

# Sustainable Development Aspects in Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes: The Case of Macedonia and Albania

Klodjan Seferaj<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The cross-border area between Albania and Macedonia can be considered as a region with agrarian or industrial-agrarian economy, although the overall picture should take into account significant contrasts within the region, between the two countries, but also between the southern and northern part, and between mountainous areas and lowlands. Agriculture, agribusiness, light industry, mining, energy production and tourism are the main economic sectors, which also have the biggest potential in the cross-border region. Both countries are gaining experience in EU funded cross-border cooperation programmes with other neighbouring countries and with each other. The scope of the research is the evaluation and analysis of the Integrated Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programme Macedonia-Albania 2007-2013 and its sustainable development aspects. The research is trying to assess the impact of the programme since its start in 2007 and the impact of the implemented grants on the sustainable development. The importance of the sustainable development aspect is recognized and is formally included into various national strategic documents, however implementation is often problematic and sustainability aspects need to be examined on a more concrete level. The methodology used was qualitative with research tools such as desk studies of relevant program documentation, strategic and planning documentation and other relevant published materials. The desk review considered well over 40 documents relevant to the program, most of which were shared by the Ministry of European Integration (MoEI) and other actors.*

**Keywords:** *cross-border cooperation, EU, evaluation, sustainable development*

---

## Introduction

The most important strategy to achieve the goals of prosperity and peace in the Western Balkans is through European integration.<sup>2</sup> European policy makers trust that greater European

---

<sup>1</sup> **Klodjan Seferaj** is PhD candidate in the field of public financial management, University of Tirana, Economic Faculty, Albania. Since February 2013, he is IPA Directorate Director within the Albanian Ministry of European Integration in Tirana. His principal areas of expertise include EU integration, financial management, sector-wide approach, external assistance and donor coordination. E-mail: [kseferaj@gmail.com](mailto:kseferaj@gmail.com).

<sup>2</sup> The Western Balkans refers to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro – countries which share a common perspective of European integration. South East Europe includes all of the Western Balkans, in addition to Bulgaria and Romania which joined the EU in January 2007.

involvement in the Western Balkans can have positive and long-lasting effects on the management of ethno-political conflict.<sup>3</sup> Stability is an important goal to be achieved and maintained by the Balkan countries and it is also essential for the European Union.

The European Union has invested great energy and finances in the stabilization of the Balkan countries. Through its aid programs the EU has provided more than 6.1 billion euros between 1991 and 2001 for the Balkan countries.<sup>4</sup> The EU felt that a more serious and long term approach was needed for the Balkan challenge, so the Stability Pact was established for that purpose. The crises in the beginning of the '90, and the crises in Kosovo were great experience for the European Union and a key moment for EU to understand the situation and to adapt to its needs so as to perform its role better and more effective regarding the stabilization of the region.

For the last decade the countries of the Western Balkans region have been regarded as potential candidates for EU membership. These countries are subject to structural aid and assistance by a number of EU foreign policy instruments, with the fundamental purpose of bringing these countries closer to the EU legislation, economy and values and successfully integrating them within the single market of the Union.<sup>5</sup>

The paper focuses on conducting research on sustainable development, territorial cohesion and CBC development aspects in the case of the IPA CBC Programme Macedonia-Albania 2007-13 and provides recommendations for improvement that can be taken into consideration for the next programme 2014-2020. Initial results after the first three calls for project proposals provide the first insights into the implementation of the 2007-13 Programme.

## **1. Cross-border Cooperation in Western Balkans**

From 2007 effective, financial aid and technical assistance from the EU to the Enlargement policy countries (Western Balkans and Turkey) is disbursed through the framework of a uniform instrument – a pre-accession program, called Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The main purpose of the IPA is to incorporate previous pre-accession and stabilization assistance within a single framework, in order to enhance the efficiency and coherence of the aid provided, and thus to better prepare the countries for actual membership within the EU. As of March 2014, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey are officially recognized as candidate countries, while Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Kosovo are identified as potential candidates.

The second of the five components of IPA<sup>6</sup>, CBC, applies to all IPA beneficiary countries and is intended to address activities and projects in promotion of good relations between

---

<sup>3</sup> Belloni, Roberto, 'European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 11, No 3, 2009

<sup>4</sup> Center for Research and Policy Making. The Macedonian Experience with Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes. Occasional Paper N.14. Skopje, Macedonia 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Sirakov, Pavlin Delchev, Serdon. EU Funding for the Western Balkans 2010 – 2012. A short survey on EU funding programs and instruments in the countries of the Western Balkans. March 2011, Sofia, Bulgaria.

