

INTERREG IPA CBC Programme

Greece – The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020



Programme Manual

December 2015

Version 1.0

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Abbreviations.....	3
Glossary	4
1. Programme Overview	7
1.1 Legal basis	7
1.2 Regions participating in the Interreg IPA II CBC Greece-The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 Programme	8
1.3 Programme intervention logic and Programme Strategy.....	9
2. Interreg IPA CBC Programme’s Strategy	14
3. Management of the Programme	17
4. Financial Arrangements on Programme level	21
5. Application of De-commitment of ERDF co-financing on Programme level:.....	22

Abbreviations

AA	Audit Authority
CA	Certifying Authority
CP	Co-operation Programme
TP	Thematic Priority
CBIP	Cross Border Info Point
IPA II	Instrument for Pre Accession II
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
FLC	First Level Control
GoA	Group of Auditors
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JS	Joint Secretariat
LP	Lead Beneficiary (Lead Partner)
MA	Managing Authority
MCS	Management and Control System
NA	National Authority of the IPA Beneficiary Country
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
PA	Priority Axis
PP	Project Partner (beneficiary)
SME	Small & Medium Sized Enterprises
SO	Specific objective
RU	Regional Unit

Glossary

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, as established by Regulation 231/2014 (IPA II) and further specified by Regulation 447/2014 on the rules for implementing IPA II.

Cooperation Programme (CP) – Document submitted by the Managing Authority and adopted by the Commission, setting out a development cooperation strategy between Greece and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with a coherent set of priorities, to be carried out with the aid of IPA II.

IPA Beneficiary country – A candidate country using IPA funds, as listed in Annex I of Regulation 231/2014. For the context of the Programme: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Financing Agreement Agreement on the rules for implementation of the cross-border cooperation programme, to be signed between the IPA beneficiary country, the Commission (DG Regio) and the Member State hosting the managing authority. In accordance with Art. 6 of IPA II IR, the financing agreement shall provide the terms on which the IPA II assistance shall be managed, including the applicable methods of implementation, aid intensities, implementation deadlines, as well as rules on the eligibility of expenditure.

Shared Management - Method of implementation of the EU budget where certain implementation tasks are delegated by the European Commission to the Member States.

Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) - The JMC shall review the overall effectiveness, quality and coherence of the implementation of all actions towards meeting the objectives set out in the cross-border programme, the financing agreements and the relevant strategy paper(s). It may make recommendations for corrective actions whenever needed. Articles 49 and 110 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 concerning its functions shall also apply.

Joint Steering Committee (JSC) - According to article 39 of the Commission Regulation 447/2014, the JMC will optionally set up a Joint Steering Committee acting under its responsibility for the selection of operations. According to Article 12(1) of Regulation 1299/2013, the JSC reports to the Joint Monitoring Committee.

Managing Authority (MA) – Body designated by the Member State for managing the Cooperation Programme, in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, carrying out the functions set out in Article 72 and 125 of Regulation 1303/2013 and article 23 of Regulation 1299/2013.

Joint Secretariat (JS) – In accordance with art. 23 of Regulation 1299/2013, the joint secretariat shall assist the managing authority and the monitoring committee in carrying out their respective functions. The joint secretariat shall also provide information to potential

beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the cooperation programme and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

Audit Authority (AA) – The institution responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system of the co-operation programme. In this context, the AA shall be responsible for carrying out the functions envisaged in articles 25 of Regulation 1299/2013 and 127 of Regulation 1303/2013 and will be assisted by a Group of Auditors (GoA) comprised by a representative from each partner state in the CP.

Certifying Authority (CA) – National authority, designated by the Member State for certifying statements of expenditure and applications for payment before being sent to the Commission. In this context, the CA shall carry out the functions envisaged in article 127, of Reg. 1303/2013 and article 25 of Reg. 1299/2013.

Controllers – bodies or persons responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each beneficiary participating in the project, according to Article 23 of Reg. 1299/2013.

National Authority (NA) - The public body responsible for Programme coordination in the IPA beneficiary country.

Management Information System – The management system for recording and saving, in computerised form, accounting records for each project under the Operational Programme.

