Cross Border Co-operation between Bulgaria & Romania

2006 Project Fiche for People to People actions
Joint Small Project Funds

1. Basic Information

1.1 CRIS Number: BG 2006/018-386.01.02
1.2 Title: People to People actions through Joint Small projects Fund
1.3 Sector: Regional Development
People to people (99810)
1.4 Location: Bulgarian-Romanian Border Region
(Bulgarian districts: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven, Ruse, Dobrich and Silistra)
1.5 Duration 12 months
Contracting Deadline: 30/11/2008
Contract Execution Deadline: 30/11/2009

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective:
The overall objective of the project is to strengthen co-operation between the communities on either side of the border in economic development, living conditions and on-going contact in order to help them to overcome specific development problems resulting from their relative isolation in the framework of national economies.

2.2 Project purpose:
Encouraging and supporting regular interaction between the communities on either side of the border and thus further development of the economic and social cohesion of border regions, in line with sustainable development principles, promoted through People to People Actions (Priority 4).

2.3 Accession Partnership and NPAA priority
The People to people actions play a key part in the process of preparation of the Romania and Bulgaria for accession to the EU, in particular through the improvement of the administrative capacity of local/regional actors.
This project is part of a process of creating “integration-minded” border regions. The project represents thus an important element in the preparation of Romania and Bulgaria for the adoption of Structural Funds.
People to people actions directly contribute to the removal of existing disparities between the two border regions, to their economic, social and cultural cohesion development and thus to their gradual development alignment. This is particularly
important in view of future integration into the European Union. Full membership will require the approximation of levels of economic activity and living standards, in particular in border regions, in order to avoid undue problems connected to the removal of borders and the introduction of the principle of free movement. Also, “People to people actions” contribute to achievement of the following overall objectives of the Chapter 21 Regional Development of the NPAA:

- Improvement of co-ordination between authorities, increase of national, regional and local level administrative capacities;
- Decentralisation in the field of regional policy.

2.4 Contribution to National Development Plan

The proposed project is in line with the National Economic Development Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria over the 2000-2006 period, and namely with priority 4 “Developing Cross-border Cooperation” under the indicative programme for “Balanced and Sustainable Regional Development”. The Bulgarian Government has planned to actively support and complement the EU initiatives and programmes for cross-border cooperation, while seeking to incorporate the latter into the national framework for regional development planning and programming. The NEDP aims at achieving sustainable development of the entire border region rather than of some individual border areas. The main goal pursued under the above mentioned priority area refers to opening up new horizons, fostering the socio-economic development of the border areas and gradually overcoming the problems resulting from their isolated position at the country’s periphery.

2.5 Cross Border Impact

The People to people actions will support small-scale activities across the borders, according to the fourth priority set up in the Romania-Bulgaria Phare CBC Joint Programming Document 2003-2006, aiming at strengthening existing people-to-people co-operation and new cooperation arrangements across the border, initiated in the fields of:

- Economic development and cooperation
- Human resources development and local employment
- Flow of information and raising of public awareness on cross-border co-operation affairs and on the process of European integration
- Cooperation in health
- Cultural co-operation and exchanges, youth meetings, linguistic education and educational activities for institutions and individuals involved in local/regional development, in local government and in organisations of public interest
- Sport and leisure, local democracy

The People to people actions provide a flexible approach to funding smaller-scale actions, which are defined on the basis of local/regional needs, have a cross-border impact and encourages the development of linkages between the communities’/organisations/ institutions on both sides of the border. People-to-people co-operation projects raise the awareness of common concerns and chances across the border region and strengthen the positive attitude towards co-operation in solving common concerns and utilize potentials. All applicants have to justify their project proposals in terms of relevance to the common development priorities and measures detailed in the
Joint Programming Document. The "people-to-people” aspects of the individual projects and the general direction of the fund guarantee a high degree of cross-border relevance of the scheme.

All projects financed by the People to people actions will focus on personal and communal contacts across the Bulgaria – Romania border, facilitating productive “people to people” contacts between the persons living in the cross-border region and encouraging development of linkages between the communities’ organisations and institutions on both sides of the border. Funds are seen as ideal mechanisms for the "maturing” of cross-border co-operation through allowing greater possibilities for the definition and preparation of joint projects.