<sup>6</sup> IPA aid is delivered through five fundamental components: I) Transition and Institution Building; II) Cross-border cooperation (I & II concern all beneficiary countries); III) Regional Development (providing support to transport, environment infrastructure and enhancing competitiveness and reducing regional disparities); IV) Human Resources Development; V) Rural Development.

regions and countries, as well as development of cross-border infrastructure, flood prevention, economic cooperation and environment problems, administrative cooperation, cultural and educational exchange, research, job creation, etc.

IPA funding for cross border activities is provided on both sides of the EU border, as well as Western Balkans internal borders on the basis of one set of rules, thus providing the opportunity for equal and balanced programming and decision-making structures between Member States and Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries.

Analysing CBC assistance provided by EU in the framework of IPA 2007-2013 as it is presented in Table 1, Croatia has received the highest percentage of funds for CBC during 2007-2013 followed by Serbia, Albania and Turkey. If we analyse the trend of funds received in 2007-2013 the total funds have increased yearly from 38.5 million euro to 66.5 million euro. In real terms Albania has registered a higher increase in funds compared to Macedonia during 2007-2013, but in terms of yearly percentage of the total funds, funds for Albania have remained the same, while those for Macedonia have decreased.

**Table 1. EU funds provided in the framework of IPA 2007-2013**

Country	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total per country	% of total
Albania	6.6	8.5	9.8	9.9	10.1	10.2	10.6	65.7	16.2
BiH	3.9	4.9	5.2	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.9	33.1	8.1
Croatia	9.7	14.7	15.9	15.6	15.8	16.1	16.7	104.5	25.8
Kosovo	-	-	-	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	11.4	2.8
Macedonia	4.1	4.0	4.3	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.2	32.9	8.1
Montenegro	3.9	4.5	4.6	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.4	30.2	7.5
Serbia	8.2	11.4	12.2	11.7	11.9	12.1	11.6	79.1	19.5
Turkey	2.1	2.8	3.4	9.5	9.7	9.9	10.1	47.5	11.7
Total	38.5	50.8	55.4	63.4	64.4	65.5	66.4	404.4	100

**Source:** Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, IPA Multi-Annual Indicative Financial Framework for 2011-2013, Com (2009) 543, October 10, 2009.

In terms of distribution of the CBC funding in 2012 compared to the number of population in 2012, it results that the funding is not provided in proportion to the size of population and size of the countries. The distribution rather depends on the previous assessed financial absorption capacity of each of the beneficiaries, as well as assessed necessity for the country's bordering regions development<sup>7</sup>. The lowest percentage of received funds is represented by Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country is much bigger in size compared to Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, but it receives the same amount of money for CBC actions as Macedonia and Montenegro, and at the same time twice less than Albania receives. In terms of CBC funds per capita Montenegro is the highest ranked

<sup>7</sup> Madzova, V., Davcev, L., Paceshkoski, V., The Impact of Cross Border Cooperation on Sustainable Development of the Bordering Areas (Case Study of Republic of Macedonia). University "Goce Delcev" –Faculty of Economics – Stip.

country with 7.17 euro per capita followed by Croatia (3.83) and Albania (3.29). In terms of CBC funds per sq.km Albania leads the list followed by Montenegro.

**Table 2. EU CBC funds in 2012 per population and surface area in 2012**

Country	CBC funds	Population	CBC funds per capita	Country surface area (sq. km)	CBC funds / country surface area (sq. km)
Albania	10.2	3.1	3.29	28,750	0.035%
BiH	4.8	3.8	1.26	51,210	0.009%
Croatia	16.1	4.2	3.83	56,590	0.028%
Kosovo	2.9	1.8	1.61	10,887	0.027%
Macedonia	5.2	2.1	2.48	25,710	0.020%
Montenegro	4.3	0.6	7.17	13,810	0.031%
Serbia	12.1	7.2	1.68	88,360	0.014%
Turkey	9.9	74.0	0.13	783,560	0.001%

Sources: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, IPA Multi-Annual Indicative Financial Framework for 2011-2013, Com (2009) 543, October 10, 2009.

World Bank indicators on population and surface area, and author calculation.