EU contribution - The amount of the eligible expenditure of a project that is financed by the European Union.

EU 2020 – A 10-year strategy proposed by the European Commission setting out the Agenda for Smart, Sustainable, and Inclusive Growth.

National Co-financing - The non-EU contribution to the projects' budget provided either by the State budget of each participating country or provided as Own Contribution by the Project Partners.

Operation – A project selected under the Cooperation Programme to deliver clear cross border benefits and to contribute to the objectives of the CP.

Beneficiary – A public or private body receiving EU contribution for the implementation of specific actions within the scope of a selected operation. The project participant, who takes the overall responsibility for the application and the implementation of the entire project, is called **Lead Beneficiary (LP)** and corresponds to the term "lead beneficiary" used in article 13 par.1 of Regulation 1299/2013.

Project Partners (PPs) - Partners participating in an operation as beneficiaries.

Amount unduly paid – Any expenditure not corresponding to delivered products or services of equal value according to the expenditure terms of the Subsidy Contract, that has been paid by EU and national contributions provided to the beneficiary.

Financial Correction – The cancellation of the entire or part of the National and Community contribution to an operation, in the context of its co-financing by the CP, which is reciprocal to the detected irregularity.

Irregularity - means any breach of Union law, or of national law relating to its application, resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds, which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the budget of the Union by charging an unjustified item of expenditure to the budget of the Union.

Recovery – The refunding by the beneficiary of the unduly paid amounts as a result of controls and audits.

1. Programme Overview

In 2007, European Territorial Cooperation became a Cohesion Policy objective, giving it more visibility, an improved legal basis and closer links with existing EU thematic strategies. Cooperation was seen as central to the construction of a common European space, and a cornerstone of European integration. INTERREG demonstrates clear European added value: helping to ensure that borders are not barriers, bringing Europeans closer together, helping to solve common problems, facilitating the sharing of ideas and assets, and encouraging strategic work towards common goals.

At the same time, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance 2007-2013 integrated under one instrument the provisions for cooperation between the two countries. Under the 'Greece - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2007-2013' Programme, joint management structures were formulated and joint projects were implemented.

Cross border cooperation policy is about establishing links across national boundaries to enable joint approach to common problems and opportunities.

The Interreg IPA CBC Programme "Greece - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020" will build on the experience of the 2007-2013 Programme and seek to promote further integration for the cross border region, allowing the capitalisation of results of past and future cooperation between the two participating countries.

The official language of the Programme is the English language. Additionally, the national languages of the participating countries can be also considered as working languages.

1.1 *Legal basis*

The IPA II regulation came into force on 16 March 2014 and is applicable retroactively from 1st January 2014. The **IPA II regulation 231/2014** is complemented by the **Common Implementing Regulation (CIR) 236/2014**, which is a set of simplified and harmonised implementing rules and procedures for all external action instruments, as well as the **IPA II Implementing Regulation 447/2014** adopted by the Commission on 2 May 2014.

1.2 Regions participating in the Interreg IPA II CBC Greece-The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 Programme

According to Article 30.a) of the IPA II Implementing Regulation (447/2014), for the purposes of cross-border co-operation between one Member State and one beneficiary country, the eligible areas for financing shall be NUTS III level regions along borders taking into account potential adjustments needed to ensure the coherence and continuity of the cooperation action, established for the 2007-2013 programming period; Hence 9 NUTS III regions along the border of the two countries, Florina, Pella, Kilkis and Serres, Thessaloniki on the Greek side and Pelagonia, Vardar and Southeast and Southwest from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, are included in the eligible area.

