1. Basic Information

1.1 CRIS Number: EE 2003/005-875; LT 2003/005-877; LV 2003/005-876; PL 2003/005-873

1.2 Title: Small and Medium Project Fund (SMPF) – Grant scheme

1.3 Sector: all sectors

1.4 Location: Eligible regions are as follows
   - PL: Voivodships of Poland: Zachodnio-Pomorskie; Pomorskie; Warminsko-Mazurskie and Podlaskie – Euroregions: Baltic, Niemen, Pomerania
   - LT: All territory;
   - LV: All territory;
   - EST: All territory;

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective(s):

The SMPF supports conclusions of the European Council in Santa Maria da Feira on 19 and 20 June 2000, and in particular paragraph 76 and the action plan for the Northern Dimension with external and cross-border policies of the European Union 2000 to 2003 referred to in that paragraph.

This appropriation is intended, as part of the flexibility and harmonisation of the Interreg, Phare and Tacis joint approach, to cover the financing of special measures to assist the applicant countries bordering the Baltic Sea.

It is intended in particular to assist the future development of relations and local, regional and NGO co-operation in the Baltic Sea region. Therefore, a significant part of the Institution Building of the project will be specifically addressed to the development of NGOs in the Baltic Sea Region. Particular attention will be paid to local initiatives to improve the protection of the environment, develop human capital, and support economic development in this region. The appropriations shall be used for small-scale local and regional projects. The Baltic Joint Co-operation Committee shall be responsible for multilateral co-ordination of actions taken under this appropriation.

The SMPF within the 2003 edition supports the key objectives of the Phare Cross Border Co-operation Programme in the Baltic Sea Region, namely to help the border regions to overcome specific development problems resulting from their relative isolation in the framework of national economics; it also supports the establishment and development of co-operative networks within the Baltic Sea Region and the creation of linkages between these networks and wider European Union networks. The SMPF aims:

- to support the further development of the economic potential of the regions bordering the Baltic Sea by strengthening existing structures;
to reduce the peripheral character of these areas, thereby improving the quality of life and creating a co-operative networking in that region.

• to contribute to the development and co-operation of NGOs in the Baltic Sea Region.

In pursuing these objectives, the SMPF provides a flexible approach to funding smaller-scale actions, which are defined on the basis of local/regional needs, and which have a cross-border impact.

The SMPF shall be implemented through two schemes, one for small projects between 20 000 – 50 000 based on the Small Project Funds 1999-2002 (SPF) and one grant scheme for medium projects 50 000 – 300 000 EUR based on the grant scheme 2001-2002 (MPF). Both schemes shall be in line with the Joint Programming Document for the Phare Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2001 – 2006, which was jointly developed by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland under the guidance of the Baltic Joint Co-operation Committee.

2.2 Project purpose:
The projects shall support development in particular in the fields of small-scale people-to-people and infrastructure activities across the border. In overall terms, the projects may:

• contribute to the development and co-operation of NGOs in the Baltic Sea Region;

• contribute to the development of the eligible districts of Euroregions particularly those on the northern border in Poland and the whole territory of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;

• enhance possibilities for cross-border tourism attraction and linkages between the tourism support infrastructures on either side of the border;

• develop the cultural co-operation between neighbouring areas in the Baltic Sea region;

• support and increase the numbers of transborder meetings of various groups of the population, especially of youth;

• support the educational activities for institutions and individuals involved in local/regional development, in local government and in organisations of public interest;

• raise the level of public awareness and information on cross-border co-operation affairs and on the process of European integration;

• encourage local involvement in the Phare Programme and to support small-scale actions which may form the basis for larger cross-border co-operation projects;

• stimulate and support the creation of permanent structures among the local and regional organisations in the border region in question, particularly organisations with membership for both sides of the border;

• develop and enhance co-operation between the communities on either side of the border with a view to joint improvement of economic development, living conditions and on-going contact;

• support the productive sector and maximise the economic growth potential by creating a business friendly environment and overcoming the obstacles to trade and co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region;
• protect and improve the environment including local energy efficiency schemes and renewable sources of energy;
• improve accessibility, communication, infrastructure and transport links initiated locally within the border regions and provide access to the Trans-European networks

2.3 Accession Partnership and NPAA priority
The SMPF plays a key part in the process of integration of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland with the countries in EU, in particular through the capacity building dimension of local/regional actors. These funds are part of a process of creating ”integration-minded” border regions. In addition, the project supports the social and economic integration between the border regions of countries seeking for EU accession in 2004.