The current People to people actions project is fully in line with the priorities that are indicated in the JPD 2003-2006 / Programme Complement 2005-2006 and follows on directly from the support and methodologies developed since 2000.

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:

The Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2760/98 stated that Phare Cross-Border Co-operation Programmes are extended to Phare-Phare countries starting with the year 1999, enabling the Romanian-Bulgarian border region to be eligible for regular Phare CBC support. This first programme with Bulgaria has been focused on investment for major infrastructure projects of common interest in the transport and environment sectors, contributing this way to accession preparation.

With a view to strengthen the local cross-border co-operation of the two border regions, Romania and Bulgaria decided in early 2000 to start to implement a JSPF. The People to people actions project included within the 2000 Phare CBC Programme Romania-Bulgaria supported the key objectives of the Romanian-Bulgarian co-operation, namely to help the border regions to overcome specific development problems resulting from their relative isolation in the framework of national economies. The procedures for the management and implementation of the People to people actions project 2000 have been prepared and implemented. The successful implementation of JSPF schemes demonstrated that the fund approach is an efficient mechanism to address small-scale intervention and led to a yearly approach of such schemes.

The Phare 2006 People to people actions follow similar operations carried out under the 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 Phare CBC programmes. (Phare allocation for each border region of 0.5 MEUR for 2001 and 2002, and 0.8 MEUR for 2003, 2004 and 2005). Approximately 15 projects received support each year on each border. Their success has greatly contributed to the positive image that the Phare Programme enjoys among the population in the target region.

The inclusion of the People to people actions project into the programme is a logical step forward in the overall context of Romania and Bulgaria future accession to the EU, and in the specific context of the development of cross-border co-operation and evolution of the Phare CBC Programme to a Structural Funds approach.

The present scheme will finance under Joint Small Project Fund “soft” projects: business co-operation, enterprise development, technology transfer and marketing for
small and medium size enterprises, training, employment, measures for health and cultural exchanges, improvement of information flow and communications between border regions etc.

In order to reach a sufficient impact, these schemes need to be implemented in a multiannual perspective. This measure will stimulate regular interaction between the communities on either side of the border, encouraging local involvement and implementation of small-scale actions that constitute the basis for larger cross-border co-operation projects. Bringing people, communities, civil society and economic actors of the border area closer to each other, the project aims at establishing a sound basis for balanced economic and social development in both countries. Co-operation with similar institutions will enable design and implementation of common projects in the cross-border region. An integrated approach is a prerequisite for ensuring sustainable development in the border area by promoting sustainable economic measures. Knowledge about each other among the inhabitants of the border regions will contribute to a smooth integration between them after the accession into the EU

3.2 Sectoral rationale:

N/A

3.3 Results:

The expected overall result is the development of an economically, socially and culturally integrated border region through enhanced cooperation between the communities on either side of the border.

Specifically, the following results are expected to be achieved:

- Small-scale “people-to-people” actions agreed and implemented in the border regions in the field of economic development, environment, tourism, local employment, cultural exchanges, local democracy, planning and development studies, etc.
- Small-scale projects in the fields mentioned above, agreed with the counterpart according to the People to people actions package rules and guidelines;
- Increased level of public awareness and information on cross-border co-operation affairs and on the process of European integration;
- Encouraged involvement of the Bulgarian and Romanian local stakeholders in the Phare CBC Programme;
- Permanent cross-border structures and partnerships created among the local organisations, further developed and strengthened;
- Increased and strengthened capacity of Bulgarian and Romanian local and regional organizations to prepare adequate cross border projects in the context of Phare CBC
- Cross-border links created among the local and regional organizations/institutions in the border region

3.4 Activities
The People-to-People measure is primarily aimed at encouraging cross-border contacts and co-operation at regional and local level, mainly in the fields of socio-economic development, environment, tourism, planning and development studies, cultural exchanges and support to local democracy as well as institution building. The JSPF will continue to pay particular attention to the support of small-scale actions that bring people and institutions together in their joint efforts to develop the cross-border area.