Total population of the Programme area is 2,366,750 people. The total area covers 29,259 km² , 14,422 km² in Greece and 14,837 km² in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

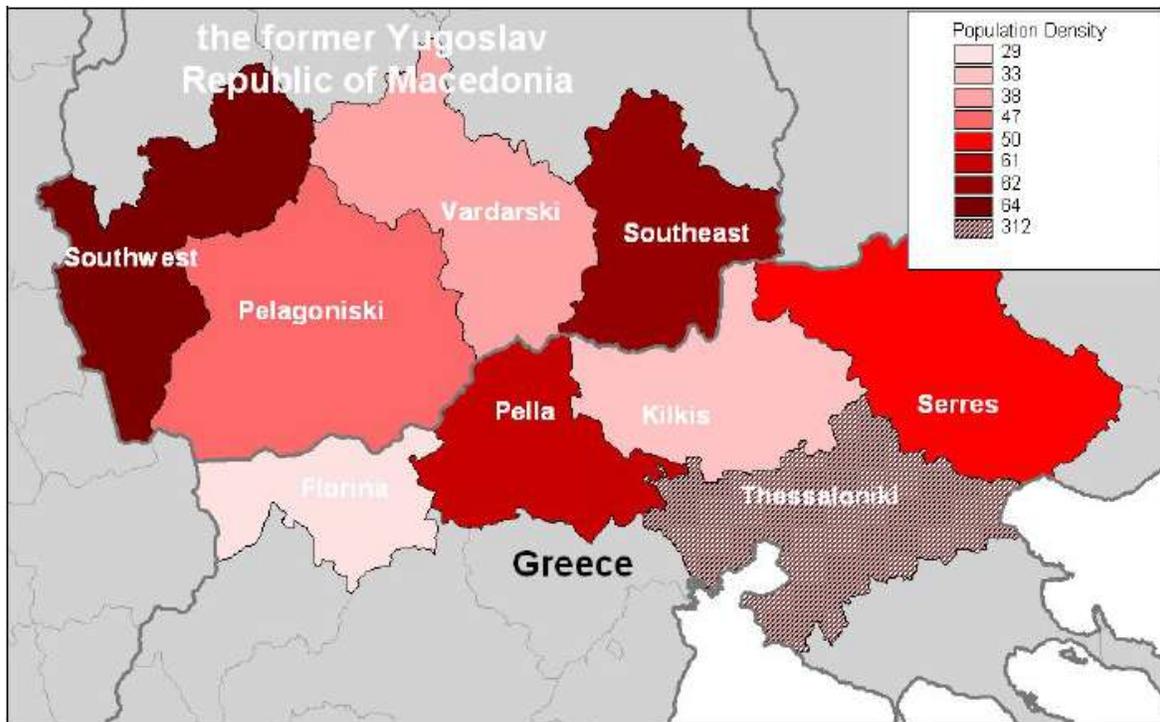


Figure 1: The Eligible Programme Area

The Programme covers the following eligible regions:

TABLE 1: ELIGIBLE AREA	
NUTS III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.U.THESSALONIKI • R.U.KILKIS • R.U.FLORINA • R.U.SERRES • R.U.PELLA • R.U.VARDAR • R.U.PELAGONIA • R.U.SOUTHWEST • R.U.SOUTHEAST

1.3 Programme intervention logic and Programme Strategy

Based on the needs and challenges identified in the ex-ante evaluation exercise, the following overall strategy is defined for the Interreg IPA CBC Programme "Greece- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020":

"to enhance territorial cohesion by improving living standards and employment opportunities holding respect to the environment and by using the natural resources for tourism "

In addition, four IPA thematic priorities (TPs), were selected as most relevant for the cross-border area and in line with the overall strategy. These priorities are:

TP a: Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of immigrants' communities and vulnerable groups; investment in public employment services; and supporting investment in public health and social services;

TP d: Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage

TP c: Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructure by, inter alia, reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities

TP b: Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management

The intervention logic dictates that the actions supported by a programme should clearly contribute to the strategy of this programme. To serve this goal, **the intervention logic leads to the establishment of two priority axes and:**

- the definition of specific objectives related to the Priority Axes and within the context of the Cross-border Area;
- specifying the desired change sought i.e. the expected results;
- deciding how to measure these results – identification of result indicators and setting of targets for these indicators;
- the recommendation / specification of types of actions to be undertaken to achieve these results;
- deciding how to measure the outputs of actions– identification of output indicators and targets for these indicators.