## **2. Cross-border Programme Macedonia - Albania 2007-2013**

### **2.1 Implementation of Cross-border Programme Macedonia - Albania 2007-2013**

Borders are important for Macedonia and Albania's development, because of their specific geographical shape and lengths of borders. According to the IPA Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programme document<sup>8</sup> the territory of the eligible area between the two countries covers 19,969 km<sup>2</sup>, with a total population of 1,524,674 inhabitants. The overall borderline length is 191 km with four frontier posts operating permanently and one frontier post operating occasionally.

The objective of IPA CBC Programme Macedonia – Albania 2007-2013 was to promote good neighbourly relations, foster stability, security and prosperity, and encourage harmonious, balanced and sustainable development.

The program is managed by the Operating Structures (OSs) established in each of the two beneficiary countries: the Ministry of Local Self-Government (MLSG), for the Republic of Macedonia, and the Ministry of European Integration (MoEI), for the Republic of Albania. During 2009 the OSs established a Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)<sup>9</sup> located in Struga to assist them and the Joint Monitoring Committee with their respective duties. Antenna in Elbasan

<sup>8</sup> IPA Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013 Macedonia – Albania.

<sup>9</sup> The aim of JTS and Antenna structures were to facilitate the process of planning and preparation of the application packages and Call for Proposals, assist with evaluation procedures and related documentation, facilitate grant applications process, and then ongoing project evaluations and monitoring.

was established on 1st September 2008. The contracting authorities for each country are the respective European Union Delegation (EUD) office.

The management of the program actions/grants was supervised by the JTS/Antenna, MoEI/ Technical Assistance and program managers at the EUD. During the implementation some improvement has been made to staff resources in the EUD<sup>10</sup> which is important as the EUD are overall responsible for the contracting of all grant contracts. The main issue is to ensure the cooperation between the EUDs so that the procedures for each program are identical and a unified process could be coordinated from Brussels. Reporting also has to be the same and one report instead of different reporting requirements on each side of the border.

The Program launched three Calls for Proposals during 2007-2013<sup>11</sup>. It is important to underline that there was political will and interest from the eligible partners from both sides to start with the cross border programme, but insufficient preparation and experience in dealing with such complex structure and procedures as IPA instrument requires. There was a time gap of 18 months for the 1st call and more than two years for the 2<sup>nd</sup> call for proposals, between the date of project applications submission and date of announcement of the final selection list of awarded project. In the first case the awarded small scale projects have been implemented two years after the project application submission, while in the case of the second call, over 2 million euro were lost. Those residuals were aimed for large grants over 100,000 EUR which actions might make possible development impact in cross border areas at both sides, and therefore the damage of such delay in the selection process seems to be much bigger. Although the time for selecting projects for the 3rd Call was shorter, it still lasted longer than a year.

**Table 3. Analysis of time between the publishing of three calls and signing of contracts**

Call	Date of call publishing	Deadline for application submission	Date of contracts signing
1st call	02.06.2009	04.08.2009	25.03.2011
2nd call	19.04.2010	19.07.2010	17-27.04.2012
3rd call	23.11.2011	23.02.2012	19.03.2013

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

The overall indicative amounts published under the three calls in the Albania-Macedonia CBC Programme 2007-2013 have changed during the years increasing from 1 million euro in the first call to almost 5 million euro in the third call. It should be noted the division of indicative amounts has changed during the years by providing a more balanced distribution between the two countries in the third call based also on the division of the eligible cross-border area for this programme<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> In the EUD in Albania, additional staff (acting as external expertise) have been made available with a very good system for covering each other.

<sup>11</sup> Albanian Ministry of European Integration. External Evaluation Report, IPA Cross Border Programme Between Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Albania 2007-2013. Tirana 2013.

<sup>12</sup> In the CBC programme the eligible cross-border areas are represented by Macedonia's territory with 52.5% and the Albanian territory with 47.5%, while the Macedonia's population is 50.3% (766,820 inhabitants) and Albania's population is 49.7% (757,854 inhabitants).

**Table 4. Analysis of overall indicative amounts published under the three calls**

Call	Total amount of the CfP (both countries)	Macedonia (euro)	Albania (euro)	Macedonia in %	Albania in %
1st call	1,020,000	680,000	340,000	67%	33%
2nd call	3,525,000	2,200,000	,325,000	62%	38%
3rd call	4,995,000	2,700,000	,295,000	54%	46%

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

The size of grants awarded under the three measures has increased from the first call to the other calls from a minimum and maximum of 20,000 euro and 50,000 euro respectively to 30,000 euro and 100,000 euro respectively.