Priority areas
The Fund will support small-scale people-to-people actions in the following priority areas:

- **Economic Development**: support for small projects that enhance the economic base of the border region. For example proposals for the development of small-scale enterprises, marketing initiatives, markets, exhibitions and advertising events as well as the creation of cross-border co-operation structures and partnerships among supporting organisations;

- **Environment**: drafting of studies, assessment of problems, environmental training, actions aiming at increasing public environmental awareness;

- **Tourism**: studies, planning, institutional strengthening measures, specific SME training and related HRD programmes;

- **Cultural Exchanges**: meetings and exchanges between youth, artistic and cultural groups with an emphasis on the maintenance of traditions and long-term co-operation;

- **Local Democracy**: support for local and regional public administration and other elements of a democratic society (chambers of commerce, trade associations, trade unions, NGOs). Relevant training courses and information will be provided supporting exchange visits, project preparation and procedural matters. Joint projects may also involve the elaboration of materials for distance learning and so forth. Exchange of know-how and experience in education at various levels will also be supported.

- **Planning and Development Studies**: projects can be supported that create the preconditions for joint planning in a border region, for framing joint research programmes, for drawing up joint strategies for regional development in a border area with the aim to jointly define the development priorities and so forth. Development of project applications and feasibility studies are also included.

The project will support:

- **Financing of selected small-scale People-to-People projects** (projects are located in the Romanian and Bulgarian border region, or contribution to common Romanian-Bulgarian projects) (Phare contribution 0.744 MEUR and co-financing 0.056 MEUR)

- **Administrative costs for operating the fund**.

Up to 7% of the PHARE contribution (maximum 0.056 MEUR, Phare contribution) may be used for expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance.
General Criteria for Eligibility

In general terms the eligible actions in the framework of the JSPF should meet the following conditions:

- Have a strong and evident cross-border nature (joint projects, especially where co-financed jointly by Romanian and Bulgarian project partners, will be particularly encouraged),
- Contain realistic and transparent financial provisions,
- Be ready for implementation,
- Be of a value within the range of maximum € 50,000 and minimum € 10,000,
- Availability of co-financing. Minimum co-financing will be 10% of the cost of projects to be borne by the organization submitting the project proposal,
- Under no circumstances be in contradiction with the long-term national development plans and those of the municipality or the region (projects that are part of an overall strategy/plan for the development of the region/town/municipality will receive priority),
- If possible, contain innovative approaches (e.g.: pilot projects)

On this basis the Bulgarian and Romanian implementing authorities will jointly develop more detailed operational guidelines.

Eligible Costs

- Relevant and linked institutional strengthening activities;
- Appropriate project preparation and supervision activities;
- Cost of organising and delivering joint events;
- Cost of various equipment facilitating co-operation;
- Travel costs related to joint events;
- Accommodation and catering related to joint events;
- Costs of conference speakers, trainers;

Only soft measures are eligible under this measure. Taxes, customs and import duties will not be funded.

Selection Criteria

When selecting from the initial group of applications, priority will be given to activities that:

- Involve direct interactions of people at least from two of the eligible border areas;
- Build upon and / or strengthen the multicultural traditions of the eligible border areas;
- Involve and mobilise a large number of people;
- Prepare / lay the foundations of long-term co-operations;
- Directly linked to other interventions of the programme.
Eligible beneficiaries

- Non-profit-making organisation;
- Local organisations, associations and foundations;
- Municipalities and Communities within the defined border region;
- District and local level organisations;
- Inter-communal co-operation organisations;
- Euro regions;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Professional associations;
- Trade Union Organisations
- Public or non-profit organisations, including local branches of universities and colleges, involved in vocational training;
- NGOs based in the eligible area.

The organizations eligible for support must be registered (or to have a branch office) in the region. Profit making organizations and national organizations without a distinctive role in the border region will not be eligible.

3.5 Linked activities

2002/000-623-04 Joint Small Project Fund
2003/005-631.02 / 2003/005-701.05 Sustainable Economic Development of the Bulgarian-Romanian Border Region
2003/005-631.04 / 2003/005-701.04 Promotion of Sustainable Development and Conservation of Biodiversity in Bulgarian-Romanian Cross Border Region
2003/005-631.05 Joint Small Project Fund
2004/016-783.01.03 / 2004/016-784.01.04 Joint Small Project Fund
2004/016-783.01.04 Project Preparation Facility
2005/017-455.01.03 Joint Small Project Fund

3.6 Lessons learned

The most significant impact of the JSPF is in strengthening the administrative capacity of both the central administration and beneficiaries involved in implementation. The JSPF Secretariat’s staff has the capacity for completing application pack documentation, advising beneficiaries on procedures, leading information days and evaluating tenders. Capacity within the local consultancy market to support grant scheme implementation has also been strengthened.