A summary of the relationship between IPA Thematic Priorities, Priorities, Specific Objectives and expected results is illustrated in the following chart:

IPA Thematic priorities (TO) / Programme Budget allocation (%)	Priority axes	Specific Objectives	Expected Results	Output Indicators	Result Indicators
<p>Thematic priority a: Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders</p> <p>25% of Programme Budget</p>	<p>Development and Support of Local Economy</p> <p>Priority Axis 1:</p>	<p>1.1 Create employment opportunities for educated graduates by exploiting comparative advantages of the crossborder area, preferably with the use of innovative tools and practices</p>	<p>Job creation, mobility of workers in the CB area, networking of SMEs, entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Nr of participants in joint local crossborder employment initiatives</p>	<p>Highly educated in employment, including self employment 6 months upon leaving the project/intervention</p>
		<p>1.2 Improvement of preventive health care and social services of children and elderly population</p>	<p>Improvement of social inclusion and living conditions with a focus in the rural CB areas</p>	<p>CO36 Population covered by improved health services</p> <p>Population covered by improved social services</p>	<p>Population having access to health services</p> <p>Population having access to social services</p>
<p>Thematic Priority d: Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage</p> <p>15% of Programme Budget</p>		<p>1.3 Improve the attractiveness and promote tourism in the cross-border area to enhance employment in tourism</p>	<p>Creation of employment by increasing the scope of the touristic product and promotion of links with other sectors</p>	<p>Number of enterprises participating in cross-border joint projects</p>	<p>Jobs created in the tourism sector</p>

IPA Thematic priorities (TO) / Programme Budget allocation (%)	Priority axes	Specific Objectives	Expected Results	Output Indicators	Result Indicators
Thematic priority c: Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructure 30% of Programme Budget	Priority Axis 2: Protection of Environment - Transportation	2.1 Upgrade public infrastructure to improve road travel time, safe border crossing and promote energy efficiency towards green transport	Improved mobility and integration of the Cross-border area with respect to the environment.	Surface of improved cross-border road and infrastructure CO32: Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings CO34: Estimated annual decrease of GHG	Reduced travel time Average border crossing travelling time Energy efficiency awareness barometer
		2.2 Sustainable management and recycling of bio-wastes	Improvement of wastewater, solid waste and liquid waste treatment	Volume of solid wastes under improved management or recycling Volume of liquid wastes under improved management or recycling	Population served by improved waste management or recycling

IPA Thematic priorities (TO) / Programme Budget allocation (%)	Priority axes	Specific Objectives	Expected Results	Output Indicators	Result Indicators
Thematic priority b: Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management 20% of Programme Budget		2.3 Sustainable management of protected areas, ecosystems and biodiversity	Conservation of environmental resources, protection of the fauna and flora of the Programme Area	CO23: surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status Surface area of rehabilitated or with improved management ecosystems	Surface area of ecosystems or habitats with improved protection and conservation status
		2.4 Prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, risks and hazards	Improvement of the capacity and readiness to tackle natural disasters	CO20: Population benefiting from flood protection measures CO21: Population benefiting from forest fire protection measures Number of participants in prevention actions	Population benefiting from risk/hazards prevention and natural disaster management measures

2. Interreg IPA CBC Programme's Strategy

The full Programme strategy is outlined in the Cooperation Programme document. As mentioned earlier, the elaboration of the Strategy involves the specification of objectives and the implementation of actions. Indicative actions for the specific objectives are as follows:

Priority Axis 1: Development and Support of Local Economy

SO 1.1 Create employment opportunities for educated graduates by exploiting comparative advantages of the cross-border area, preferably with the use of innovative tools and practices. Indicative actions include:

- Initiatives to encourage support of unemployed and self employed or managers to innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship
- Awards on innovative ideas
- University Students' mini-companies (competitions)
- Support to joint market initiatives and networking, incl. promotion and marketing campaigns for entrepreneurs
- Networking of public services, authorities and nongovernmental initiatives for the exchange of know-how and the support of employment and entrepreneurship

S.O 1.2 Improvement of preventive health care and social services of children and elderly population. Indicative actions include:

- Mobile and other health services and social care for children and elderly habitants of remote areas
- Elaboration of ICT, telemedicine and smart applications related to health and social care
- Communities development initiatives to support social and family care;
- Cross-border initiatives for promotion of health and well-being of children;
- Promotion of people's participation in social care
- Preventive health Programmes
- Supply of equipment for health care and social care