**Table 5. Analysis of published size of grants between the three calls**

Measure	First Call		Second Call				Third Call	
	Min.	Max.	Small Grants		Large grants		Min.	Max.
			Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.		
Measure 1	20,000	50,000			50,000	200,000	50,000	200,000
Measure 2					50,000	200,000	50,000	200,000
Measure 3			20,000	50,000				

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

Between June 2009 and February 2012 three calls for proposals were organized for three measures: Measure 1 Economic development; Measure 2 Sustainable environment development; Measure 3 Social cohesion. The number of applications has considerably increased by 105% from 60 applications in the first call to 123 in the third call. During the three calls the highest increase in the number of applications between the measures has been registered by the measure 2 from 15 to 42 with more than 180% showing the increased interest in environmental related projects.

**Table 6. Number of applications during the three calls for proposals**

Measure	First Call		Second Call		Third Call	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Measure 1	21	35%	44	53%	46	37%
Measure 2	15	25%	21	25%	42	34%
Measure 3	24	40%	18	22%	35	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

The amounts of funds contracted for the projects during the three calls have followed almost a similar division between the countries taking in consideration the division of

the eligible cross-border area for this programme, and the division is more proportional compared to indicative amounts published under the three calls (Table 4).

**Table 7. Amounts of funds contracted during the three calls for proposals**

Call	Total amount of selected applications (both countries)	Macedonia (euro)	Albania (euro)	Macedonia in %	Albania in %
1st call	1,098,409	571,270	527,139	52%	48%
2nd call	1,252,024	662,447	589,577	53%	47%
3rd call	1,647,932	886,375	761,557	54%	46%

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

Under the 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposals 29 grants out of 60 applicants were awarded by EU Delegations from both sides of the border with a total budget for all three measures of 1.098 million euro (Albania and Macedonia together).

**Table 8. Number of awarded grants during the 1st call for proposals**

Country	Total awarded grants	Projects implemented on both sides	Projects implemented on one side only
Macedonia	14	12	2
Albania	15	12	3
Total	29	24	5

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

Under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Proposals, 16 grants out of 83 applications from both sides of the border were awarded by EU Delegations with a total budget 1.25 million euro.

**Table 9. Number of awarded grants during the 2nd call for proposals**

Country	Total awarded grants	Projects implemented on both sides	Projects implemented on one side only
Macedonia	8	7	1
Albania	8	7	1
Total	16	14	2

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals 19 grants out of 123 assessed were approved from both sides of the border, and were awarded by EU Delegations with a total budget 1.64 million euro.

**Table 10. Number of awarded grants during the 3rd call for proposals**

Country	Total awarded grants	Projects implemented on both sides	Projects implemented on one side only
Macedonia	12	12	0
Albania	7	7	0
Total	19	19	0

Source: Author's own calculations from the data on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL

**Strategic projects.** For Albania-Macedonia CBC Programme, funds for 2012 & 2013 (850,000 euro per year), were transferred to the strategic project for Lake Ohrid, "Towards strengthening the governance of trans boundary natural and cultural heritage of the region of Lake Ohrid". Funding and management of this project went under IPA Component I.

## 2.2 Sustainability development aspects in the implementation of CBC Programme Macedonia - Albania 2007-2013

When looking at the objectives and priorities in the operational programmes for cross-border cooperation, in which Albania and Macedonia participate, all of them are built on the idea of sustainability and integrated development. All of them include social, economic and environmental aspects. Participatory development approaches are inherent in the obligatory requirement that project proposals need to be developed by at least two cross-border partners. The mentioned sectors in the programmes are often regarded to as the vertical elements of the programmes within which the objectives and priorities and measures are formulated.

Proposed projects also have to comply with EU policies referring to social inclusion, gender equality, environmental aspects, accessibility, information and communication technology, which are most commonly integrated in the programmes as the horizontal policy axes. Project proposals have to comply with these objectives and policies in order to be considered for financing. The programmes provide in that sense a top-down development framework for the respective border areas with a clear indication of funding opportunities. The implementation of the programme is accomplished by projects developed by the targeted institutions (usually local and regional authorities, non-profit organisations) and funded through the respective operational programme grant schemes. In this way, bottom-up development is fostered and capacity building of the lowest levels of governance is enabled. According to the grant applicants' evaluation during the three calls, it is hard to say that any local authority in the eligible areas did not think of applying for EU grants.

The implementation of CBC programme is considered very important for both countries for to the following reasons:

- Almost the whole territory of both countries is covered by different IPA cross border programmes. These will enable total inclusion of all entities from all parts of the country while implementing it, to strengthen the human, organizational and institutional capacities to better adapt the EU practices.

