities have been subject to such an analysis and, on that basis, threats which may occur during implementation of the Programme task groups have been pointed to. Moreover, the SEA contains a prospective diagnosis of the environmental condition in the analysed area. The conclusions from the SEA can be summarised in several essential items.

The Programme supports the sustainable variant of Poland-Slovakia borderland development. It has been discussed in the SEA and assessed in terms of its ecological effects. It is definitely more beneficial than traditional developmental strategies or planning documents.

The discussed area is one of the most valuable nature regions of Europe. Therefore it is justified to channel developmental priorities towards areas which do not pose a threat of environmental resource depletion or upsetting the balance between human activities and needs of nature.

The SEA analyses developmental opportunities of the borderland and points to the chance for raising the living standards of local inhabitants through development of services (including tourism), and makes this development dependent on quick improvement of municipal facilities (water, wastewater, solid waste, wider access to cheaper energy) and development of infrastructure, mainly transport.

This latter area can develop strongly in the discussed area causing certain threats to the environment (including the global one) by release of gases contributing to the global warming. Therefore the Projection points to the need to adopt various measures which would reduce undesirable effects.

A structured approach to the space is a very important aspect of the Programme area development. It will consist in reaching a final agreement on the network of protected sites and determining what limitations are applicable to that network.

The Programme presents a specific offer addressed to potential entrepreneurs and organisations (from the two neighbouring countries) operating, first and foremost, in the sector of small industry and services, including operations which would build on local resources and the opportunities of cross-border cooperation. Moreover, vast opportunities can be found in the area of social, cultural, educational and promotional initiatives. The objectives of such initiatives can be convergent with the challenges of the sustainable development.

The SEA does not see any significant threats to the environment resulting from implementation of the Programme. State-of-the-art methods of assessing the environmental impact and the impact on human health will be applied to individual projects. The threats, if any, will be eliminated by means of methods developed on a shared basis.

It was recommended to allocate a greater portion of the funds for intangible projects to prevent environmental hazards. Moreover, it was suggested that ecological criteria should be incorporated into the project selection regulations.

Hence, the results of the Programme implementation effort should include:

- Increased integration of this part of the Carpathian Mountains;
- Improved accessibility of the area accompanied by care of its natural qualities;
- Reduced water, soil and air quality hazards; improved accessibility of good potable water;
- Broadening the offer addressed to enterprise, including that consistent with the principles of sustainable development;
- Improved spatial order;
- Stimulated business activity in peripheral and rural areas.

The SEA and the Programme contain provisions aimed at reduction of possible negative after-effects of fast economic growth in the region. In particular, the point is to reduce: exclusion of valuable areas from certain forms of utilisation; separation of ecosystems (deteriorated conditions of fauna and flora existence); changes in the landscape and visual interference; occupation of recreational areas; separation of socioeconomic communities; contamination of underground and surface waters; deterioration of the water status; and occurrence of accident- and disaster-related threats.

The environmental-protection-oriented provisions of the SEA were taken into account in preparation process of the draft Programme, and the ecological arguments contained in the former will be useful for promotion of the cross-border region.

### **Public consultations**

Under the framework of the procedure concerning the preparation of the Operational Programme within the European Territorial Cooperation – the public consultation on the Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-Border Co –operation Operational

Programme 2007-2013 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (hereinafter SEA) took place.

Information concerning the invitation to public consultation was published on the web site of the Ministry of the Regional Development RP on May 7, 2007 and also through publication of advertisements in the local newspapers in the following regions: śląskie, małopolskie and podkarpackie.

The following documents: Operational Programme and the Strategic Environmental Assessment were available on the web sites of the Polish Ministry of Regional Development and Regional Contact Points in the śląskie, małopolskie, podkarpackie voivodships.

These documents were available in the seats of the mentioned institutions.