2.4 Contribution to National Development Plan
The National Development Plan / Single Programming Document is an important medium-term planning document for all four countries. The projects to be selected within the SMPF will follow priorities of the NDP.

2.5 Cross Border Impact
The SMPF will contribute to the removal of existing disparities between areas in the Baltic Sea Region and thus to the gradual alignment of economic and social development. This is particularly important in view of future integration of the enlarged 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.

The SMPF emphasises projects with a cross-border impact and encourages the development of linkages between the communities /organisations/ institutions in the Baltic Sea Region. All small-scale people-to-people projects necessitate active participation of foreign partners from at least one BSR country other than the applicant’s, thus facilitate establishing direct contacts of inhabitants from the entire region.

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:
Following the approach adopted in 1999-2002, the SMPF 2003 is now focused on the mechanism of small and medium scale projects and confirms the evolution of the overall Phare CBC Programme in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland from an exclusively project–by-project approach to the gradual inclusion of flexible funding mechanisms. The success of this mechanism in addressing identified local needs, their popularity with local/regional actors and relatively quick implementation record encourages a greater emphasis within the Phare CBC Programmes.

The fund model approach is particularly useful in the context of preparation of local/regional administrations and NGOs for full utilisation of Interreg programmes after the accession. Moreover, 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.
To summarise, the inclusion of the small and medium scale projects into the programme is a logical step forward in the overall context of the Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland’s 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 in the pre-accession context.

3.2 Linked activities:
The mechanism of small and medium scale projects follows on directly from the support and methodologies developed since 1996 in the Baltic Sea Region, beginning with the Baltic Small Project Facility and supported by bilateral MS contributions. It is currently taking up the linking of the opportunities provided under the Interreg strands IIIA, B and C. The programme is also linked with the Tacis Cross-Border Co-operation initiatives for countries eligible for Tacis in the Baltic Sea Region. A close co-ordination with cross-border co-operation projects under Interreg and Tacis must be ensured. The programme will be co-ordinated with other relevant programmes such as programmes of the EIB, Interreg, the 2003 External Border Initiative and the New Neighbourhood Initiative.

3.3 Results:
The project’s main objective is to sustain and develop further the BSR networking which permits the ongoing integration of the candidate countries into the region itself and by doing so into the EU. This is achieved by a series of project results:

- An enhanced development of border regions’ and BSR integration projects and networking for developing strategies and preparing for greater investments
- Successful preparation and implementation of Northern Dimension Action plan projects
- The implementation of small scale “people to people” support actions in line with the objectives of the programme across the BSR and the integrating of the new member states into the EU-MS networks
- The provision of small-scale infrastructure with clear trans-border impact
- The implementation of joint co-operation projects with INTERREG countries
- Further development of and co-operation between NGOs in the region
- Successful co-operation projects including partners from TACIS countries

3.4 Activities:
The activities to be performed within the programme must comply with the Joint Programming Document 2001-2006. The project is based on the single, repeated activity of developing small projects via a mechanism of standardised project applications / joint calls for proposals – with criteria under the decentralised harmonised guidelines. Activities to be supported under the programme include the following:

- carrying out of cultural exchanges, youth meetings;
- training courses, exchange visits;
- courses, conferences and seminars,
elaboration of planning and development studies, feasibility studies, project preparation documents;
marketing initiatives for the region, tourist information material printed;
exhibitions visited and arranged;
small scale infrastructure projects

The project selection process shall be agreed by the Baltic Joint Co-operation Committee as outlined in the Joint Programming Document and detailed in harmonised Guidelines for Applicants, which will subsequently be adopted by each country.