S.O. 1.3 Improve the attractiveness and promote tourism in the cross-border area to enhance employment in tourism. Indicative actions include:

- Joint actions on potential niche tourism activities and/or on the demand for new tourist destinations and experience;
- ICT applications promoting sustainable tourism and international branding
- Joint activities to identify tourist products with potential for cross-border branding;
- Development of local brands based on natural and cultural heritage of the region;
- Visualization of local brands, incl. 3D visualization, mobile applications, social networks, tailor-made internet platforms, and other innovative tools;
- Development of sustainable and responsible tourism potential of the cross-border region, through innovative and quality tourism products
- Expansion of touristic season as well as increase of senior tourism
- Planning of integrated actions to support the creation of jobs and enterprises to promote tourism and protect environment in the cross-border area

Priority Axis 2: Protection of Environment – Transportation

S.O. 2.1 Upgrade public infrastructure to improve road travel time, safe border crossing and promote energy efficiency towards green transport. Indicative actions include:

- ICT systems and equipment to improve check point services and facilities
- Improving cross-border road access and mobility with targeted interventions of small scale infrastructure
- Improving cross border custom and safety infrastructure and equipment
- Improving energy efficiency of public buildings and infrastructure
- Small scale investments in energy efficiency, in check point facilities and public buildings of cross- border area, including joint awareness initiatives for energy efficiency.
- Integrated solutions for reducing the carbon footprint of road facilities and transport in the cross-border area

Interventions within specific objective 2.2 are related to demonstrative actions while the improvement of existing infrastructure is not foreseen within the framework of the Programme.

S.O. 2.2 Sustainable management and recycling of bio-wastes. Indicative actions include:

- Monitoring, early warning and decision support systems for the sustainable management of waste
- Green waste management and recycling
- Recycling and improving of resource efficiency through the pilot use of wastes in composting and biogas production
- Sustainable management and recycling of solid and liquid bio-degradable wastes using eco-friendly techniques and processes
- Development of processes and demonstration units for managing food and kitchen waste from households, restaurants caterers and retail premises

S.O. 2.3 Sustainable management of protected areas, ecosystems and biodiversity.

Indicative actions include:

- Management, conservation and restoration actions of protected areas, vulnerable and threatened ecosystems
- Water resources vulnerability assessment and mitigation measures
- Rehabilitation of degraded soil ecosystems and conservation of soil biodiversity
- Interventions for the conservation of threatened or indigenous species of flora and fauna
- Reducing the environmental footprint of human activities through sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services
- ICT applications in environmental protection, monitoring and management
- Networks of cooperation for environmental education, awareness and volunteering

S.O. 2.4 Prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, risks and hazards.

Indicative actions include:

- Improving the operational efficiency of public administration and public services in natural disasters management
- Mobilization of citizens and support of volunteering to increase disaster resilience and emergency preparedness
- Cross-border networks of co-operations for the effective prevention and management of natural disasters, and climate related risks and hazards
- ICT systems for early warning and risk management

3. Management of the Programme

The Cooperation Programme will be implemented under shared management. As such, the Member State and the Commission shall be responsible for the management and control of the Programme in accordance with their respective responsibilities as provided for in Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

Articles 73 and 74 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 concerning the responsibilities of the Member States under shared management shall apply to the Member State where the managing authority is located. Article 75 of the same regulation concerning the powers and responsibilities of the Commission under shared management shall apply.

As a general rule, the Managing Authority (MA) takes over the responsibility for implementation of the programme. The overall implementation of the programme is based on the structures mentioned in Section 5.4. of the Cooperation Programme and consists of:

The **Managing Authority**, which is responsible for managing and implementing the Programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and for coordinating the other Programme Bodies.

The Joint Secretariat is set up under the legal responsibility of the managing authority. The two bodies work closely together. Under the MA's supervision, the joint secretariat assists the managing authority and the monitoring committee in carrying out their respective functions. The joint secretariat shall also provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the cooperation programme and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

The **Certifying Authority**, which is responsible for certifying statements of expenditure and applications for payment received by the MA before being sent to the EC, as well as for receiving payments from the EC and making payments to the Lead Beneficiary.