The consultation meetings with the expert and representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development RP were addressed to the societies inhabited the area covered by the Programme and they took place:

- 28 May 2007 in Katowice,
- 29 May 2007 in Rzeszów.

The table below includes information about the public consultation process within the programme eligible area.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Method of consultations</b>	<b>Subjects consulted</b>
<b>Poland Katowice</b>	28 May 2007	<p>The SEA Report has been available on the Ministry of Regional Development (Managing Authority) webpage as well as, together with draft Operational Programme, on the premises of the Ministry. Both documents were published also on the websites of 3 Marshall Offices (Małopolski, Śląski and Podkarpacki Regions).</p> <p>Appropriate note about the public hearings was published in the Ministry's Newsletter.</p> <p>Finally, information have been distributed to local / regional newspapers.</p> <p>The remarks on the draft Operational Programme were also collected via the electronic way through the form available on the web site of the Ministry of Regional Development.</p>	<p><b>Katowice</b></p> <p>Approximately 170 entities and about 150 persons from Śląskie region and Żilinski Kraj were addressed and 60 persons took part in the mentioned meeting in Katowice.</p> <p>Respondents came from public authorities and institutions, economic and social partner institutions, research and educational institutions, culture and youth institutions, rural actors and NGO's in the social, cultural and youth areas.</p>
<b>Poland Rzeszów</b>	29 May 2007	<p>Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Department of the Environmental Impact Assessment was the Contact Point (Authority) responsible for the process of the trans-boundary</p>	<p><b>Rzeszów</b></p> <p>Approximately 1900 persons from Małopolskie, Podkarpackie region and</p>

		<p>environmental impact assessment of the strategic document on the Slovak side.</p> <p>SEA report and the draft of the Programme was published at the website: <a href="http://www.enviroportal.sk">www.enviroportal.sk</a>.</p> <p>Deadline for the submission of the standpoints of the public and of the other interested authorities and organizations was until 8th June 2007.</p>	<p>Presovski Kraj were addressed and 30 persons took part in the mentioned meeting in Rzeszów</p> <p>Representatives of local and regional authorities, social and economic partners, cultural institutions, non-governmental organisations, universities and other educational institutions, etc.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>During the public consultation concerning both documents any remarks on the Strategic Environmental Assessment were received and the remarks submitted to the draft Operational Programme were taken into consideration.</p> <p>Within the determined deadline for sending the standpoints, Ministry of Environment of SR did not obtain any comments.</p> <p>The technical comments received from Polish Ministry of Environment were fully taken into account in preparation of the SEA Report.</p>		

### Monitoring of environmental effects

The Programme is structured in accordance with the principles the fulfilment of which definitely reduces unfavourable trends in changes of environmental conditions. But it is important to try and introduce organisational measures which make it possible to mitigate environmental threats, if any, related to implementation of the Programme, namely:

- Evaluation of ecological effects of the Programme implementation efforts, in accordance with recommendations presented below;
- Appropriate allocation of the Programme funds in a way that the projects of a potentially environmentally hazardous character were reduced or modified;
- Adequate architecture of the application regulations supporting the projects conducive to the environmental protection and the idea of the sustainable development;
- Broad participation of the general public in making decisions about allocation of funds for individual tasks;
- Verification of the Programme every several years;
- Setting the Programme against other strategic documents, environmental protection problems on the Provincial, Poviát and Community levels, and spatial development plans for individual provinces.

In the strategic assessment process the possible and recommended minimising, compensating and monitoring measures (matched up with given conditions) related to specific projects which may have a substantial environmental impact, can be presented.

The Programme makes it possible to mitigate, prevent, limit and compensate (in terms of the affected nature) negative environmental impacts which may result from

implementation of the document. Moreover, it prompts the stakeholders to make bilateral arrangements and introduce standardisation. Thus, the projects planned as a result of the Programme implementation can contribute to making the development more sustainable through employment of measures (characteristic for individual sectors) which eliminate or reduce the negative environmental impact.