As evaluated by ECOTEC Bulgaria in the Interim Evaluation (2005) of the European Union Pre-Accession Instrument Phare for the CBC Sector, in terms of efficiency and sustainability, following lessons learned could be relevant:

- The JSPF schemes are being effective in strengthening administrative capacity at a central level. The use of new district level staff in tender evaluations would strengthen regional administrative capacity and reduce pressure on central level staff.
• Sustainability would be enhanced if beneficiaries with additional and more constant sources of revenue were selected.

• JSPF grants include a significant number of secondary tender procedures that have to be implemented by the beneficiaries and controlled ex-ante by the MRDPW. In this, it is supported by the TA contractor and the systems of control have been extensively developed as part of the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS) preparations. This ex-ante control is a source of delay in implementation. The ECD retains an ex-post audit control function, as outlined in the decentralised implementation system (DIS) manual, of the secondary procurement. The anticipated ex-post financial audit of the 2001 JSPF failed to contract at the end of 2004 and this project will therefore not be specifically audited. The ECD is not able to monitor the implementation of, or variation within, the grant schemes due to a lack of resources.

JSPF is a highly effective and visible mechanism for mobilising worthwhile small-scale projects at the local level. Projects are often the first of their type in the locality and can often provide the applicants with new ways to express their creativity and endeavour in a cross border environment. Significantly JSPF is found to raise local interest and capacity for accessing instruments such as grant schemes. Interest has also been raised through JSPFs in post accession instruments, for which the learning experience of applicants under JSPF has been particularly valuable.

4. Institutional Framework

Programme Management Structures

National Authorities

Both BG and RO will have an Implementing Agency (IA) (fulfilling also the role of Contracting Authority (CA)) and have three joint management structures, namely the Joint Co-operation Committee (JCC), the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS).

The Implementing Agency is the body responsible for the overall management and implementation of the programme for all financing under Phare CBC. The Contracting Authority role is carried out by the national authority designated in the Financing Agreement.

In Bulgaria, the Implementing Agency will be the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW), acting through its Phare Implementing Agency Directorate General as IA and CA and, therefore, will retain overall responsibility for the implementation of the whole of the programme, including: approval of tender documents, evaluation criteria, evaluation of offers, signature of contracts, authorisation of invoices. The PAO retains his contractual and financial responsibility for the implementation of the Grant Programme. The PAO has full responsibility for selection and implementation (tendering, contracting and management) of all projects.

The IA/CA will remain responsible for approval of tender documents, preparation of evaluation criteria, evaluation of offers, signature of contracts and authorisation of invoices and will supervise adequately the CBC Regional Office Calarasi. In addition the IA/CA execute payments to the final beneficiaries (the CBC Regional Office Calarasi will not manage funds and payments). Also, control of funds remains the direct responsibility of the IA.
The CBC Regional Office

The Programme will be implemented as much as possible on a decentralised basis. The BG Phare IA Directorate will therefore delegate a range of management tasks to the CBC Regional Office Calarasi and to the BG experts in Silistra JTS Branch office. The CBC Regional Office Calarasi together with JTS Silistra branch will assist the IA/CA in the implementation phases of the Grant Scheme project cycle (financial management, monitoring and control of the projects). The relationship between the IA/CA and the CBC Regional Office Calarasi shall be defined in an Implementation Agreement which, in turn, shall be approved by the EC Delegation.

For the Romanian side, the Ministry of European Integration may delegate a considerable part of its responsibilities for implementing the CBC to a regional body, situated in the border area.