The **Audit Authority** shall be responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system of the Programme and on an appropriate sample of projects and relevant sampling methodology.

The **Joint Monitoring Committee** is the main decision body of the Programme. The JMC is responsible for monitoring the Programme's implementation and reviewing the Programme's overall effectiveness towards meeting its objectives.

The body is composed of members of both partner countries. Representatives of the MA, NA, regional governors, mayors, NGOs, etc. may be members. The JMC is co-chaired by senior representatives from the two countries. The Greek side of the JMC is established with an Order of the Greek Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism. The Minister of Local Self Government appoints the members of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The **Joint Steering Committee**. According to article 39 of the Commission Regulation 447/2014, the JMC will optionally set up a Joint Steering Committee acting under its responsibility for the selection of operations. According to Article 12(1) of Regulation 1299/2013, the Joint Steering Committee shall report to the Joint Monitoring Committee. JSC has a decisive role in the programming process defining the priorities and areas of intervention and goals of the programme. JSC at its meetings or by written procedures approves the selection of projects, on the basis of the preliminary technical evaluation carried out by the JS. The JSC is also responsible for examining certain substantial changes in the projects' contents during implementation.

STRUCTURES IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

National Authority of the IPA beneficiary country

The Territorial Cooperation Management Operating Structure within the Ministry of Local Self Government is the designated body in charge of the programme coordination in the IPA beneficiary country. The competencies and responsibilities of the National Authority are as follows:

- Supporting the MA and JS in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme;
- Organising procedures for the signature of the bilateral Agreement between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (if applicable)
- Coordinating the appointment of members of the JMC on behalf of the IPA beneficiary country
- Coordinating the appointment of First Level controllers to project partners in the IPA beneficiary country
- Co-Chairing Monitoring Committee meetings

- Coordinating the logistics (venue, catering, etc.) of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) meetings when taking place on the IPA beneficiary country
- Providing information about the programme and the calls for project proposals to potential applicants and beneficiaries as well as ensuring compliance with the information and publicity requirements
- Participating in the evaluation committee responsible for the recruitment of JS staff in the JS main office and in the JS Antennae Office.

National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC)

The NIPAC shall be the main counterpart of the Commission for the overall process of: strategic planning, coordination of programming, monitoring of implementation, evaluation and reporting of IPA II assistance.

Members of the Group of Auditors

According to Article 2 and 3 of the National Law on Audit of Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), a single Audit Authority has been established for IPA Programmes.

The General IPA Auditor is the designated member in the Group of Auditors. Its operating assets are provided from the Budget of the IPA beneficiary country. The General IPA Auditor is appointed by the government with a nine years term of office.

When planning its activity, selecting methods and implementing the audit programme, the General IPA Auditor acts independently. For the overall programming period the General IPA Auditor plans to fulfil the audit activities using its own internal resources and will not rely on the work of other auditors and/or audit bodies.