The issue of monitoring the condition of the environment in the course of the Programme tasks fulfilment is especially important in this area, but the size of the Programme does not make it possible to introduce a separate survey and measurement system. The existing National Environmental Monitoring System of both countries (run by National Environmental Protection Inspection represented by Provincial Environmental Protection Inspection Authorities in Rzeszów, Cracow and Katowice, and branch offices in Przemyśl, Krosno, Nowy Sącz, Tarnów and Bielsko-Biała, and by Slovakian Environmental Agency) could be used. It is important to notice a very important role of those organisations in implementation of the Programme.

It should be underlined that the environmental effects monitoring will be directly connected with the monitoring of the Programme as a whole and refers to the types of actions envisaged within the Programme. In particular, monitoring will have to answer whether the measures recommended in the SEA were undertaken in case of actions which are likely to cause environmental effects (e.g. checking of the EIA reports in cases of projects, for which such reports are required).

### **Integration of SEA results into the programme**

The SEA has been produced in line with the principal challenges of sustainable development and at this stage (prior to writing down detailed tasks and decisions on the allocation of funds, and consulting the project selection criteria) it does not portend any escalation of environmental threats in the analysed area.

On the contrary, the priorities recorded therein indicate that the pressure on the environment will decrease. In particular, implementation of the specified task groups related to individual priorities should lead to:

- Stabilisation of the good aero-sanitary status in the entire area, and liquidation of local air pollution sources accompanied by certain intensification of the emissions from the means of transport;
- Gradual improvement of the water quality, including an improved access to healthy potable water accompanied, unfortunately, by worsening problems with unlimited access to water resources;
- Stabilisation of the soil, ground and vegetation quality;
- Improved structure of nature conservation;
- Gradual improvement in the waste management area;
- Improvement of the spatial order and sanitation of human settlements;
- Definite improvement of the ecological awareness;
- Introduction (to a larger extent) of pro-ecological enterprise, “green competitions” and, in particular, a qualified tourism and environmentally-conserving production (OZE, environmental science and technology, recovery and recycling) in the Programme area.

Strategic Environmental Assessment was an interactive process during which recommendations included in the report were subsequently taken into account in the draft Operational Programme. The recommendations refer to the programme

implementation phase. Any other recommendations or remarks regarding SEA document were being submitted during the public consultations process. No substantial changes were recommended to the draft Operational Programme.

SEA report was also sent for consultations to appropriate environmental authorities (including Polish and Slovak Ministry of Environment). The remarks received from Polish Ministry of Environment concerning the content and structure of the SEA report have been taken into account in the next version of the document. In general, Programme implementation will not bring significant negative impacts at the environment and the SEA assessment as well as the Ministry of Environment of SR recommends to approve the Programme, provided that the individual project will be subject to the environmental impact assessment procedure according to the national law and Directives EIA and SEA prior to being permitted or approved.

As the result of consultations and SEA process it is underlined that separate environmental impact assessments should be prepared and public consultations held for specific types of projects indicated in the report.

The analysis carried out in SEA pointed to the needs to limit the share of the physical projects in favour of the soft projects, and highlight the pro-ecological tasks in the course of the application procedure. It recommended that the Programme should have been formulated in a feasible way and should be perceived well by non-governmental ecological organisations and citizens who take care of the quality of their environment.. These recommendations were taken account in preparation of the draft Operational Programme.

The information about required environmental sustainability of the projects was added in the project selection criteria and application pack documents.

In accordance with SEA report all interventions undertaken within the Programme are expected to contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of the programme area. It should be added that interventions will also contribute to sustainable environmental development.

Sustainable development principle (understood as taking into account environmental considerations) will be treated as cross-cutting theme within the programme, appropriate information was underlined in the programme document.

This recommendation is to be taken into account in the process of selection the projects within the programme. The recommendation regards the monitoring of the environmental effects in the programme will be introduced into respective procedures.