The detailed guidelines developed for CBC 2002 in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, endorsed by the Commission, will be applied for the SMPF 2003. These Guidelines will be revised, taking into account the experiences gathered in the previous editions of the CBC programme on the basis of discussions at the BJCC as well as any new provision of the amended PRAG. The revised 2002 guidelines will be approved by the respective EC Delegations before Calls for Proposals are launched.

4. Institutional Framework

The Baltic Joint Co-operation Committee is the principal forum to assist Baltic Sea accession countries in their implementation of the Phare CBC programme. It should ensure that appropriate monitoring of the implementation of the Joint Programming Document has been established as well as it should initiate, support and oversee activities which promote cross-border co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region and make the current and future programmes more effective. The members of the BJCC are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and the European Commission (Russia, Belarus, Norway are observers to the BJCC). In the countries concerned, the institutional framework will be as follows:

**Poland**

The project will be implemented under the overall responsibility of the Implementing Authority for the Phare Cross Border Co-operation Programme at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration in Poland (the **IA CBC Phare**).

The IA CBC Phare is finally responsible for the management of funds allocated to the CBC programme and reserves therefore certain rights with respect to approving individual regional subprograms and reserves the right to supervise them: issuing of guidelines; definition of the responsibilities of institutions involved in the programme; approval of the institutional set-up; specification of the rules for financial management and for regular submission of reports; the IA CBC Phare has the right of veto over certain projects that have been approved in contravention of the established rules; and finally the IA CBC Phare is responsible for the provision of on-going support to institutions in the regions in the form of training or consultation through experts chosen by the IA CBC Phare. Specifically the IA CBC Phare will manage the implementation of horizontal actions in support of institutional development.

The operational activities within the programme will be performed by the Euroregions: Baltic, Niemen, Pomerania (in case of both: the SPF and MPF).

**For evaluation of projects, the Evaluation Committees** will be established. The Evaluation Committee may consist of representatives of the local/regional/national public administration (it may also include experts from the private sector) and (in case of the SPF) of other relevant
institutions and organisations from all partner countries in the areas comprised by the respective Euroregion. Representatives of the European Commission (Delegation) will participate in the meetings of the Committee as observers. The basic function of the Evaluation Committee is

- Evaluating and recommending projects for funding, in accordance with the Guidelines issued for the CBC 2003.

The Secretariat represents the executive CBC body in the region. Its chief function is to provide technical and specialist support to the Evaluation Committee and to ensure the everyday implementation and operation of the programme. The secretarial services will be performed by Polish secretariats of Euroregions: Baltic, Niemen, Pomerania. The responsibilities of the Secretariat include:

- provision of information to beneficiaries on the Phare CBC Programme in the BSR 2003;
- provision of support for the preparation of Evaluation Committee meetings;
- organisation of individual round of public calls for the submission of proposals;
- supporting applicants with project preparation;
- assisting and co-ordinating the process of project evaluation, through passing project proposals to the Evaluation Committees (and -where necessary- to Assessors) and organising their sessions, etc.
- assisting in the preparation of Terms of Reference and associated tender and contracting documents as required;
- monitoring of sub-contracts;
- monitoring and inspection of project implementation;
- evaluation of benefits and impact;
- assisting with the financial management of the programme;
- reporting to the IA and CBC Programme Officer.