Joint Management Structures

Joint Co-operation Committee:

The JCC is the strategic body of the CBC BG-RO Programme. With members from both countries and from national, regional and local level, the JCC will ensure a joint management of the programme and thus ensure a policy and financial overview of the operation of the CBC. It performs the tasks described in the Phare CBC Regulation 2760/98

The main responsibilities of the JCC are:

- To adopt the JPD and any further adjustment of it, as appropriate
- To adopt the project fiches and the Financing Proposals to be put forward for the yearly programming exercise
- To consider and approve the joint annual and final progress and implementation reports before they are sent to the Commission.

The JCC consists of:

- representatives of national, regional, and local authorities, as well as representatives from civil society, NGOs, economic and social actors, sectoral organisations – e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Unions, etc. They may participate in the JCC in an advisory capacity, i.e. not as voting members.
- Representatives of the European Commission participate in the JCC in an advisory capacity.

The JCC will be co-chaired by the Romanian IA and the Bulgarian IA and will meet at least once a year.

Joint Steering Committee (JSC):

The JSC is the operational body of the CBC Programme. The main responsibilities of the JSC are:
➢ To prepare the project fiches for the yearly programming exercise, to be forwarded to the JCC for adoption;

➢ To oversee the calls for proposal/Application Pack (drafted by the JTS), to be forwarded to respective IA for publication;

➢ To oversee the joint selection of projects;

➢ To supervise the activities of the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and the Evaluation Committee;

➢ To approve the framework for the Joint Technical Secretariat’s tasks and the rules of procedures for the JTS to define the exact division of tasks To approve

➢ To review periodically, progress made towards achieving the specific (and quantified) objectives of the programme and to analyse the results of implementation (achievement of the targets set for the different measures).

The JSC consists of:

• representatives from the RO IA/CA and representatives from the BG IA/CA (in case of RO, one member shall be nominated from the CBC Regional Office Calarasi)

• representatives of regional and local authorities with an equal representation of both RO and BG partners

• representatives of the EC Delegations, acting as observers.

The JSC will meet quarterly. It draws up and adopts its own rules of procedure.

**Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS):**

The JTS is the main administrative body of the programme.

The main responsibilities of the JTS are:

• receiving project applications,

• providing regularly monitoring reports the JSC

• providing advice to potential project partners

• carrying out day-to-day administrative tasks related to the programme.

The tasks of the JTS include only technical and administrative support which means that there will be no transfer of public authority tasks relating to the management of the funds.

The JTS consists of an Executive Secretary and four desk officers (2 Romanian (from the CBC Regional Office Calarasi and 2 Bulgarian). The CBC Regional Office Calarasi provides office facilities to the JTS. In case of RO, JTS running costs (with the exception of staff costs) will be financed from the programme’s Technical Assistance budget. The JTS will be accountable to the IA/CA in RO and to the EC Delegations to RO for the management of the respective EU funds used for fulfilling its tasks.

From past experience it is clear that project applicants need considerable assistance in the preparation of their applications. The JTS will be equipped to organise training and information workshops and to assist in a transparent manner the potential beneficiaries to prepare good quality proposals, including project cost assessment. The Joint Technical Secretariat will convene.
Implementation at Project Level

In 2006 two separate but harmonised application procedures will be introduced. It is the intention of all parties to develop this system into a procedure that is coordinated and “joint” to the greatest extent possible.

The IA/CAs in BG and RO, in close co-operation with the JSC, will draft the following harmonised documents:

- Calls for proposals,
- Guidelines for applicants,
- Application form.

For BG, the Application Pack will be published in English and in Bulgarian.

Project application and submission

For BG, the application language will be English. Supporting documents for Bulgarian applicants/partners can be presented in Bulgarian language. The CA can ask the successful applicants/partners for a translation into English of supporting documents (on the cost of the applicant/partner) before the signature of the contract. For BG, the RO partners should provide translated documents into English.

All applications shall be submitted to the JTS. The JTS collects and registers all proposals.

Project Selection

The JTS will perform the secretariat function for the joint Evaluation Committee. Projects will be selected following the approval and issue of harmonised Guidelines for Applicants, harmonised Call for Proposals and an evaluation of subsequent project applications. The JTS will provide support to applicants. The JTS will collect and register submitted project proposals and the selection and approval process will follow PRAG.