- Some of the bordering regions are very poor with lack of capacities, thus, even a small amount of funds might make evident improvements with project interventions.
- The partnerships established while implementing cross border projects can strengthen neighbouring ties, or even improve the political and ethnic relationship between the two countries.
- Being an area with great potentials in alternative tourism, the bordering regions get an opportunity to develop the cross border area, through implementing small-scale projects for cultural, historical, religious and other forms of tourism, and therefore have positive impact on sustainable development.

Overall, cross-border cooperation is found in the projects and there are clear cross-border effects and impacts of many projects. The grant projects analysed fall well within the objectives of the programs, and impacts on a sectoral/priority level are therefore easier to identify and assess than cross-border impacts. Projects span from support to economic development of small infrastructure and tourism to entrepreneurship, activities focusing on eco-tourism in the cross-border region, as well as regional cooperation projects in tourism. The program beneficiaries were:

- Local and regional authorities;
- Country and regional agencies, (responsible at central, regional and municipal level);
- Regional employment agencies;
- Non-governmental or non-profit making organizations, associations and foundations (NGOs and NPOs), such as business support organizations, local enterprise agencies, development agencies, chambers of commerce, tourism agencies, ICT development agencies, educational, training and R&D institutions, producer associations, labour unions;
- Public enterprises;
- Small and Medium Enterprises;

Although many of the grant beneficiaries are experienced project implementers, many of them have never before implemented a CBC project and therefore are not aware of the specific implications. Many projects have requested a no-cost extension of the implementation period of less than 12 months for most projects seems to be too short, particularly taking into account that the grant beneficiaries, in general, have limited experience with European Union projects. As indicators are only used consistently in relatively few programmes and application forms, it is difficult to predict sustainability of the implemented grant projects. There is little experience in the region with the concept, and further training is needed for grant beneficiaries in terms of assessing and ensuring sustainability of the projects.

In fact overall understanding remains low, as most of the grant beneficiaries have conceptualized the sustainability only with regard to the financial needs. There is an expressed need to formalize the recommendations and project outcomes at institutional and policy levels and involve right from the beginning the proper stakeholders. Some grant beneficiaries have considered this fact as the most important part of the sustainability and risk management plans, so the involved project beneficiaries could take over the project results and continue the work.

When coming to the important question of the impact, it is difficult to be clearly articulated, the cross-border involvement of numerous stakeholders show that project results have impacted the sectoral and thematic developments of the program. The prospect for medium or longer term impact is generally vague.

There is still evidently low capacity for preparation and implementation of the projects among cross bordering municipalities. This is due to the fact that (a) municipalities do not have sufficient staff, (b) they do not have a specific team or unit that will operate on funds from IPA and (c) they have financial constraints, as they cannot afford to engage consultants for writing and implementing projects. Thus the leading position for the project application is usually taken by experienced NGOs which are designing project activities based on their vision and capacities, neglecting the real needs of the people in bordering areas. All this prevent cross bordering human and organizational capacities to be strengthened and sustainable partnership to be built.

### **3. Conclusions and recommendations**

Despite several shortfalls, the CBC projects should be seen as a success story, especially when considering that for all Albanian organizations this was their very first experience in dealing with EU funded CBC projects.

- Despite the fact that there were partnerships where organizations knew each other from previous activities, a general assessment can be made that there was a clear willingness to work and cooperate across the borders. The CBC projects and their related promotion activities appear to have improved overall neighbourly relationships and understanding, communication as well as the awareness of the need for further strengthening of this cooperation. Furthermore, they have raised mutual motivation for further cross border relations and future cooperation.

- All grant beneficiaries have had difficulties in complying with the financial management procedures of PRAG and VAT requirements. It can be stated that the projects represent very demanding administrative procedures. Training on and monitoring of project implementation, especially on PRAG regulations, should be offered to beneficiaries throughout the project cycle. The “help-desk” support on project implementation should be strengthened. A solution should be found with Government authorities on the VAT issue in Albania, especially for NGOs.

- All cross-border cooperation programmes in EU candidate and potential candidate countries are supported by technical assistance projects, so preparatory meetings and trainings for potential applicants are frequently organised prior to calls for project proposals. However, due to lack of either time or even expert knowledge, sustainable development and environmental protection issues could receive more attention and even additional targeted training events. A way of strengthening sustainability could be ensuring involvement and active participation of public local and regional institutions in all EU funded projects.

- The concept of CBC programmes is based on the partnership principle and a precondition or basic eligibility criteria for receiving a grant for project implementation.