The Secretariat will in particular ensure sound and professional financial management of the funds in line with Phare requirements. Overall, the IA CBC Phare through the provision of ongoing advice and support and specialist consultancy and training inputs will assist the Secretariats in performing their role. In particular in the case of more complex services or supply procurement, the Secretariat will co-operate closely with the IA CBC Phare. The Secretariat will need to report regularly to the IA CBC Phare, in particular on the financial management and implementation record of the programme. Up to 7% of the Phare contribution may be used for Technical Assistance - expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance

**Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania**

In Latvia and Estonia the CFCU (Central Finance and Contracting Unit) is responsible for the implementation within the framework of the Guidelines agreed by the respective EC Delegations. The CFCUs will be supported by National CBC Co-ordinators and CBC Secretariats with similar functions as listed above for Poland (in Latvia the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments and in Estonia the Ministry of Internal Affairs). In Lithuania the Ministry of Interior is the National CBC Co-ordinator and the CPMA (Central Project Management Agency) is the implementing agency which will be supported by Secretariat, acting as the Joint Technical
Secretariat of the Lithuania-Poland-Kaliningrad Interreg IIIA Programme. National Steering Committees will be established in each of the three countries as the key national institution responsible for the operation of the Fund. The national Steering Committee in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania may consist of representatives from national, regional and local public administration. The detailed functions and tasks of the National Steering Committee will be determined in the Guidelines for Applicants. The National CBC Co-ordinator will be nominated as chairman of the National Steering Committee.

*Project Selection*: Projects will be selected following the approval of harmonised *Guidelines for Applicants*, harmonised *Call for Proposals* and an evaluation of project applications, involving independent expertise if needed. The detailed procedure for the project selection will be outlined in the *Guidelines for Applicants*, which are to be developed on the basis of SPF guidelines 2002. Separate *Guidelines for Applicants* will be developed for the MPF basing on the pattern harmonised in all 4 Phare countries within the 2002 programme.

*NGOs*: As stated above, one of the programme’s objectives is to develop co-operation of NGOs in the Baltic Sea Region. Thus, it is expected that the detailed principles on the functioning of the programme to be elaborated will make a wide participation of NGOs as recipients of grants possible. Representatives of NGOs may also be involved in the project selection, unless potential conflict of interest exists.

*Local Authorities*: Due to the decentralised nature of the programme, local/regional authorities can be involved in project selection and the management of the Fund as well as in the preparation and implementation of the projects. It is expected that also the NGOs will be frequent recipients of the SMPF grants. Moreover, local and regional authorities through their participation in the National Steering Committees will need to integrate the actions funded through the programme with those supported through other programmes. However, due to the eligibility of local authorities as project applicants, their participation in Steering Committees and project selection and management will be limited where potential conflict of interests exists.

*Experience of the institutions*: Representatives of the eligible territories have acquired experience of the operations of Steering Committees and the associated project selection and evaluation processes within the framework of the CREDO Programme and of previous CBC Programmes. There is a strong commitment on the part of regional/local public administration and other actors in this type of funding mechanism and enthusiasm for their active involvement in an EU Programme.

In terms of the project evaluation, there is a pool of know-how on the defined themes that the programme will address. Experts from regional/local level can be involved in the preliminary project evaluation exercise, where conflict of interests can be avoided. This will help ensure that information on good practice experiences from elsewhere can be available to each committee.

The co-ordination with other projects funded by Phare, ISPA and SAPARD must be ensured by the NAC.
In each country, 1 meur will be allocated to the SPF and 2 meur will be allocated to MPF. The split between investment support and institution building components within the MPF will be determined in the Guidelines for Applicants.

The division of Phare contribution between investment support and institution building is indicative, showing the intention to support people-to-people type projects from SPF and investment projects from MPF. The actual division of the Phare contribution will depend on the number and quality of projects submitted to both grant schemes.

In the case of soft projects the formal requirement for foreign partner financial contribution can be introduced. There is no formal requirement of foreign partner involvement in infrastructure projects. However, projects with financial contribution of foreign partners will be given priority in project selection.

Co-financing provided from national sources will be available. Minimum 20% (minimum 25% in case of investment costs) of the total eligible costs of the project is required to be national co-financing (from the applicant country). The minimum co-financing rate to be applied will be defined on the basis of eligible costs within each individual project. The national co-financing can be provided by the grant beneficiaries, national, regional or local authorities.