Each IA/CA (PAO) will nominate a Grant Scheme Evaluation Committee (with a non-voting Chair and Secretary, and voting members) exclusively on the basis of technical and professional competence, ensuring a clear balance between national / regional / local representation, technical knowledge and independent expertise. The EC Delegation will approve the composition of the committee and will nominate an observer to follow all or part of the proceedings.

The evaluation process will be simultaneously carried out by the BG and RO Grant Scheme Evaluation Committees. Formal evaluation decisions will be made once both Evaluation Committees have consulted each other and drawn up their evaluation report (containing recommendations for grants) and submitted it to the IA/CA. The IA/CA (PAO) then approves and forwards the evaluation report, and grant award proposals, to the EC Delegation. The EC Delegation then endorses (ex-ante) the evaluation report and the final list of grants to be awarded. It should be noted that the EC Delegation participation in the evaluation committees as observer is compulsory.

The IA/CAs notify the JTS and each applicant in writing of the result of the selection process.
The Joint Steering Committee

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) oversees the joint selection of projects, but is not actually involved in the selection process. The Joint Evaluation Committee operates in full autonomy. The JSC cannot change the Evaluation Committee's scores or recommendations and cannot alter the evaluation grids. The JSC formally ratifies the Evaluation Report and the award proposals and pass them on (together with recommendations, as appropriate) to the IA/CA for endorsement and onward transmission to EC Delegations for final approval.

Award of grants

Once the EC Delegation has approved the Evaluation Report and the grant award proposals, the IA/CA will commence awarding the grants according to PRAG rules.

Each IA/CA drafts the grant contract according to PRAG, using the standard grant contract form and its annexes, and submits this to the EC Delegation. The EC Delegation approves the standard contract form and then the list of grants to be awarded.

The PAO then signs the grant contracts with the selected beneficiaries based on the final list of grants approved by the EC Delegation. The language of the grant contract is English. A copy of the signed grant contract is sent to the EC Delegation. Copies of the signed grant contracts are made available at the respective IA/CA in BG and RO.

The Joint Technical Secretariat will notify the successful and unsuccessful applicants of the result of the Call for proposals within 30 days of the Commission approval of the list of award proposals.

Implementation of grant contracts

The implementation of selected projects through provision of works, supplies and services, which are sub-contracted by the final beneficiaries of the individual grants (“secondary procurement”) will be subject to the procurement rules for External actions (PRAG) at the time of implementation. The IA is responsible for ensuring that grant beneficiaries implement the projects in compliance with the EC rules.

Tenders and contracts of EUR 50,000–300,000 will be presented to the IA (MRDPW) for ex-ante approval. For secondary procurement below this threshold, the IA will implement a system of random checks to verify that grant beneficiaries apply contracting procedures in accordance with EC rules.

Tenders and contracts above EUR 300,000 will be presented to the IA and EC Delegation for ex-ante control. For secondary procurement below this threshold, the Delegation will implement a system of random checks.

The Joint Technical Secretariat will notify the successful and unsuccessful applicants of the result of the Call for proposals within 30 days of the Commission approval of the list of award proposals.
The above provisions are valid until Bulgaria becomes a member state of the European Union. After accession, the national procurement legislation will be in force.

5. Detailed Budget

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<th>Phare support</th>
<th>Co-financing</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
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<td>% of total public funds</td>
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<td><strong>max75 %</strong></td>
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<td>min25 %</td>
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| People to people actions | 0.744         | 0.080        | 0.824      |
| Regional Office / Administrative costs(**) | 0.056 |               | 0.056 |
| IB support              | 0.800         |              | 0.880      |

| Total project           | 0.800         |              | 0.880      |

(*) Co-financing is needed and will be one criterion for eligibility of projects. Minimum co-financing will be 10% of the cost of soft projects, in cash only, and is covered by the beneficiaries themselves, not by the Bulgarian National Fund

(**) Maximum 7% of Total RHARE allocation of 0.8 MEUR may be used to cover Technical Assistance for consultancy and training inputs, but not for remuneration

6. Implementation Arrangements

6.1 Implementing Agency

Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
Address: 17-19 Cyril and Methodius St. 1202 Sofia
Dimcho Mihalevski – PAO;
Stefan Gerasimov – Deputy PAO and Director General of the DG Phare IA;
Tel: +359 2 9405 382
Fax: +359 2 987 0737

6.2 Twinning
6.3 Non-standard aspects

There are no non-standard contracts or tender procedures envisaged within this project. *Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions* will be strictly followed.