However, in reality very often the more experienced partner prepares all the application procedures and leads the project implementation without a real improvement of the capacities of the other partners.

- Many of the projects suffer from weak design, while projects have clearly elaborated needs and objectives, most of them have set rather “over ambitious” objectives and results, not possible to achieve in the given context, budget or time frame.
- Sustainability of the results of these projects is questionable. It is interesting to evaluate, through other research, if any of the projects had a second phase or a real follow up after its completion. However the majority of projects generated some strong partnerships amongst the organizations involved.
- An increase in allocations to fund CBC related initiatives would be strongly recommended. CBC initiatives are generally under funded to produce a wide impact. CBC calls for proposals could be combined with similar regional development related initiatives already existing in the area under different donors funding (including EU).
- It will be recommended to limit the variety of actions that can be potentially funded under one Call for Proposal by narrowing the focus of interventions. This might increase the chances of deepening the level of interventions and impact of projects in a given area to be supported.
- Consolidated cross-border IT system with regard to PCM and M&E: the number of grant beneficiaries, the diversity of the projects that have been implemented and parties involved, do create the grounds for a consolidated and unified format of guidelines and regulations, dedicated to harmonized solutions in cases of joint activities and expected results.

## Bibliography

- Berger, G. and Steurer, H. (2009). Horizontal Policy Integration and Sustainable Development: Conceptual Remarks and Governance Examples. ESDN Quarterly Report June 2009.
- Faludi, A., 2009, Territorial Cohesion under the Looking Glass. [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/consultation/terco/pdf/lookingglass.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/terco/pdf/lookingglass.pdf) [02.02.2014]
- Faludi, Andreas (2008) – *European Territorial Cooperation and Learning -Reflections by the Guest Editor on the Wider Implications*, <http://www.aesop-planning.com/>. [http://www.sep.gov.mk/content/?id=20#.UXQ\\_q6L-FJI](http://www.sep.gov.mk/content/?id=20#.UXQ_q6L-FJI)
- [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/consultation/terco/pdf/6\\_university/7\\_curds\\_newcastle.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/consultation/terco/pdf/6_university/7_curds_newcastle.pdf) [01.02.2014]

- <http://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/7188/1/CROSS%20BORDER%20COOPERATION%20IN%20RM.pdf> [02.02.2014]
- [http://www.sd-network.eu/quarterly%20reports/report%20files/pdf/2009-June-Horizontal\\_Policy\\_Integration\\_and\\_Sustainable\\_Development.pdf](http://www.sd-network.eu/quarterly%20reports/report%20files/pdf/2009-June-Horizontal_Policy_Integration_and_Sustainable_Development.pdf) [06.02.2014]
- Madzova, V., Davcev, L., Paceshkoski, V., The Impact of Cross Border Cooperation on Sustainable Development of the Bordering Areas (Case Study of Republic of Macedonia). University "Goce Delcev" – Faculty of Economics – Stip.
- Medeiros, Eduardo, "Cross-Border Cooperation in EU Regional Policy: a fair deal?", 2010.
- Pike, A., Rodriguez-Pose, A., Tomaney, J. (2006) What Kind of Local and Regional Development and for Whom? London, New York: Routledge.
- Sumpor M. and Đokić, I. (2011), Cross-border Cooperation in Central and South-East Europe: A Croatian perspective, 3rd World Planning Schools Congress, Perth (WA), 4-8 July 2011.
- COWI-II Report – Interim Evaluation of Cross-Border Programmes between Candidate/Potential Candidate Country (Intra-Western Balkan Borders) under the Cross-Border Cooperation Component of IPA, June 2011.
- SERDON - EU Funding for the Western Balkans, 2010 – 2012, March 2011
- Center for Research and Policy Making - "The Macedonian experience with CBC programmes" Occasional Paper N.14, Skopje, 2007.
- The cross-border Program between Republic of Macedonia and Albania, 2007-2013
- Reports of the monitoring missions performed by JTS/Antenna Elbasan in Albania on grant contracts awarded under the 1st Call for proposals IPA CBC Program Macedonia-Albania
- List of Beneficiaries under the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Call for Proposals - IPA CBC Program MK-AL
- Approved action plans, and websites of MoEI ([www.mei.gov.al](http://www.mei.gov.al))
- [www.delmkd.ec.europa.eu](http://www.delmkd.ec.europa.eu)
- [www.mls.gov.mk](http://www.mls.gov.mk)
- <http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/>