Up to 7% of the Phare contribution may be used for management costs of the SPF - expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance - as well as co-ordination of the assistance with Interreg programmes.

6. Implementation Arrangements

6.1 Implementing Agency
The EDIS system must be in place in all countries seeking accession to EU in 2004 at the time of accession the latest. Under EDIS the functions and tasks of all relevant bodies involved remain similar to the DIS procedures. The primary difference will be that the ex-ante control will not be carried out by the European Commission (Delegation) but by the IAs themselves. The division of tasks between IA and European Commission (Delegation) may thereby be revised accordingly after IAs have received the accreditation.

6.2 Twinning
None

6.3 Non-standard aspects
All contracting will be carried out in line with the Practical Guide to Phare, ISPA and SAPARD contract procedures (in case of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and with the Polish Procurement Law (in case of Poland). In case the SMPF will be implemented on a fully decentralised (EDIS) basis, the national procurement rules will be applied.

6.4 Contracts
A maximum of 50 contracts for the Small Project Fund and maximum 40 contracts for the Medium Project Fund per each Phare country

7. Implementation Schedule

7.1 Start of tendering/call for proposals
The Call for Proposals for both SPF and the MPF will be launched before the time of EU accession (May 2004).

7.2 Start of project activity
Expected date of commencement of first contract/grant scheme is the second half of 2004

7.3 Project Completion
The expected date of last payment under last contract/grant is 30th November 2006.

8. Equal Opportunity
Equal participation in projects by women and men is assured and women’s participation will be measured by examination of the individual project personnel portfolio.

9. Environment
Dealt with at the individual project level

10. Rates of return
Dealt with at the individual project level

11. Investment criteria
Dealt with at the individual project level

11.1 Catalytic effect:
The Phare support catalyses the priority accession driven action of preparation of the local, regional authorities and NGOs for accession which would otherwise not have taken place in this way by galvanising the local authorities into the project development actions which are at the heart of future EU funding mechanisms.

11.2 Co-financing:
Phare will use its grants to attract as much co-financing as possible from all sources. The principle of joint financing shall be applied for all investment projects and investment components, where the sources are Phare grant and national co-financing. Minimum 20% (minimum 25% in case of investment costs) of the total eligible costs of the project is required to be national co-financing (from the applicant country. The co-financing ratio will be applied on the final contract price.

11.3 Additionality:
Phare grants shall do not displace any other financiers especially from the private sector or IFIs since no other source provides for these specific activities – bearing in mind that the expertise developed by the successful beneficiaries makes them well placed to also take advantage of EU funding from other sources such as Economic and Social Cohesion, Interreg and the ACCESS programme.

11.4 Project readiness and Size:
Projects will only be financed by Phare if they are ready for contracting and (for infrastructure projects) all necessary technical studies have been completed and this is amply assured by the extensive and detailed project selection criteria and the project selection process using experts.

11.5 Sustainability:
Dealt with at the individual project level

11.6 Compliance with state aids provisions
Dealt with at the individual project level

11.7 Contribution to National Development Plan and/or SPD
Contributes through following the priorities defined in the NDP

12. Conditionality and sequencing

No new conditionality applies since the activities are continuations of previous ongoing ones for which all conditions are fulfilled.

The sequence of the project is in the order of:

1) approval of the country Guidelines for both schemes nationally and through the respective EC Delegations
2) launch a harmonised call for proposals with co-ordinated timing between the 4 countries
3) analyse and select projects, including co-ordination between the 4 countries at the selections stage
4) contracting of grants
5) monitoring and evaluation.

The most important milestone of the project in terms of impact is the actual number of projects successfully terminated with the results achieved. Control is therefore at the level of the individual projects.