The above provisions are valid until Bulgaria becomes a member state of the European Union. After accession, the national procurement legislation will be in force.

6.4 Contracts

The JSPF will be implemented via a Call for Proposals. The number of the individual grant-contracts to be signed will vary depending on the number of the proposals received for each component and the respective grant amounts approved for funding.

7. Implementation Schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start of tendering/call for proposals</td>
<td>April 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracting (latest deadline)</td>
<td>October 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of project activity</td>
<td>November 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Completion (estimate)</td>
<td>October 2008</td>
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</table>

8. Equal Opportunity

In the whole process of preparation and implementation of the projects no discrimination between men and women will be made. Equal opportunity will be respected in all aspects of the project.

9. Environment

The specifics of the grant scheme does not foresee concrete investment element. Environmental aspects will be assessed individually for each of the proposed projects.

10. Rates of return

N/A

11. Investment criteria

11.1 Catalytic effect
Without PHARE assistance, the project would not be implemented in the near future, because of the lack of funds. By exposing applicants to grant scheme procedures, it lays the ground for the future absorption of Structural Funds.

11.2 Co-financing

The beneficiaries of the People to people actions project will contribute with at least 10% of the total budget of the projects.

11.3 Additionality

N/A

11.4 Project readiness and size

The project can be launched according to the implementation chart (Annex 2). A draft of the Cooperation Agreement, Call for Proposals, Application Form, Guidelines for Applicants and Grant Contracts will be elaborated by all concerned organisations by the time of signing of the Financing Memorandum. All documents shall be prepared according to the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions template and submitted to the Delegation for endorsement prior to the launch of the Call for Proposals. Only projects ready for tendering can be supported. The minimum grant for a single application to be contracted (under Phare) is € 10,000 while the maximum one is € 50,000. The Phare contribution to the project is € 0.8 million.

11.5 Sustainability

The development of the border region is part of both governments’ strategy of maintaining good relations with their neighbours.

11.6 Compliance with state aids provisions

The project respects the state aids provisions.

12. Conditionality and sequencing

The CBC IA within MRDPW will ensure the necessary human resources for the technical management. The Programme will be implemented as much as possible on a decentralised basis. The BG Phare IA Directorate will therefore delegate a range of management tasks to the CBC Regional Office Calarasi and to the BG experts in Silistra JTS Branch office. The CBC Regional Office Calarasi together with JTS Silistra branch will assist the IA/CA in the implementation phases of the Grant Scheme project cycle (financial management, monitoring and control of the projects). The relationship between the IA/CA and the CBC Regional Office Calarasi shall be defined in an Implementation Agreement which, in turn, shall be approved by the EC Delegation.
For the Romanian side, the Ministry of European Integration may delegate a considerable part of its responsibilities for implementing the CBC to a regional body, situated in the border area.

Importance will be given to providing assistance to the project applicants since preparation of project applications according to the “Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions contract procedures is rather demanding.

The project will start after signing of the Financial Agreement between Bulgaria and the European Commission for 2006. In certain circumstances, the Call for proposals might be launched with suspense clause, if the EU funding is not yet available (e.g. prior to Commission Decision approving the Financing Proposal).
ANNEXES TO PROJECT FICHE