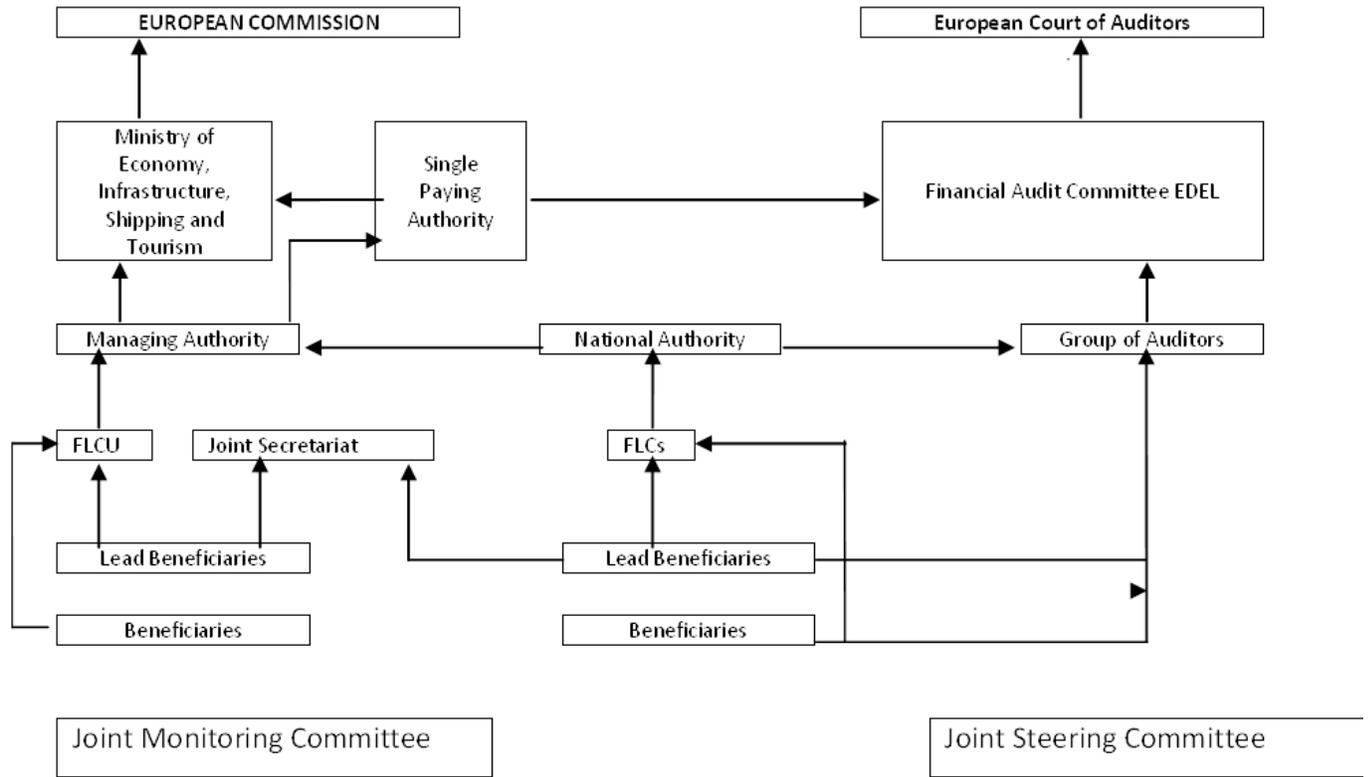
Personal independence of the staff in the performance of their tasks is ensured through signing of Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality. The body's employees abide to the ethics standard set in the IFAC Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants and INTOSAI Code of Ethics.

In applying the audit procedures, the General IPA Auditor considers international audit standards ISSAI and European Commission Guidelines.

The General IPA Auditor shall set its own Rules of procedure.

Antenna of the Joint Secretariat An antenna of the Secretariat may be established in the IPA beneficiary country. The role of the Antenna will be focused at the national level. In particular, it shall support the Programme's communication strategy and the Programme's potential beneficiaries and project partners in their activities.

Subordination Chart of Management, Control and Implementation Actors in the Interreg IPA CBC Greece – The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 Programme



4. Financial Arrangements on Programme level

Approved on the 6/8/2015 by the European Commission, the Interreg IPA II CBC Greece-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 has a total budget of **€45.470.066**. The total financing consists of **€38.649.552**(85%) ERDF funding and **€ 6.820.514**(15%) national contribution and national co-financing rates are common for both countries.

5. Application of De-commitment of ERDF co-financing on Programme level:

At the beginning of every year, the Commission allocates a certain amount of ERDF to the Interreg IPA CBC programme. The annual allocation must be spent within 2 years following the year of commitment. If, at the end of 2 years, the annual allocation is not spent, the corresponding ERDF budget will be lost (= de-committed). If this loss results from certain projects lagging behind their spending targets, the programme will be obliged to reduce the budget of these projects.

The first year of potential decommitment for the Interreg IPA CBC Programme is 2017.

All the amounts connected to a financial commitment, which are not covered by pre-financing or by a request for payment within a defined period shall be de-committed.

The exception of the de-commitment concerns part of the budget commitment for which:

- The operations are suspended by administrative appeal or legal proceeding; or
- The payment request has been delayed for reasons of force majeure, seriously effecting programme implementation.

The commitment related to the last year of the period shall be subject of de-commitment according the rules to be followed for closure of the Programme.