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
### LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR
Project: Small and Medium Project Fund (SMPF) – Grant scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme name and number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contracting period expires: 30/11/2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disbursement period expires: 30/11/2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total budget : 15.5 € Phare budget : 12 M€</td>
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#### Overall objective
- support the further development of the economic potential of the regions bordering the Baltic Sea by strengthening existing structures;
- reduce the peripheral character of these areas, thereby improving the quality of life and creating a co-operative networking in that region;
- contribute to the development and co-operation of NGOs in the Baltic Sea Region

#### Objectively verifiable indicators

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<tr>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sustainability of projects implemented within the programme (the results of at least 50% of projects are sustained after 1 year of completion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No of partner institutions involved in the implementation of the projects supported under SMPF (at least 240 institutions involved as applicants or project partners)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability of NGOs supported by the programme (at least 50% of NGOs supported are operating after 1 year of completion of the projects)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Project purpose
- contribute to the development and co-operation of NGOs in the BSR.
- enhance possibilities for cross-border tourism;

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<th>Objectively verifiable indicators 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of applicants being NGOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of relevant projects supported and new cross-border tourism opportunities created</td>
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</table>

#### Sources of Verification
- Regional and IA CBC reports;
- Final reports of the projects;
- Programme evaluation reports

#### Assumptions
- continued commitment of the Governments towards the priorities of the programme and regional development;

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1. The LogFrame is applicable for the whole programme, i.e. the target values for indicators are set to cover all four countries concerned.
2. The indicators related to the project purpose will be quantified in the Guidelines for Applicants.
- develop the cultural co-operation between neighbouring areas in the BSR;
- support and increase the numbers of transborder meetings of various groups of the population, especially of youth;
- raise the level of public awareness and information on cross-border co-operation affairs and on the process of European integration.
- support small-scale actions which may form the basis for larger cross-border co-operation projects;
- build and develop the specialist resources of local and regional institutions involved in regional development, groundwork and implementation of cross-border projects;
- stimulate and support the (creation of) permanent structures among the local and regional organisations in the border region;
- develop and enhance co-operation between the communities on either side of the border with a view to joint improvement of economic development, living conditions and on-going contact.

### Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective verifiable indicators</th>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSR integration projects and networking for developing strategies and preparing for greater investments</td>
<td>IA CBC reports; Final reports of the projects; Reports of Secretariats</td>
<td>political commitment to Regional co-operation</td>
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<td>“people to people” support actions in line with the objectives of the programme across the BSR</td>
<td>Monitoring and assessment reports;</td>
<td>functioning co-operation between all relevant partners in the Regions;</td>
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<tr>
<td>small-scale infrastructure with clear trans border impact</td>
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<td>sustained interest of the Region’s population in development and co-operation</td>
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<td>co-ordinated projects with INTERREG and TACIS programmes</td>
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- No. of relevant projects supported and new cultural co-operation contacts established
- No. of relevant projects supported and persons participating in the meetings
- No. of relevant projects supported and public awareness events and new information sources
- No. of relevant projects supported and follow-up activities possibly leading to larger projects
- No of relevant projects supported and staff trained
- No of relevant projects supported and existing or new structures
- No of relevant projects supported and communities, which have widened up to scope of cooperation

- percentage of the projects

- availability of qualified experts, local interest maintained;
- well functioning co-operation between project partners
### Activities
- Activities will include: carrying out of cultural exchanges, youth meetings; training courses, exchange visits; courses, conferences and seminars, elaboration of planning and development studies, feasibility studies, project preparation documents; marketing initiatives for the region, tourist information material printed; exhibitions visited and arranged; carrying out small scale infrastructure projects
- Qualified technical expertise supports these activities

### Means
- It is anticipated that:
  - Up to 50 contracts covering 1.25 M€ will be signed for SPF implementation per Phare country
  - Up to 40 contracts covering 2.625 M€ will be signed for MPF implementation per Phare country

### Assumptions
- Standardisation of the approach across the BSR is the main challenge to be met – based on the assumed willingness of the many partners to co-operate with the attendant risk that the logistics may not allow them to do so in an optimal manner
Annex 2 and 3: Cumulative implementing, contracting and disbursement schedule.

### Implementing schedule:

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### Cumulative Contracting schedule (M€):

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**Cumulative Disbursement schedule (M€):**

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