1. Logical framework matrix in standard format
2. Detailed implementation chart
3. Contracting and disbursement schedule by quarter for full duration of programme
**ANNEX 1: LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR**  
*Project: “People to people actions”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme name and number</th>
<th>2006/018-386.0.02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contracting period expires</strong></td>
<td>30 November 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Execution of contract period expires</strong></td>
<td>30 November 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total budget:</strong></td>
<td>0.880 MEUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phare budget:</strong></td>
<td>0.800 MEUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall objective</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The overall objective of the project is to strengthen cooperation between the communities on either side of the border in economic development, living conditions and ongoing contact in order to help them to overcome specific development problems resulting from their relative isolation in the framework of national economies. | • At least 10 joint events, workshops and trainings in the border region;  
• Over 20 local and regional institutions involved in cross-border activities  
• Increased level of joint economic co-operation in border area both in traditional and new businesses | • CBC Implementing Agency;  
• Regional and local media;  
• Public opinion polls;  
• Regional and central statistical sources |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project purpose</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| This project aims at increasing capability of the Romanian and Bulgarian local stakeholders to develop, manage and implement projects with clear regional cross-border impact in order to raise awareness and co-operation, to develop partnerships and establish local networks on both sides of the border. | • 15 cross border projects with clear regional/cross-border development impact;  
• 5 established associations by CBC partners by the end of the project;  
• Increased level of motivation in the target regions for cross-border co-operation with regard to solving the common problems and utilise the potential;  
• Increased volume and intensify of contacts, jointly organised actions by the end of the project;  
• New cross border project proposals between partners | • CBC Implementing Agency  
• Monitoring and assessment reports;  
• Reports of the PMU.  
• Project evaluation reports;  
• Local newspapers | • Political support to cross-border co-operation  
• Efficient programme management (implementation, monitoring assessment);  
• continued commitment of the Government towards the priorities of the programme and regional development;  
• continued commitment of regional and local actors;  
• availability of qualified staff and institutional support;  
• functioning co-operation between all relevant partners;  
• functioning co-ordination |
### Results

The following specific results are expected to be achieved:

- Small-scale “people-to-people” actions agreed and implemented in the border regions in the field of economic development, environment, tourism, local employment, cultural exchanges, local democracy, planning and development studies, etc.
- Small-scale projects in the fields mentioned above, agreed with the counterpart according to the People to people actions package rules and guidelines;
- Increased level of public awareness and information on cross-border co-operation affairs and on the process of European integration;
- Encouraged involvement of the Bulgarian and Romanian local stakeholders in the Phare CBC Programme;
- Permanent cross-border structures and partnerships created among the local organisations, further developed and strengthened;
- Increased and strengthened capacity of Bulgarian and Romanian local and regional organizations to prepare adequate cross border projects in the context of Phare CBC
- Cross-border links created among the local and regional organizations/institutions in the border region

### Objectively Verifiable Indicators

- 15 people-to-people actions carried out;
- 5 economic actions carried out
- Number of tourists/visitors in border regions increased by the end of the project by 10%;
- 5 cross-border co-operation agreements signed;
- Better knowledge for each other’s history, traditions and better mutual understanding.

### Sources of Verification

- Monitoring and assessment reports;
- Reports of the Implementing Agency;
- Programme evaluation reports;
- Regional and local press and news reports.

### Assumptions

- Efficient marketing and promotion of the JSPF scheme in the border region;
- Adequate support for applicants through counseling and mentoring functions at local level
- Well functioning co-operation and co-ordination between IA, Secretariats, Joint Committees, and with the EC Representation and other relevant central, regional and local authorities;
- Well functioning co-operation among the central, regional and local administrations of the two countries
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC Grants given for small scale people-to-people actions in the fields of:</td>
<td>Several Grant Contracts with a total budget of 0.744 MEUR</td>
<td>• JSPF documentation and Operational Guidelines prepared and approved;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economic development;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sustained interest of local institutions in the JSPF scheme;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Environment;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sufficient local/regional project development capacity and capacity to prepare professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tourism;</td>
<td></td>
<td>grant applications;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural exchanges;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Availability of local organisations willing to apply for JSPF grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local democracy;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planning and development studies, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC Funds – 0.8 MEUR; Local Funds – minimum co-financing of 10% of the projects’ costs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ANNEX 2 - Implementation Time Chart

### Joint Small Project Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AMJ</td>
<td>JAS</td>
<td>OND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Joint Small Projects Fund / People to people actions</td>
<td>T T T T T C I</td>
<td>I I I</td>
<td>I I I I I I I I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Administrative costs</td>
<td>T T T T/C I</td>
<td>I I I</td>
<td>I I I I I I I I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*T = Tendering   C = Contracting   I = Implementation/works*
## Cumulative Contracting Schedule by Quarter in MEUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;People to people&quot; actions</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Administrative costs</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.800</td>
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<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.800</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Cumulative Disbursement Schedule by Quarter in MEUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;People to people&quot; actions</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Administrative costs</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>0.800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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